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Hiteshwari Jadeja
Research Scholar, C.U. Shah
University Asst. Professor,
Marwadi Education
Foundation's Group of
Institutions, Rajkot, Gujarat,
India.

Dr. AN Sanghvi
Research Supervisor, C.U.
Shah University Director-
Development, C.U. Shah
College of Engineering &
Technology, Wadhwan,
Gujarat, India.

A meta-analytic examination of occupational stress and its related factors among university teachers

Hiteshwari Jadeja and Dr. AN Sanghvi

Abstract

Stress has been widely recognized in the literatures across the globe. With the intention to see the sights of basic stress and stressors among the university teachers, this investigation also examine the relationship between selected demographic variables and Principal Component of Sources affecting Stress. It is based on empirical research conducted on 183 university teachers of Gujarat that are providing education in various disciplines using convenience sampling method. Pertinent data was collected through questionnaires based on close-ended questions. Factor Analysis was performed in SPSS to identify the major factors affecting the stress level of the teachers and Pearson Correlation was applied to understand the relation between age, gender, educational qualification, work experience, designation and sources of stress. The results obtained from the data revealed that unfavorable personal factors and bureaucratic procedures hinder the performance of teachers. Also the clarity of job role and the authority to handle the situations is very essential for a well performed duty. It was also found that Age and Work experience contributes towards the feeling of stress while no difference was found among education and the gender of the teachers. Thus, it can be summarized that cautious and well-planned application, strategies in work, role clarity, and training and development can be rewarding for employees and organizations both.

Keywords: Occupational stress; stressors; job satisfaction; university teachers

1. Introduction

The Stress among working people is significantly increasing worldwide and education sector is no exception. Stress at work place has become an integral part of everyday life and is referred as 'worldwide epidemic' by the World Health Organization. It is experienced when a person is unable to cope with the increasing demand at the workplace and finds everything difficult to manage.

According to the Miyo Clinic, Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the ever-increasing demands of life. Certain level of stress is considered useful for the individual but if it exceeds the normal level it can have adverse effects on the mind and the body and ultimately disturbs the work and family life. It can also lead to physical problems like headaches, an upset stomach, back pain, sleeping disorder, blood pressure and heart rates also if not controlled. It can make a person moody, tensed, or depressed affecting the relationships at work place and home. Considering this, the present article identifies the major sources affecting the level of stress among the university teachers and its relation with various demographic variables.

2. Objectives of study

This study was conducted to identify the major factors related to the stressful conditions of the job among the university teachers. It also tried to examine the relationship between selected demographic variables like Age, Gender, Educational Qualification, Work Experience and Designation and Principal Component of Sources affecting Stress.

3. Hypothesis of study

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Age and Principal component of Sources affecting Stress

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Gender and Principal component of Sources affecting Stress

Correspondence
Hiteshwari Jadeja
Research Scholar, C.U. Shah
University Asst. Professor,
Marwadi Education
Foundation's Group of
Institutions, Rajkot, Gujarat,
India.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Educational Qualification and Principal component of Sources affecting Stress

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Work Experience and Principal component of Sources affecting Stress

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Designation and Principal component of Sources affecting Stress

4. Research methodology

The study aimed at identifying the factors that are remarkably considered by the university teachers in experiencing stress. The data was collected for the purpose of pilot study for thesis. The data collection was done through primary and secondary sources. Past literatures were referred to identify the factors that have a significant influence on the stress levels among the university teachers. On basis of a structured questionnaire with five point likert scale, opinions of respondents were taken. Responses have been gathered from 183 respondents using convenience sampling method. Factor analysis was applied with SPSS to identify principal component among the 47 variables under study. Pearson Correlation was performed to identify relationship between selected demographic variables and the principal components of sources affecting stress, identified via factor analysis.

