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Strategies for enhancing faculty brand through personal branding: Insights from lecturers

Ellyn Eka Wahyu*, Yekie Senja Oktora

Department of Business Administration, State Polytechnic of Malang
Jl. Soekarno Hatta No.9 Malang, 65141, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: E-mail: eka.ellyn@gmail.com

Abstract

Professional branding is a new step in the professional development of a lecturer, which presupposes a holistic process of forming a lecturer's personal brand, which consists of creating a personality image of a lecturer that is attractive, socially recognized, and can be recognized in his professional field. This study aims to identify the extent of the faculty branding process carried out by lecturers of the Business Administration Department of the State Polytechnic of Malang through Instagram social media. A total of 10 respondents were determined using purposive sampling. The data collection method is done by in-depth interview, while the data analysis method uses data triangulation. The results showed that the majority of respondents have carried out professional branding by uploading various outputs that show their respective expertise ranging from education, training (mastery class) to community service. However, there are still no significant findings regarding lecturers' output related to intellectual property rights so that it becomes an opening for further research. Through the results of this study, it can be stated that the Malang State Polytechnic Business Administration Study Program has made efforts to carry out massive faculty branding through lecturer posts on social media.

Keywords: Branding; Lecturer; Personal faculty brand

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1. Introduction

In response to the modern labor market, a growing trend in teaching emphasizes active, creative knowledge application (Rutter et al., 2016). This notably affects higher education lecturers, especially in personal branding (Eldegwy et al., 2018). Lecturers, engaging in communication, research, and community service, shape their professional image and reputation while acting as ambassadors for the "lecturer" profession. These efforts contribute to individual lecturer standing and the overall reputation of their academic institution (Rauschnabel et al., 2016).



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Professional branding marks a novel phase in the evolutionary journey of a lecturer's professional development, signifying a comprehensive process of sculpting an attractive, socially recognized personality image within their field (Waller, 2020). The adept management of personal branding by lecturers yields manifold benefits in executing their responsibilities. A well-crafted strategy not only fosters heightened trust within the academic community and society in their domain proficiency but also facilitates the expansion of their communication network. Simultaneously, it engenders a distinctiveness that augments their marketability as professionals (Khrulyov & Khrulyova, 2020). In essence, personal branding propels lecturers to elevated status, transcending both social and economic dimensions (Fitriana, 2022).

Although branding is primarily examined within the framework of marketing traditions, some authors have emphasized the necessity to comprehend the intraorganizational implications of branding as a dominant logic in modern society (Li et al., 2023). The brand of an organization has the ability to be a substantial and basic component of organizational identity and to help workers' identification processes by enabling self-positioning of employees (and potential employees) within corporate narratives (Yaping et al., 2023). The "management of meaning" within an organization should be understood as an innovative project, and branding should be viewed as a powerful method for identity regulation (Zhang et al., 2021). However, it is asserted that branding difficulties in the context of educational institutions differ from those in the corporate, for-profit sector (Frandsen et al., 2018). Studies specifically point out how different logics coexist in higher education institutions. Faculty members are forced to manage the marketization language of branding as well as discourses of erudition and truth, professional expertise, and scientific brilliance in this tension-filled setting (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2022). Despite these insights, we still lack in-depth information of how higher education workers respond to and make associations with the brand in this specific environment.

This study aims to analyze how lecturers in the Department of Business Administration, Malang State Polytechnic carry out a personal branding process which can be used as a basis for determining strategies for building the department's reputation. In this paper, we add to the growing body of research on faculty members' relationships as well as perceptions of their institution's brand. Our findings allow us to contest the generally accepted view that branding serves as an effective tool for managing value in higher education, an environment characterized by the relationship of various professional discourses. The paper is set up in the way that follows to make these contributions. First, we survey the body of prior research on branding in higher education before introducing our theoretical approach. Next, we describe our research methodology in detail before presenting our findings and discussing their implications.

