# CHURCH MARKETING: THE EFFECT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ON CHURCH GROWTH IN MANADO

# PEMASARAN GEREJA: PENGARUH STRATEGI PROMOSIONAL TERHADAP PERTUMBUHAN GEREJA DI MANADO

by:

<sup>1</sup>Kitara Runtuwene <sup>2</sup>S.L.H.V. Joyce Lapian <sup>3</sup>Merinda Pandowo

<sup>123</sup>Faculty of Economics and Business, International Business Administration, Management Program, Sam Ratulangi University

#### E-mail:

1 kruntuwene@yahoo.com 2 lapianjoyce@gmail.com 3 iinpan@yahoo.com

Abstract: The common concept of marketing that is typically using by the profit organization, has also been applied to the nonprofit organization. In North Sulawesi specifically in Manado, one of the nonprofit organizations that started to apply a business-like technique by the promotional strategies is church organization, following by a gradual development and competition in attracting more congregations. This study aims to test the effect of promotional strategies which are advertising, personal selling, public relation/publicity, direct marketing and sales promotion towards church growth. This research applied causal type with quantitative research method. Population of this study are 300 respondents from Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM), Gereja Bethany Indonesia and Gereja Tiberias Indonesia. Findings indicate that advertising, personal selling and sales promotion are significantly influence the church growth. Meanwhile, public relation and direct marketing are insignificantly influence the church growth. As the recommendations, church needs to empower the existing promotional resources for the better way of communicating and attracting people to get involved in church activities.

Keywords: church marketing, promotional strategies, church growth

Abstrak: Konsep umum pemasaran yang biasanya digunakan oleh organizasi laba, telah diaplikasikan pada organizasi nirlaba. Di Sulawesi Utara khususnya di Manado, salah satu organizasi nirlaba yang mulai menerapkan teknik bisnis melalui strategi promosional adalah organisasi, diikuti dengan peningkatan perkembangan dan kompetisi dalam menarik jemaat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh dari strategi promosional diantaranya periklanan, penjualan pribadi, hubungan masyarakat/publisitas, pemasaran langsung dan promosi penjualan terhadap pertumbuhan gereja. Penelitian ini menerapkan tipe kausal dengan metode penelitian kuantitatif. Populasi dari penelitian ini sebnyak 300 responden yang berasal dari Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM), Gereja Bethany Indonesia dan Gereja Tiberias Indonesia. Hasil mengindikasikan bahwa periklanan, penjulan pribadi dan promosi penjualan berdampak signifikan pada pertumbuhan gereja. Sementara itu, hubungan masyarakat/publisitas dan pemasaran langsung tidak berdampak signifikan pada pertumbuhan gereja. Sebagai rekomendasi, organizasi gereja perlu untuk menciptakan pendekatan mengingat masyarakat sekarang yang berkaitan erat dengan trend an teknologi, serta memberdayakan sumber promosi yang telah ada untuk cara komunikasi yang lebih baik dan menarik orang untuk ikut mrngambil bagian dalam aktifitas gereja.

Kata Kunci: pemasaran gereja, strategi promosional, pertumbuhan gerej

#### INTRODUCTION

## Research Background

The people of today's society is changing, and so is the world. Changes occur daily and rather people are being aware about it or not, those transformations cover the entire aspects that recently happen. Over the past few decades, the concept of marketing has been evolved and used by the organizations in facing the external forces. Nowadays, the implementation of marketing is no longer limited in business or governmental sectors but now to the non-profit sector which based on the social activities. It becomes apparent that non-profit organizations are extensively engaged the marketing techniques even if they are being unware of it. Thereby, marketing plays a very important role in the lives of non-profit organizations in order to survive and strengthen their contribution to provide the social values, since marketing is not always about sales, it is about understanding the community and using the availability of tools to speak more effectively.