5. literature review

Khan, A., Yusoffa, R. B. M., & Azam, K. (2014) [8]. in the research “Factors of Job Stress among university teachers in Pakistan: A conceptual review” reviewed the different factors of Job Stress among university teachers in Pakistan. A non-systematic narrative review technique was used for the same. And with the help of existing literature, nine potential factors of Job stress was found out which includes Social Status of Teacher in Pakistan, The Problem of Work Overload, Demanding Students and Parents, Job Insecurity, Ever Changing Educational Policies, External Political Influence on Universities, Problem of Performance Appraisal, Absence of Training and Resource Constraints. Researcher suggested that, stress problems should be addressed both at individual and institutional levels.

Finocchiaro, J., & Moore, K. A. (2013) [6]. in their study “Stress and coping: The role of mindfulness” aimed at investigating the relationship between mindfulness and levels of perceived stress and use of various coping strategies. A snowball sampling as used to select the 112 participants who filled the online questionnaire. Various scales like The Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) (Brown & Ryan, 2003), The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Roth & Cohen, 1986), The Deakin Coping Scale (DCS) (Moore, 2003) were used to explore the relationship between mindfulness, perception of stress and coping strategies. The results indicated that the scores of males and females were much similar. The result of Pearson Correlation suggested that mindfulness was negatively related to stress and avoidance coping and was positively related to appraisal of the demand.

Devadoss, V., & Minnie, J. B. (2013) [5] in the study “A Study of work related stress factors affecting work life balance using combined overlap block fuzzy cognitive mapping” opines that work related factors that creates stress affect the Work-life harmony and work efficiency of every individual. This study was conducted with aim of identifying work related stressors that cause the work life imbalance and affects the work life harmony among the employees. The opinions were analyzed

using Combined Overlap Block Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping (COBFCM) model to find out the work related stressor. The result showed that because of distant or unreachable supervisors, employees feel lot of pressure due to excessive work load, conflicting job demands, lack of individual autonomy, cooperation in decision making, poor performance from co-workers and long working time. Thus under such circumstances where supervisor is unreachable, employees cannot show their dissatisfaction nor complain about work load. Even job demands cannot be clarified proving it as the major stressor affecting work life harmony.

Sarwar, A. (2013) [12] in the study “Stress and Family Imbalance Comparative Study of Manufacturing and Services Sector in Pakistan”, aimed at understanding the causes and consequences of stress and its impact on the individual and family life of the employees. The Questionnaire was distributed and collected from 686 respondents. Various statistical techniques like T-test, Anova, Manova, Corelation, Regression, Structured Equation modelling (SEM) was applied to reach the conclusion. It was found that level of stress along with its impact on individuals and their families is different for employees in manufacturing and services sectors. Also the level of stress was found different among the different level of managers due to their level of responsibility and other parameters. It was found obvious from the study that service sector has more stress compared to the manufacturing sector.

Arora, S. (2013) [2] in the study “Occupational stress and health among teacher educators” aimed at analysis the occupational stress among the teacher educators of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur District of Punjab and its effects on their health in relation to their gender and marital status. Data under study was collected from 206 teachers and Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava & Singh (1981) was used for the same. To reach to the conclusion, researcher applied various statistical measures like mean, standard deviation, t test and coefficient of correlation. After the due analysis it was found that, there exists a positive relationship between occupational stress and health of teacher educators and differences were found among teacher educators in terms of their gender and marital status. In order to reduce the level of stress, researchers suggested measures like providing congenial working environments, less work load, job securities, maximum provision of facilities, etc.

Aftab, M., & Khatoon, T. (2012) [1] in their study entitled “Demographic differences and occupational stress of secondary school teachers” examined the occupational stress among secondary school teachers on the basis of various demographic variables like gender, qualification, teaching experience, salary, subjects taught and marital status. Total of 608 teachers from 42 schools of UP were surveyed. Teachers Occupational Stress Scale was used to collect the data and t-test and F-test was applied to reach to the conclusions. It was found that half of the teachers are in less stressed group and male teachers experience more stress than female teachers. Trained graduate teachers experienced higher stress compared to untrained and post graduate teachers. Even no significant differences were found among occupational stress and salary, marital status as well as subject taught. The researcher suggested that regular assessment should be made among the teachers in order to avoid the stressful situations.