2. Literature Review

Personal branding

Fitriana (2022) revealed that personal branding is an effort made by a person to create an impression on others regarding their characteristics, abilities and advantages. Personal Branding aims as a medium to direct other people's perceptions of certain individuals, informing their identity, characteristics, advantages and all the things that make them different, to create the impression that individuals are the solution to a problem (Zhang et al., 2021). In the context of higher education, especially for a lecturer, personal branding is needed as a means of expertise related to the field of science that is occupied, conveying the differences and advantages possessed compared to colleagues, to give the impression of being the right facilitator in every classroom faced (Clark et al., 2020).

The urgency of personal branding for higher education lecturers

We should know beforehand that before a lecturer is positioned to do personal branding, the problems experienced by various leaders in business universities are about perceived value about the university and according to Frandsen & Huzzard (2021) include the following:

Competition in terms of campus facilities, tuition fees, campus environment and qualified lecturers in the MBA field. These problems are classical patterns that are always faced by schools that carry the theme of "business school" so that each school is competing to create a distinctive narrative by marketing higher education by narrating campus facilities and how strategic the campus location is with the city center (Atmaja & Budi, 2016). In addition, the value offered by business schools is about the educational qualifications of lecturers experience as well as networks with practitioners (private), entrepreneurs and other stakeholders related to business processes. Even in promoting educational programs, the branding process is carried out by narrating "schools that provide online courses" or "schools that are able to collaborate with well-known companies" (Amzat & Yusuf, 2016).

Inter-campus ranking competition by globally recognized ranking agencies (Müller, 2017). It should be noted that the current map of competition between schools is determined through school rankings conducted by trusted ranking agencies. Rankings can guide prospective students to choose which campus to use as a destination in pursuing higher education (Abbas, 2014). Formally, the focus on higher education that prioritizes business study programs as the main core has shifted from focusing on improving the quality of formal education to image management initiatives including public relations, responding to the media and personal branding (Rutter et al., 2016).

Personal branding in terms of business school

We should know in advance that before a lecturer is positioned to carry out personal branding, the problems experienced by various leaders at business universities are regarding the perceived value of the university and according to Frandsen et al. (2018), competition in terms of campus facilities, education costs, campus environment and qualified lecturers in the field of Business Administration. These various problems are a classic pattern that is always faced by schools that carry a "business school" theme so that each school competes to create a unique narrative by marketing higher education by narrating campus facilities and how strategic the location of the campus is to the city center (Li et al., 2023). Apart from that, the value offered by business schools is regarding lecturer educational qualifications/lecturer experience as well as networks with practitioners (private sector), entrepreneurs and other stakeholders related to business processes (Minocha et al., 2017). Ranking competition between campuses by globally recognized ranking agencies. It is worth noting that the current competition map between schools is determined through school rankings carried out by trusted rating agencies (Clark et al., 2020). Rankings can guide prospective students to choose which campus to use as a destination for pursuing higher education. Formally, the focus on higher education which prioritizes business study programs as the main core has shifted from initially focusing on improving the quality of formal education to image management initiatives including public relations, responding to media and personal branding (Vásquez et al., 2013).

Digital media as a tool to enhance faculty brand

The current development of the digital world means that personal branding can be done by someone through many digital media. Likewise with a lecturer, there are many digital media that can be used to carry out personal branding, both media that support his tri dharma activities and media used for socializing (Kusumawati, 2019). Digital media can be the main media used in personal branding activities considering the characteristics of digital media which can be accessed by everyone throughout the world as long as there is an internet network (Sang et al., 2023). This means that by using digital media the public reach will be wider. The following are

several digital media that can be used for personal branding when viewed in terms of objectives and relation to the tri dharma of a lecturer and campus reputation according to Fitriana (2022):

E-Learning

A lecturer is able to build a reputation as a lecturer who is ready to teach through digital media. The e-learning portal has provided features for entering lecture material, attendance and other features that make online lectures remain at the same stages as offline lectures or directly in the classroom. The results will be different if a lecturer is unable to carry out online learning optimally. Several e-learning applications that lecturers can use outside the university's portal.

Publications

A lecturer is obliged by law to publish or publicize scientific work. This is proof for a lecturer that they have conducted research or expressed their ideas in a scientific work. In the current digital era, publication of scientific works can not only be done using print media, but almost all print publication media also have digital versions. This activity is an important part in establishing a lecturer's reputation, because it will be proof of a lecturer's competency.