The main challenge in non-profit organization is in receiving community's attentions. With the development of non-profit organizations amount, will lead to the competition among organizations. Although the competition would be an uncomfortable concept in non-profit organization, marketing approach that has been adopted by for-profit sectors could be relevant in social based organizations. In Indonesia, non-profit organizations have grown quite rapidly. Christian protestant has become predominant religion in North Sulawesi. The challenges can affect the church organizations to provide the congregations' spiritual needs, psychological needs and trust towards the church organization that has been weaken recently.

Promotional strategies as one of the marketing activities is suitable with the basic components of church organizations in making a long-term relationship with the congregation. Marketing especially this strategy would definitely not be for personal gain but to inform the existence of the church itself and its values within the community. Promotional strategies in church is about to do an activity of social transaction where proceed the feedback. From this stage, the church organizations will be able to seek for what kind of opportunities that has been missed, optimizing the sources available, fixing the weaknesses and prevent the damage that would probably happen during the marketing activities.

# Research Objectives

The objectives of this research:

- 1. To analyze the simulants influence of promotional strategies on church growth in Manado.
- 2. To analyze the partial influence of advertising on church growth in Manado.
- 3. To analyze the partial influence of personal selling on church growth in Manado.
- 4. To analyze the partial influence of public relation on church growth in Manado.
- 5. To analyze the partial influence of direct marketing on church growth in Manado.
- 6. To analyze the partial influence of sales promotion on church growth in Manado.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Marketing

Marketing is a managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). According to American Marketing Association (2007), marketing is the activities, a series of institutions and process of creating, communicating, delivering and offerings that created value to the consumers, clients, partners also society.

# Non-profit organization

Nonprofit organization is an organization that principally grounded to support an issue or subject in public attention a non-commercial purpose, without any concern for monetary matters (Komang, 2008). Non-profit organizations stand for realizing changes in individuals or communities, while profit organizations as the name implies clearly aimed at making a profit.

#### **Promotional Strategies**

The promotion element of the marketing mix of the organization includes all the relevant "activities, materials, and media used by a marketer to inform and remind prospective of the customers about a particular product offering" (Connett, 2004). The goal of promotion is to persuade the target consumer to buy or consume the product offering

#### Advertising

Advertising defined as a paid form of non-personal communication about companies and their products/services (Belch and Belch, 2001). This best-know form of promotion includes a wide range of advertising media such as broadcast with TV or radio and many other types of outdoor media such as posters, billboards and electronic message boards (Lovelock and Gummesson, 2011).

#### Personal Selling

Personal selling according to Morissan (2013) is the activity on person-to-person communication. Personal selling takes place when marketer or sales representative sells products or services to clients. This tool strengthening the relationship between the organization and its end-users because they interact directly to each other. On the other hand, this is the promotional tools that is mostly suitable for unsought goods and services where customers are not aware of their needs.

# **Public Relation/Publicity**

Public Relations is the shape of communication that occur in in every type of organization, rather in commercial or non-commercial, government or private. The role of public relation officer is to present the organization in the best light, meaning that the other party can understood about the organization in the best way (Morissan, 2013).

#### **Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing is a promotional tool in which companies communicate directly with their target customers in the attempt to receive a response or generate a transaction (Belch and Belch, 2001). This form of promotion consists of mailings, emails, mail-order catalogs, telemarketing and direct-response ads. Using this tool, companies are required to have a sufficient database of information about customers (Lovelock and Gummesson, 2011).

#### **Sales Promotion**

The purpose of these forms is to generate immediate purchase with customers or increase the volume in each purchase and in frequency of using. Blattberg and Neslin (1990) define a sales promotion as an action-focused marketing event whose purpose is to have a direct impact on the behavior of the firm's customer.

## **Church Growth**

Church is defined as a particular Christian organization with its own building, practice and doctrine. Usually the issue of failure to grow by some churches is based on a number of factors. The first being that attitude contribute greatly to declining size of a church, for small churches have their own view as they look at themselves such as inability to have an effective evangelism program. Growing churches have a positive feeling about their abilities to run a successful outreach program (Ken, 2005).