With the aim of identifying the various aspects of work life among the teachers of the colleges, Kumar, D., & Deo, J. M. (2011) [9] conducted a study on “Stress and work life of college teachers”. It was found that junior college teachers

experience more level of stress compared to senior teachers due to role overload, role stagnation, and interpersonal relation. Also the female teachers experience high role experience stress and inter role distance stress compared to male teachers.

Gardner, S. (2010)^[7] in the paper “Stress among Prospective Teachers: A Review of the Literature” reviews the psychological distress among university students, teachers and student teachers with brief idea about stress management. According to the Global Burden of Disease study (Murray & Lopez, 1997), it was predicted that depression would be second most affecting disease after heart disease which indicated that steps should be taken to control the hazards of such situation occurring in the future. According to the reports of the 2004-05 Australian National Health Survey, the increases in the occurrence of psychological distress were found among people in the age group of 18-24 and females aged 35 years and above, particularly among women who were separated. Even the stress level was found comparatively higher in practicing teachers. The researcher reviewed that Psychological distress is associated with anxiety, diminishing performance, lower productivity, suicidal ideation and depression and hence should be addressed immediately. Various stress reduction techniques suggested by researchers over the years include Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Mindfulness techniques and cognitive strategies, relaxation and visualization techniques, exercise & social support and others.

Winefield, A. H., Gillespie, N., Stough, C., Dua, J., Hapuarachchi, J., & Boyd, C. (2003)^[15]. in their study entitled “Occupational Stress in Australian University Staff: Results from a National Survey” aimed at identifying psychological strain and job satisfaction among Australian university staff. There were 8732 respondents from 17 Australian universities. The result showed that Psychological distress was higher in academic than in general staff. But both of them were experiencing more stress than what they used to feel before 5 years and it clearly indicates that there is a mismatch between requirements and ability of the faculties as well as the expectations and the actual involvement of the job. The major reasons of the stress include insufficient funding and resources, work overload, poor management practice, job insecurity, and insufficient recognition and reward.

6. Analysis & results

The data presented in the Table 1 - indicates demographic profile of the respondents under study. The type of institutions fall under the category of Government, Aided and Private. Age analysis of respondents indicates that most of the respondents fall in young age group of 21-30 whereas number of male respondents are higher compared to the female respondents in the survey. Most of the respondents belong to the category of Assistant professor with permanent employment. Also, the majority among them is married which is having a significant impact on the level of stress experienced by them.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

	Type of Institution	Classification	Frequency	Percent
1		Government	17	9.3
		Aided	53	29
		Private	113	61.7
		Unaided	0	0
		Autonomous	0	0
		Total	183	100
2	Age	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		21-30 years	73	39.9
		31-40 years	49	26.8
		41-50 years	42	23
		51-60 years	19	10.4
		60 & above	0	0
		Total	183	100
3	Gender	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		Male	123	67.2
		Female	60	32.8
		Total	183	100
4	Educational Qualification	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		Post Graduate	121	66.1
		Doctorate	55	30.1
		Others	7	3.8
		Total	183	100
5	Nature of Employment	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		Permanent	170	92.9
		Temporary	13	7.1
		Total	183	100
6	Designation	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		Assistant Professor	130	71
		Associate Professor	47	25.7
		Professor	5	2.7
		Others	1	0.5
		Total	183	100
7	Additional Responsibility	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		Dean/Principal	5	2.7
		Deputy Dean/Vice Principal	2	1.1
		HOD	22	12
		Coordinator	62	33.9
		Others	17	9.3