Social media

Social media is a site or platform for sharing various things in which one person and other people in the network connect each other. The use of social media in Indonesia itself is increasing very rapidly along with the development of the digital world. Apart from its communication and interaction functions, social media is also often used for economic activities such as selling products or services, campaign activities or even carrying out promotions, whether product or personal.

Personal website

Personal website or blog is a home built in the digital world. As a lecturer, a personal website can be an alternative for carrying out personal branding. All matters related to education, teaching, research, scientific work and community service activities can be stored on a personal website and can be presented to every visitor who visits the website.

3. Methods, Data, and Analysis

The type of research in this research is Explorative Research with a qualitative approach. Exploratory research is research that aims to develop new knowledge or conjectures and to provide direction for further research (Kuncoro, 2014). The location of this research was Department of Business Administration at State Polytechnic of Malang. The population in this study were lecturers in the Department of Business Administration at State Polytechnic of Malang. The sample was determined by non-probability sampling and the selection process used purposive sampling. As informants in the in-depth interview process, the respondents in this study were lecturers that active in TriDharma activities such as education, research and community service; also active in publishing their study research online; as well as being active in posting their activities via social media. This sample criterions were applied with considering to personal branding is a series of activities that collaborate knowledge and technology in forming a unique positive self-image. Besides, lecturer were able to formed faculty branding to increase the bargaining value of higher education institutions in society. These sample criteria were applied to lecturers in the D4 Marketing Study Program, D3 Business Administration Study Program, English Language Study Program and Additional Study Programs (Archivist and Travel Business). Based on these various filters, a sample of 10 lecturers was found.

The independent variable studied in this research is personal branding of lecturers while the dependent variable is faculty branding. The personal branding variable in this study adopts the concept from Fitriana (2022) that lecturer is a profession that is required to maintain the image of educational institutions through publicity of educational activities and community service. The Lecturers' personal branding process through seven activities including social interaction, image

building, joining the academic community, filling positions outside the main campus, improving learning, creating mastery classes and promoting products that intellectual property. The dependent variable in this study is Faculty Branding that measured from Nguyen et al., (2021) which states that the lecturers must capable to create learning media, being able to disseminate research results, having the ability to network widely with the community, being able to operate communication devices and at the same time being able to create digital-based learning media. These five elements were the assessment points of faculty branding.

Our data were analyzed by data triangulation methods, which combined research results with expert opinions and previous empirical studies (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). The purpose of data triangulation is to equate perceptions of whether the research results and the opinions of other experts have led to the same conclusions (Heale & Forbes, 2013). In this study, Mr. Fathurrahman as a computer lecturer in the business administration department at State Polytechnic of Malang was appointed as an expert who was asked for his opinion on the phenomenon of lecturer branding on social media in supporting faculty branding. The following is a chart regarding the data triangulation process which could be seen in Figure 1.

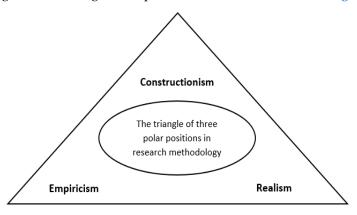


Figure 1. Triangulation data processes Source: Olsen (2014)

4. Results

The Business Administration program at State Polytechnic of Malang produces graduates of applied science in the field of marketing management which includes planning, program implementation and evaluation of technology-based marketing programs with a technopreneur character, quality conscious with strong competitive advantages and also have a professional ethics. Researchers observed ten (10) Instagram account owners from lecturers of the Business Administration Department of the State Polytechnic of Malang. The following are details of the lecturer's Instagram account in Table 1.