# **Church Marketing**

Church marketing can be defined as the analysis, planning, and management of voluntary exchange between a church or religious organization and its congregation for the purpose of satisfying the needs of both parties (Steven and Ackerman, 2005). Leathers (1990) proposes that a church offers two levels of 'products'. The first are actual religious activities, such as worship services and bible study groups. The second are perceived 'products', such as a sense of belonging, compassion, purpose, and personal relationship with God—all of which can be categorized as social behavior products.

#### **Previous Research**

Research by Dhliwayo (2013) studied about people's perception of promotional strategies for church growth. It intends to test the impact of such promotions to Pentecostal church growth, as well as the perceptions of costumers towards the church services of African Pentecostal congregation which had a tradition of not promoting church activities. This research was carried out with a sample of respondents was picked from six Masvingo based Pentecostal churches who added up to 140 respondents. The results show that on a general note promotion of church activities has now been accepted as a good and effective strategy for church growth. It was noted that the promotional elements used may not have the same effectiveness in their use but all combined can bring a good result to the church leaders.

A research by Applah, Dwomoh and Kyire (2013) studied about the relationship between church marketing and church growth. It explores the impact of church marketing and its effect on church attendance growth. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of a randomly-drawn sample size of 132 which involves 12 pastors, and 120 members from six charismatic churches. Results from the calculated Pearson correlation indicates that positive relationship exist between 'church promotion' and church attendance growth.

Research about Church Marketing: Strategies for Retaining and Attracting Members by Webb S. et al., (1998), based on the findings from questionnaire of 180 churches in the Midwest that was randomly selected for participation in a mail survey, monthly and weekly newsletters and bulletins are effective in retaining members, whereas radio and yellow page advertisements are effective in attracting members. Ineffective media include television, community cable access and door-to-door canvassing.

## **Conceptual Framework**

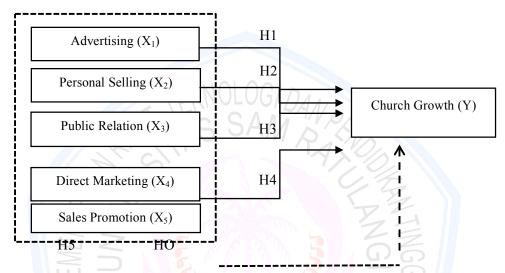


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

#### RESEARCH METHOD

## Research Approach

This research is Causal type of research. This type of research also determines if one variable causes another variable to occur or change. Quantitative data is required in this research which is a research method based on paradigm that used to investigate specific population or samples (Sugiyono, 2013).

## Place and Time of Research

This research conducted in Manado, specifically in *Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM)*, *Gereja Bethany Indonesia* and *Gereja Tiberias* in Manado between April-May 2018.

## **Population and Sample**

The population in this research are the congregations of *Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM)*, *Gereja Bethany Indonesia* and *Gereja Tiberias*. This research is using a Convenience Sampling for gaining information quickly and efficient. The total size is 300 respondents.

#### **Data Collection Method**

There are two main types of data that gathered to construct an appropriate result, which are primary data and secondary data. Secondary data is data collected from several sources such as articles, journals and relevant literature from library and internet. Primary data is the data that collected directly from respondents to address the research problem using questionnaire survey.

#### **Data Analysis Method**

## Validity and Reliability Test

An index of validity shows the degree to which a test measures what it purports to measure, when compared with accepted criteria as the definition of validity by Freeman (2006). According to Urbina (2002),

reliability refers to the consistency of scores obtained by the same persons when they are re-examined with the same test on different occasions, or with different sets of equivalent items, or under other variable examining conditions.