		Not Applicable	75	41
		Total	183	100
8	Work Experience	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		0-5 years	58	31.7
		5-10 years	44	24
		10-15 years	20	10.9
		15 years & above	61	33.3
		Total	183	100
9	Salary drawn annually	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		Less or equal to 1,00,000	9	4.9
		1,00,001 to 5,00,000	66	36.1
		5,00,000 to 10,00,000	61	33.3
		More than 10,00,000	47	25.7
		Total	183	100
10	Marital Status	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		Married	150	82
		Unmarried	32	17.5
		Other	1	0.5
		Total	183	100
11	Number of Children	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		Nil	1	0.5
		One - Two	77	42.1
		Two- Four	104	56.8
		Four & above	1	0.5
		Total	183	100
12	Type of Family	Classification	Frequency	Percent
		Joint	102	55.7
		Nuclear	60	32.8
		Single	21	11.5
		Total	183	100

Source: From analysis of primary data

6.1 KMO and Bartlett's Test

In order to assess the appropriateness of factor analysis, Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) Test is done. The KMO measures the sampling adequacy which should be greater than

0.7 for a satisfactory factor analysis to proceed. In the present analysis, the measure of sample adequacy is 0.785 which is higher than the average of 0.7 and hence the available data is considered reliable for Factor Analysis.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Stressful Conditions of your job

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.785
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	
	Df	
	Sig.	

Principal component analysis (PCA) involves a mathematical procedure for identifying a smaller number of uncorrelated variables, called "principal components", from a large set of

data. The principal component analysis (PCA) was carried out to explore the underlying factors associated with 47 items.

Table 3: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.838	18.803	18.803	8.838	18.803	18.803	3.358	7.144	7.144
2	5.237	11.144	29.947	5.237	11.144	29.947	2.924	6.221	13.365
3	2.506	5.332	35.279	2.506	5.332	35.279	2.744	5.839	19.205
4	2.032	4.324	39.603	2.032	4.324	39.603	2.732	5.814	25.018
5	1.793	3.814	43.417	1.793	3.814	43.417	2.668	5.678	30.696
6	1.530	3.256	46.673	1.530	3.256	46.673	2.418	5.145	35.841
7	1.477	3.142	49.815	1.477	3.142	49.815	2.392	5.088	40.929
8	1.402	2.984	52.799	1.402	2.984	52.799	2.321	4.938	45.867
9	1.273	2.708	55.507	1.273	2.708	55.507	2.258	4.804	50.671
10	1.208	2.570	58.077	1.208	2.570	58.077	2.041	4.343	55.014
11	1.138	2.421	60.498	1.138	2.421	60.498	1.800	3.831	58.845
12	1.015	2.159	62.657	1.015	2.159	62.657	1.792	3.812	62.657

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The 12 factors are extracted from the analysis along with their eigenvalues, the percent of variance attributable to each factor, and the cumulative variance of the factor as shown above (Table 3). The first factor accounts for 18.803% of the

variance, the second factor accounts for 11.144% of the variance, the third factor accounts for 5.332% and so on. The total percentage of the factors extracted is 62.657. All the remaining factors are not significant.