Table 1Descriptive Analysis

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Department	Gender	Education Level	Instagram Account
Tourism Travel Business	Male	Doctoral	@helmyabdul
Business Administration	Female	Doctoral	@trievelina
Business Administration	Female	Master	@ayusulasari
Business Administration	Female	Master	@ayufebrianti15
Business Administration	Male	Master	@mboisiyah
English Department	Female	Doctoral	@hildacahyani
English Department	Female	Master	@noveririet
English Department	Female	Doctoral	@marianahoesny
English Department	Male	Doctoral	@sugenghari123
English Department	Male	Doctoral	@penaklausa

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Based on the initial data that has been collected from Table 1 it is known that in the context of lecturers in the Department of Business Administration who actively use social media, the majority come from the English language study program and the business administration program. Then for the classification of respondents based on gender, the majority of respondents are female lecturers (60%). Furthermore, for the classification of lecturers based on their latest education, the majority of research respondents have earned a Doctoral degree (60%).

The next step taken is for researchers to make observations using research guidelines that have been prepared previously with the results presented in Table 2.

Table 2Observation result from 10 Instagram accounts

Item		Observation Results (Respondent)								
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
- Conduct open interactions with stakeholders, audiences, trained instructors in networking with professionals either through in-person	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
 meetings or through online meetings. Positive image building of lecturers both during active learning and when outside the campus environment. Connecting with the academic 	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
community such as attending symposiums, scientific seminars and conferences	V	V	V	V	X	V	V	V	V	V
 Expanding the scope of activities by filling positions outside the campus environment. 	Χ	X	X	V	Х	X	Х	X	V	V
 Improve learning methods, training and online learning. 	X	V	Χ	V	V	V	V	X	V	V
 Create training classes in accordance with areas of expertise and knowledge. 	X	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
 Promoting products or intellectual property. 	V	V	V	Χ	V	X	V	V	V	V
 Lecturers are able to create e-learning- based learning tools. 	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Lecturers are able to publish scientific work through reputable journal portals.Lecturers are able to build a network of	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
friends and build a positive image through social media that is widely used by the public.	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
 Lecturers are able to operate digital communication media to facilitate the communication process both to students and to colleagues. 	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
 Lecturers are able to create and operate blogs or websites as a means of disseminating information related to learning activities. 	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V

5. Discussion

Based on the observation data, it can be summarized that ten lecturers of the Business Administration Department of the State Polytechnic of Malang have used Instagram social media accounts as a medium that displays the personal branding process as a lecturer. All of respondents had been able to uploaded posts about campus cooperation, campus marketization and also creating mastery classes through Instagram. The branding of the Business Administration Department at State Polytechnic of Malang as a campus that excels in business is also aligned with the content of the research respondents' uploads which aim to increase the reputation of the campus among the general public in the scope of social media friendships. Furthermore, the results of the research findings were consulted with a Computer Expert opinions. These points including: (a) Suitability of lecturer posts with development/cooperation/marketization activities of the Business Administration Program, State Polytechnic of Malang with stakeholders; (b) Appropriateness of lecturers' posts regarding to their participation in scientific activities; (c) Appropriateness of lecturers' posts regarding to learning conditions in class; (d) Suitability of lecturers; posts regarding to provide educational contents.

The ten Instagram accounts of the research respondents will be assessed based on these four criteria with reference to each Instagram account having uploads/posts about the criteria in question. For instagram accounts that have the intended upload content, a checklist mark (V) will be given and if the account does not have the upload content, the assessment points will be crossed (X). The assessment results can be seen in the Table 3.

Table 3Assessment from computer expert

Resp.	Instagram Account	Grading					
		Point A	Point B	Point C	Point D		
1	@helmyabdul	V	Х	V	V		
2	@trievelina	V	V	V	V		
3	@ayusulasari	V	V	V	V		
4	@ayufebrianti15	V	V	X	V		
5	@mboisiyah	X	X	X	V		
6	@hildacahyani	V	V	V	V		
7	@noveririet	V	V	V	V		
8	@marianahoesny	V	X	X	V		
9	@sugenghari123	V	V	V	V		
10	@penaklausa	V	V	V	V		

Referring to the Table 3, it is known that not all points of the assessment criteria could be fulfilled by lecturers as research respondents. such as the @mboisiyah account which is only devoted to providing mastery classes and educational content, then the @marianahoesny account which is devoted to digital literacy-based major development activities. For several other respondents, the average thing is the availability of uploads/posts that comply with the four assessment criteria proposed as assessment material by computer experts. It can be concluded that not all criteria were fully met, the ten research respondents have attempted to maximize the potential of Instagram social media as a tool for knowledge dissemination and also faculty branding so that it can have an impact on improving the image of the Business Administration Program, State Polytechnic of Malang as a capable faculty.