# **Multiple Linear Regression**

Multiple regression analysis is a technique to observed value more than one X to estimate or predict corresponding Y value (Cooper and Schindler, 2001). The equation model of multiple regression analysis which used in this research can formulate as shown as follows:

 $Y = a + {}_{1}x_{1} + {}_{2}x_{2} + {}_{3}x_{3} + {}_{4}x_{4} + {}_{5}x_{5} + e$ 

Description:

Y = Church Growth a = Intercept

 $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5$  = The regression coefficient of each variable

 $X_1$  = Advertisement  $X_2$  = Personal Selling

X<sub>3</sub> = Public Relation/Publicity

 $X_4$  = Direct Marketing  $X_5$  = Sales Promotion

e = Error

# RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Validity and Reliability Result Table 1. Validity Test

		Church Growth	Adv	Personal Selling	PR	Direct Marketing	Sales Promotion
Church	Pearson Correlation	1	.343**	.296**	.294**	.167**	.264**
Growth	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.004	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
Advertising	Pearson Correlation	.343**	1	.347**	.404**	.441**	.222**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
	Pearson Correlation	.296**	.347**	1	.371**	.306**	.374**
Personal	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
Selling	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
Publicity	Pearson Correlation	.294**	.404**	.371**	1	.343**	.392**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
Direct	Pearson Correlation	.167**	.441**	.306**	.343**	1	.370**
Marketing	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
Sales	Pearson Correlation	.264**	.222**	.374**	.392**	.370**	1
Promotion	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300

Source: Data Processed (2018)

Table 1 shows the correlation of variables advertising, personal selling, publicity, direct marketing and sales promotion are greater than 0.113 and below the significance level of 5%. Therefore, the data is considered as valid.

T	able	2.	Relia	bil	itv	<b>Test</b>
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Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Advertising	0.804
Personal Selling	0.801
Publicity	0.788
Direct Marketing	0.744
Sales Promotion	0.754

Source: Data Processed (2018)

Table 2 shows that Cronbach's Alpha of each variables in this research are greater than the acceptance limit of 0.6 and it indicates that the data is acceptable or indicates good internal consistency. Therefore, the research instrument is reliable.

**Testing of Classical Assumptions** 

Table 2. Multicollinearity

Model		Collinearity Statistic			
		Tolerance	VIF		
1	Advertising	708	1.413		
	Personal Selling	C.758	1.319		
	Publicity	05 9.711// 0	1.407		
	Direct Marketing	.715	1.398		
	Sales Promotion	.740	1.350		
a. Dependent	Variable: Church Growth		いた		

Source: Data Processed (2018)

Table 2 shows the tolerance value of variables are more than 0.2 and the VIF value of all variables are less than 10. Meaning that, this research is concluded to be free from multicollinearity.

## Heteroscedasticity

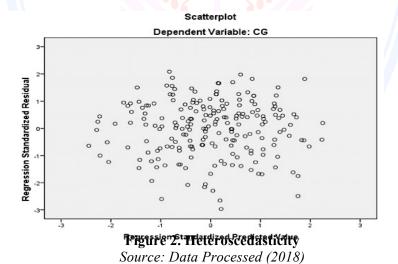
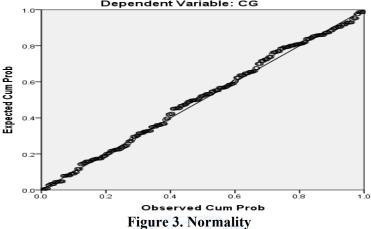


Figure 2 shows that the dots are spreading above and below the number zero (0) in the Y axis, points are not form wavy pattern and there is no other pattern established. This proves that there is no heteroscedasticity in this regression.

#### **Normality**





Source: Data Processed (2018)

Figure 3 shows that the dots are spreading near to the diagonal line and follow the direction of the diagonal line. Therefore, the normality test is accepted which means the data of this research is normally distributed.