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cumbersome life	.677			-.162	-.180	-.169		.200		-.116		.150
Violate formal process due to group pressure	.638	.149	.135				.189			-.164	.171	.196
Unsatisfactory performance due to workload	.574	.277		-.150	-.148			.195	.167			
Difficulty in implementing new procedures	.519	.173		-.180				.164	.352	.152		.102
Dispose work hurriedly	.496	.394	-.133			.148	.111	.229	.168	.272	-.150	
Unwilling Work	.446		-.160				.329		.379		.127	.198
Ambiguity of scope	.395	.635			-.109	.121			.170		-.118	
Lack of significance by higher authorities	.126	.609		.213	-.186	-.198				.116		.238
Insufficient instructions & facilities	.171	.598	-.140	-.179		.165	.270	.220			.175	
Unclear work and behavior	.119	.518		-.254		-.187	.211	.224	.324	-.100	.301	
No opinion taken in solving problems on own area	.225	.346	-.295			-.259	.256	.256	.233			
Opinions Sought in policy making			.758		.152		-.174			.208	-.230	
Opinion sought in changing working system			.755	.201	.153							
Opinions considered in Recruitment		-.178	.696	.264	.179		.185			.232		.130
Enhanced Social Status			.152	.677	.132	.291	-.149			-.136		-.209
Self-respect	-.207		.150	.598	.357		-.118			.232		
Ample Opportunities	-.299	-.153	.400	.598	.174							.140
No Interference	-.404		.264	.533	.107	.112	.116			.263		.284
Due importance attached to formal procedures	.113	.172		.496	.469	.158	.128	-.168				-.217
Cooperation from colleagues			.181		.744	-.147						.219
Opportunity to develop aptitude	-.155	-.128	.160	.212	.676			-.113		.150		
Existence of cooperation & team spirit	-.365		.168	.197	.581	.216		.154		-.110		
Satisfactory Working conditions	-.234	-.146	.161	.164	.501	.101		-.272	.312	.157	-.173	.155
Colleagues Defame me	.140	.144			-.413		.257	-.161	.401	.214	.276	.241
Greater Responsibility	-.216					.687				.170		
Produce more than usual	.207	.167			-.149	.586			.267	.231	.132	
Greater Responsibility			.175	.232	.105	.567	-.224	.299				.103
Clear Objectives	-.104	-.196	.235	.216		.525	-.136		-.299	-.197	-.134	
Responsibility of Future	.163	-.377	-.116	.252		.519		.150	.205	.212		
Contradictory Instructions	.119	.114					.767			-.162	.105	
Lack of Information		.148					.738	.194	.174			
Insufficient Time	.214	.116		-.193	-.154		.154	.678			-.110	.169
Abundant Work		.168	.104			.175		.641	.278		.170	
Working under Tensed circumstances	.328		-.125	-.126			.199	.634			.174	
Doing others work	.182	.139	.223		.133					.665		.241
Monotonous Assignments		.227		.226			.282	.208	.533			-.179
Lack of Promotion opportunities		.331		-.281	-.201	.214	.179	.144	.378	-.315		.244
Lack of Rewards				-.108	.202	.153	.225	.192	.321	.296		.293
Instructions Followed		.103	.217		.213	.107	-.188			.653		.198
Suggestions Implemented			.361	.148		.251		.116		.630	-.172	
Risky Assignments	.151	.455				.118	.230	.300	.185	.456	.177	
Working with preferred personnel		.163	.332				.157	.117	-.154			-.683
Lack of Time	.326	.206		-.160			.134	.245		.162	.523	
Difficulty in teaching		.237					.290	.162			.518	.143
Co-operation Sorted			.140			.129	-.226	.110	.229	.143	.110	.664
Frustrations	.338						-.142	.294		-.170		.616
Insufficient Salary	.181	.339		-.353	.177		-.118	.119	.103		.130	.509

Source: SPSS

The table above shows the loadings of the variables on the twelve factors extracted. The higher the absolute value of the loading, the more the factor contributes to the variable. The idea of rotation is to reduce the number factors on which the variables under investigation have high loadings. Rotation does not actually change anything but makes the interpretation of the analysis easier.

Following items are extracted:

Factor 1: First factor consist of four components labelled as “Unfavorable personal factor” which have been categorized as cumbersome life. 677, Violate formal process due to group pressure. 638, unsatisfactory performance due to workload. 574 and Difficulty in implementing new procedures. 519

Factor 2: Second factor encompasses four variables as follows: Ambiguity of scope. 635, Lack of significance by higher authorities. 609, insufficient instructions & facilities. 598 and unclear work and behavior. 518. It is labelled as “Professional Ambiguity”

Factor 3: Third factor named as “Upkeep My Honour” extracted the variables categorized as Opinions Sought in policy making. 758, Opinion sought in changing working system. 755 and Opinions considered in Recruitment. 696

Factor 4: Fourth factor consist of four components which have been categorized as “Independence”. The factor loads for those variables are Enhanced Social Status. 677, Self-respect. 598, Ample Opportunities. 598 and No Interference. 533

Factor 5: Commonly named as “Cooperation from others”, this factor extracted four variables as follows: Cooperation from colleagues. 744, Existence of cooperation & team spirit. 676, Opportunity to develop aptitude. 581 and Satisfactory Working conditions. 501