The findings in this research are in line with research that conducted by Fitriana (2022) in the personal branding process, a lecturer is expected to be able to create knowledge, build trust, create a reputation and influence perceptions. Through the Instagram social media application, all research respondents were able to upload knowledge-based content which can also increase trust, perception and reputation as indicated by the large number of viewers and followers on

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the Instagram account so that it has a big impact on the information dissemination process which can also strengthen reputation of the Department of Business Administration, State Polytechnic of Malang

Furthermore, the results of this research are also in line with the findings published by Nguyen et al. (2021) that the determination of a University's branding can be influenced by activities that build dynamic capacity in facing radical change as well as building an image through social media which is used to shape positive perceptions of lecturers such as publications on teaching activities, product publications and scientific network publications. From the results of observations, ten research respondents had uploads/posts that took part in scientific activities such as research conferences which aimed to update or disseminate research results both nationally and internationally. Apart from that, the posting of photos accompanied by special tweets/frames indicating participation in a community also indicates that the lecturer is able to integrate himself with the scientific community in forming a network (Eldegwy et al., 2018). Then, a post showing the publication of entrepreneurial products made by student's shows that there is synchronization with the entrepreneurship program initiated by the study program. This indicates that universities that have business-oriented faculties/departments support the activities of students who carry out entrepreneurial activities (Frandsen & Huzzard, 2021).

Then, the results of this research are also in line with research by Khrulyov & Khrulyova (2020) that in the personal branding process for lecturers there are various steps taken, including opening interactions with various stakeholders, expanding the scope of external activities, improving learning methods, creating mastery classes, promoting products, goods or intellectual property as well as building networks with the scientific community. From the research results, it is known that on every social media account of the respondents studied there were posts about product promotions produced by student collaboration as well as posts related to the scientific community. There are also lecturer social media accounts that promote mastery classes, such as the @mboisiyah account (hypnotherapy class) and the @marianahoesny account (intensive novel writing class). Through observations, the majority of research respondents also expanded the scope of collaboration with stakeholders, such as the @hildacahyani account which uploaded Polinema's collaboration with Bank BTN regarding new student admissions as well as the @ayusulasari account which showed collaboration between the Polinema Entrepreneurship Unit and the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Laboratory from the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, University of Brawijaya. The various efforts made by the lecturer reflect personal branding which has an impact on increasing the reputation of the Department of Business Administration, State Polytechnic of Malang

Finally, the results of this research are also in line with research by Frandsen et al. (2018) that the personal branding process for lecturers related to improving faculty reputation can be carried out by marketizing higher education and creating a sense of belonging among students and the academic community. In the research results, it was found that the majority of research respondents marketed higher education by uploading brochures related to registration for new students and posters related to scientific activities in the Business Administration Program, State Polytechnic of Malang as listed on the Instagram account @helmyabdul and on the account @hildacahyani. Apart from that, the existence of a sense of belonging is also demonstrated by the Instagram account @noveririet and the account @penaklausa that to build bonds between students and lecturers, it is necessary to publish efforts about togetherness in class so that these accounts contain uploads of class photos. These two things show that the personal branding process through marketization and a sense of belonging is relevant as an effort to improve the reputation of the Business Administration Program, State Polytechnic of Malang.