# **Multiple Regression Analysis**

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

			ndardized efficients	Standardized Coefficients		
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.402	.989		4.451	.000
	Advertising	.232	.058	.252	4.029	.000
	Personal Selling	.178	.078	.139	2.291	.023
	Publicity	.119	.067	.112	1.787	.075
	Direct Marketing	070	.057	077	-1.234	.218
	Sales Promotion	.154	.067	.140	2.294	.023

Source: Data Processed (2018)

The result on Table 3 can be written in equation below:

# $Y = 4.402 + 0.232X_1 + 0.178X_2 + 0.119X_3 + (-0.70X_4) + 0.154X_5$

The interpretation of the multiple linear regression equation above is as follows:

- In the equation, the constant = 4.402 shows that in a condition where all independent variables are zero, church growth (Y) as dependent variable is 4.402.
- Coefficient value of 0.232 means that if there is one unit increase in advertising  $(X_1)$  then the church growth (Y) will increase 0.232 assuming that other variables are constant.
- Coefficient value of 0.178 means that if there is one unit increase in personal selling  $(X_2)$  then the church growth (Y) will increase 0.178 assuming that other variables are constant.
- Coefficient value of 0.119 means that if there is one unit increase in publicity  $(X_3)$  then the church growth (Y) will increase 0.119 assuming that other variables are constant.
- Coefficient value of -0.70 means that if there is one unit increase in direct marketing ( $X_4$ ) then the church growth (Y) will decrease 0.70 assuming that other variables are constant.
- Coefficient value of 0.154 means that if there is one unit increase in sales promotion ( $X_5$ ) then the church growth (Y) will increase 0.154 assuming that other variables are constant.

Table 4. Coefficient of Multiple Correlation and Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.430a	.184	.171	1.850

a. Predictors: (Constant), Adv, PS, Publicity, DM, SP

b. Dependent Variable: Church Growth

Source: Data Processed (2018)

Based on Table 4. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) is 0.184. It shows that the variation of all independent variable explains 18.4% of variation in church growth (Y), while the rest 81.6% is explained by other factors outside the model or not discussed in this research.

Hypothesis Test Table 5. F-test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	227.701	5	45.540	13.300	$.000^{b}$
	Residual	1006.646	294	3.424		
	Total	1234.347	299			

Source: Data Processed (2018)

Table 5 shows the value of  $F_{calculated}$  is 13.300. The value of  $F_{table}$  is found on the F Distribution Table by determining the degree if freedom 1 (numerator) is 5 and degree of freedom 2 (denumerator) is 295 with level of significance is 0.05 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) and the level of confidence is 95% then  $F_{table}$  is 2.23. The result is  $F_{calculated}$  (13.300) >  $F_{table}$  (2.23). Therefore, since  $F_{calculated}$  is greater than  $F_{table}$ ,  $H_0$  is accepted and  $H_1$  is accepted which means the independent variables simultaneously influence the dependent variable significantly.

Table 6. F-Test

Variable	T <sub>calculated</sub>	T <sub>table</sub>
Advertising (X <sub>1</sub> )	4.029	1.9662
Personal Selling (X <sub>2</sub> )	2.291	1.9662
Publicity (X <sub>3</sub> )	1.787	1.9662
Direct Marketing (X <sub>4</sub> )	-1.234	1.9662
Sales Promotion (X <sub>5</sub> )	2.294	1.9662

Source: Data Processed (2018)

- 1. The partial influence of advertising  $(X_1)$  on church growth (Y), the  $t_{calculated} = 4.029$  and  $t_{\sim (0.05)} = 1.9662$ . Since  $t_{calculated} > t_{\sim}$  then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. It means that church growth  $(X_1)$  has positive and no significant partial influence on church growth (Y).
- 2. The partial influence of personal selling  $(X_2)$  on church growth (Y), the  $t_{calculated} = 2.291$  and  $t_{\sim (0.05)} = 1.9662$ . Since  $t_{calculated} > t_{\sim}$  then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. It means that personal selling  $(X_2)$  has positive and no significant partial influence on church growth (Y).
- 3. The partial influence of publicity  $(X_3)$  on church growth (Y), the  $t_{calculated} = 1.787$  and  $t_{\sim (0.05)} = 1.9662$ . Since  $t_{calculated} < t_{\sim}$  then  $H_0$  is accepted and  $H_1$  is rejected. It means that publicity  $(X_3)$  has negative and no significant partial influence on church growth (Y).
- 4. The partial influence of direct marketing  $(X_4)$  on church growth (Y), the  $t_{calculated} = -1.234$  and  $t_{\sim (0.05)} = 1.9662$ . Since  $t_{calculated} < t_{\sim}$  then  $H_0$  is accepted and  $H_1$  is rejected. It means that direct marketing  $(X_4)$  has negative and no significant partial influence on church growth (Y).
- 5. The partial influence of sales promotion  $(X_5)$  on church growth (Y), the  $t_{calculated} = 2.294$  and  $t_{\sim (0.05)} = 1.9662$ . Since  $t_{calculated} > t_{\sim}$  then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. It means that personal selling  $(X_2)$  has positive and no significant partial influence on church growth (Y).