Factor6: This factor consist of five components which have been categorized as Greater Responsibility. 687, Produce more than usual. 586, Greater Responsibility. 567, Clear Objectives. 525 and Responsibility of Future. 519. It is labelled as “Enhanced Responsibility”

Factor 7: Two variables commonly known as “Vagueness” were extracted from this factor with factor loadings Contradictory Instructions. 767, Lack of Information. 738

Factor 8: Eighth factor encompasses four variables as follows: Insufficient Time. 678, Abundant Work. 641 and Working under Tensed circumstances. 634. It is commonly known as “Unreasonable Workload”

Factor 9: This factor includes variables like Doing others work. 665 and Monotonous Assignments. 533 and is labelled as “Compulsory work”

Factor 10: Tenth factor encompasses two variables and is named as “Enhanced Self-esteem”. The factor loads for the variables are: Instructions Followed. 653 and Suggestions Implemented. 630

Factor 11: Eleventh factor consist of two components which have been classified as “Difficulty in Teaching” with factor load Lack of Time. 523 and Difficulty in teaching. 518

Factor 12: The twelfth factor includes the variables like Co-operation Sorted. 664, Frustrations. 616 and Insufficient Salary. 509. It is named as “Dissatisfactory Conditions”

6.2 Correlation Analysis

This study tried to investigate the relationship between Principal Components of Sources affecting Stress and selected demographic variables. Five hypotheses were designed to test the hypotheses using Pearson test.

Table 5: Correlation between Stressful conditions of Job and selected demographic variables

Sr. No.	Variables	Sig	R	Remarks	Hypothesis
1	Age	0.001	-0.25	Relationship is significant & there exists Negative Correlation	Null Hyothesis Rejected
2	Gender	0.775	-0.021	No significant Relationship	Null Hyothesis failed to Reject
3	Educational Qualification	0.174	-0.101	No significant Relationship	Null Hyothesis failed to Reject
4	Work Experience	0.004	-0.213	Relationship is significant & there exists Negative Correlation	Null Hyothesis Rejected
5	Designation	0.007	-0.199	No significant Relationship	Null Hyothesis failed to Reject

Source: From analysis of primary data

H1: Age and Stressful conditions of Job

Age is found to be negatively correlated at significance level of PC = -0.250, Sig. =0.001, $p<0.05$ and hence it's proved that there exists a significant relationship between Age & Principal Components of Sources affecting stress.

H2: Gender and Stressful conditions of Job

No significant relation is found between Gender and Stressful conditions of Job (PC = -0.021, Sig. =0.775, $p<0.05$).

H3: Educational Qualification and Stressful conditions of Job

No significant relation is found between Educational Qualification and Stressful conditions of Job (PC = -0.101, Sig. =0.174, $p<0.05$).

H4: Work Experience and Stressful conditions of Job

Work Experience is found to be negatively correlated at significance level of PC = -0.213, Sig. =0.004, $p<0.05$ and hence it's proved that there exists a significant relationship between Work Experience & Principal Components of Sources affecting stress

H5: Designation and Stressful conditions of Job

No significant relation is found between Gender and Stressful conditions of Job (PC = -0.199, Sig. =0.007, $p<0.05$).

7. Conclusion

Stress is a significantly growing concern in many workplaces today. The objective of this paper was to identify the major conditions affecting the stress level of the university teachers. The result showed that unfavorable personal factors and

bureaucratic procedures hinder the teachers to perform their role independently. Also the clarity of job role and the authority to handle the situations is must for a well performed duty. These things contribute significantly in the level of stress experienced by the teachers. Age and Work experience contributes towards the feeling of stress. The reasons of stress changes as the person grows older and gains more experience while no difference was found among education and the gender of the teachers. The influence of variables such as role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group or political pressure, responsibility, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relation, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working condition, and unprofitability to level of stress has its own significance. The findings of this study thus might help, in promoting a healthy working environment. Cautious and well-planned application strategies in work, role clarity, and training and development can provide a fruitful result to the employees and organizations both.

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