The results of this research provide a holistic understanding of the theory proposed in the research. In general, the results of this research can support the theory put forward by

Rauschnabel et al. (2016) and Atmaja & Budi (2016) when lecturers from a business school-based higher education institution are able to carry out personal branding both from an educational perspective, research or service or various positive activities from a lecturer, this can boost the reputation of a business college. A lecturer is the spearhead of a university, especially a business school (Bauer et al., 2020). From the results of this research, it appears that all research respondents are able to carry out personal branding through their respective Instagram accounts by uploading educational content and content that is self-development for lecturers such as teaching processes, research and community service. These various uploads are able to reflect the personal branding process as an effort to introduce academic life to social media followers, the majority of whom are the general public and students (Smørvik & Vespestad, 2020). The personal branding process is in line with the branding of the Department of Business Administration, State Polytechnic of Malang, namely as a superior vocational study program in the field of Business Administration in global competition. Spry et al. (2020) revealed that the reputation of a university is very dependent on the branding process carried out at the faculty/department level. Then, the branding process in departments is largely determined by the various programs carried out by lecturers and students which are closely related to the style of the faculty (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2022). The existence of an interrelated branding process between the faculty and the lecturer concerned (co-creating brand) creates a sense of professionalism among the public (Rutter et al., 2016). Business Department at State Polytechnic of Malang is depicted as a productive business school.

There are several practical implications that can arise in connection with the results of the study. The first implication is that strong personal branding of lecturers through social media can help improve the image and reputation of the faculty. Lecturers who are active and influential on social media can attract the attention of prospective students, alumni, and other stakeholders. They can showcase their expertise, research and achievements, which in turn can increase positive perceptions of the faculty as a whole. Lecturers who successfully build strong personal branding on social media can become important influences in their respective industries. They can become resource persons or recognized experts in specific fields, which can enhance the faculty's reputation as a center of quality education that is relevant to the world of work. Prospective students tend to look for faculties that have a good reputation and influential lecturers. Lecturers who have strong personal branding on social media can attract prospective students and portray the faculty as an attractive place to study. This can increase the number of applicants and improve the quality of students admitted. Personal branding of lecturers through social media can help increase the visibility of faculty among a wider audience. Relevant and engaging content shared by lecturers can be seen and shared by people outside the academic community, including the media, industry and the general public. This can provide greater exposure for the faculty and help expand its reach and impact. Strong personal branding of lecturers can open doors for collaboration and partnerships with other institutions or organizations. Lecturers who are recognized in their field and have influence on social media can attract the attention of external parties who are interested in working together. These partnerships can benefit the faculty in terms of research, curriculum development, internship opportunities, or funding.

This research has a number of limitations. The first limitation is regarding the scope of the discussion only focuses on Lecturers of the Business Administration Program of State Polytechnic of Malang who actively upload content on Instagram social media which can reflect personal branding in supporting the improvement of the department's reputation. The results of this study cannot be generalized to other research objects and units of analysis because each faculty has different branding and diverse lecturer characteristics. Then the second limitation is regarding the assessment of personal branding by referring to various types of uploads, especially on Instagram social media. It should be noted that personal branding is not only done through Instagram social media but can be done on other media such as YouTube and websites, but

researchers take the limitation of Instagram social media because until now the media most frequently accessed by the millennial generation is Instagram so that the personal branding process tested is only through the application.

6. Conclusion

Through the research that has been carried out, it is concluded that the ten research respondents have attempted to maximize the potential of Instagram social media which is used as a tool for knowledge dissemination and campus marketization so that it can have an impact on improving the image of the Malang State Polytechnic Business Administration Department as a faculty capable of facing global competition. Then, the branding process in departments is largely determined by the various programs carried out by lecturers and students which are closely related to the style of the faculty. The existence of an interrelated branding process between the faculty and the lecturer concerned (co-creating brand) creates a sense of professionalism among the lay public so that in the context of this research the Department of Business Administration at the Malang State Polytechnic is depicted as a productive business style department.

Recommendations for lecturers in the Business Administration Program at State Polytechnic of Malang include optimizing the use of Instagram for personal branding. Collaborative engagement in branding activities by lecturers and the entire academic community can significantly elevate the campus reputation, given the widespread dissemination of lecturers' activities. Future research avenues may involve expanding branding efforts beyond individual faculty to encompass university branding. It is suggested that the evaluation of the branding process goes beyond content analysis of social media posts and incorporates metrics such as the number of followers actively engaging with the account. This approach ensures a seamless connection between individual personalities and the overarching formation of a university brand.

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