#### **Discussion**

# Advertising, Personal Selling, Publicity, Direct Marketing and Sales Promotion on Church Growth

The result of this study is suitable or fit for the selected F-test. Based on the R-square correlation test or R<sup>2</sup>, the independent variables influence the dependent variable. It can be concluded that advertising, personal selling, publicity, direct marketing and sales promotion will determine the church growth.

# **Advertising on Church Growth**

This result proves or update previous research as well as indicates that the advertising brings impact to the church growth in Manado. For this study, advertising is proposed as a paid non-personal communication through various advertising media (TV, radio, billboards) by churches who want to inform existing members and persuade prospective members to join their church.

# **Personal Selling on Church Growth**

Based on t-test statistic, can be explained the effect of personal selling on church growth in Manado has a significant and positive coefficient. Personal selling become the second strongest variable that impact to church growth in this research.

# Public Relation/Publicity on Church Growth

Based on t-test statistic, can be explained the effect of public relation/ publicity on church growth in Manado has an insignificant and negative coefficient. This research indicates that the public relation/ publicity brings less or no impact to the church growth in Manado.

## **Direct Marketing on Church Growth**

Based on t-test statistic, can be explained the effect of direct marketing on church growth in Manado has an insignificant and negative coefficient. GMIM, Bethany and Tiberias already have their own website that consist of several types of information and other tools. Unfortunately, these tools have not been utilized well by the church because it usually took a slow response for example when it comes to direct mail activities.

# Sales Promotion on Church Growth

Sales promotion is an essential promotional tool and its importance cannot be overemphasized when it comes to the religious organizations. This sales promotion activities are basically for increasing the fund or financial for some church events.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### Conclusion

After examining the collected data, there are some conclusions based on this research conducted to analyze the effect of promotional strategies on church growth in Manado. Findings of the study reveal indicates that:

- 1. Promotional strategies have a significant effect on church growth in Manado simultaneously.
- 2. Advertising has significant effect on church growth in Manado partially.
- 3. Personal selling has a significant effect on church growth in Manado partially.
- 4. Public relation/ publicity has an insignificant effect on church growth in Manado partially.
- 5. Direct marketing has an insignificant effect on church growth in Manado partially.
- 6. Sales promotion has significant effect on church growth in Manado partially.

## Recommendation

Based on the results of the study, here are some recommendations which can be applied:

- 1. The study proposes that churches who want to experience an improvement of membership, service coverage and successful outreach programs should increase their presence on TV, billboard, radio as the indicators of advertising.
- 2. For the church leaders, it should be noted that today's society (congregations) has started to embrace with new trend of promoting activities. Therefore, church leaders should consider utilizing the new platform that is effective and efficient such as e-flyer and social media.
- 3. The study recommends that churches in Manado should use more of personal selling and sales promotion since they are the promotional tools that found to have influence on church growth. For publicity and

direct marketing that found to have no significant influence on church growth, it does not mean that church organizations should not give any attention on these variables but to pursue further action of church organizations to make a good statement on publics and give a fast responds for the information exchange between community and church. Church will need to improve all of the existing promotional strategies by updating any information.

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