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EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND SOLIDARITY IN ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract:

This article aims to examine the relationship between workplace solidarity and employee engagement in task execution. The study was conducted using a proprietary survey questionnaire developed based on a comprehensive review of the literature. In 2024, data were collected from a sample of 2,000 employees from various types of organisations in Poland. The results were analysed using Pearson's chi-squared test. The findings confirm the hypothesis that solidarity positively influences employee engagement in assigned tasks. Statistically significant relationships were observed for variables such as job tenure and type of position held (managerial vs. non-managerial). This article presents a unique empirical study on workplace solidarity and employee engagement, conducted on an exceptionally large sample. Highlights the potential of fostering solidarity within organisations as a strategic approach to enhancing employee engagement. These opportunities should be identified and developed by managers and HR professionals to support workforce development.

Keywords:

HR, managers, solidarity, workplace solidarity, employee engagement, human resource management

JEL Classification: J24, J17, J28

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1. Introduction

Employee engagement has become one of the key drivers of organisational success in contemporary management (Haffer & Haffer, 2018), and it constitutes a central construct in modern human resource management (Pincus, 2023). Research indicates that high levels of employee engagement maintain job satisfaction and enhance employee performance (Boccoli, Gastaldi, & Corso, 2022). Organisational engagement refers to the extent to which employees identify with and participate in the life of the organisation, using their competencies to achieve its goals (Pocztowski, 2018). Within organisations, various processes play a crucial role in fostering employee participation in task execution. These processes are built upon multiple components designed to stimulate more active participation in the workplace. Managers and HR professionals play an essential role in this context by supporting employees in their efforts and cultivating a positive work environment - one characterised by trust, a supportive environment, and relationships grounded in shared values, including solidarity. Solidarity influences trust, engagement, and employee behaviour within organisations (Lu & Guo, 2019). Despite its significance, solidarity is often overlooked in academic discourse due to the challenges associated with its analysis; little is known about how it emerges and evolves over time (Heckscher & McCarthy, 2014). However, solidarity between coworkers generates a high level of job satisfaction and is associated with improved relationships with management. This latter finding suggests that a key component of positive vertical relationships in the workplace is rooted in mutual support and solidarity among employees (Hodson, 1997). Therefore, it is essential to foster relationships based on the value of solidarity - both within employee teams and between managers and their teams.

2. The essence of engagement

Engagement in professional activity and in the organisation where an employee is employed refers to the individual's relationship with their work and the place in which it is performed (Łaguna, Mielniczuk, Żaliński, & Wałachowska, 2015). Work involvement is defined as a type of attitude towards one's job (Juchnowicz, 2012). It is a process embedded in a social context in which the employee, through engagement, becomes involved in the functioning of the team. By contributing through their involvement, the employee supports the achievement of both group and organisational goals (Szczepańska-Woszczyna & Bogaczyk, 2023). Employee engagement has become one of the main drivers of organisational success in contemporary management. In the literature, the concept of work engagement is defined in various ways and presented from multiple perspectives relevant to organisations (Haffer & Haffer, 2018; Schohat & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010; Robertson-Smith & Markwick, 2009):

- management practitioners they view employee engagement through the lens of additional work-related outcomes that employees voluntarily offer to the organisation beyond their formal job descriptions. These behaviours are seen as a response to individual organisational experiences;
- the academic community by defining work engagement, focusses either on its outcomes, such as advocacy, dedication, discretionary effort, and support for change, which closely aligns with the managerial perspective or on the psychological state of the employee and the mutually beneficial, bidirectional relationship between supervisors and subordinates;
- the consulting sector emphasises the psychological state of the employee that generates a range of positive outcomes for the organisation, as well as the role the organisation plays in fostering and sustaining this state.

There is a general consensus that engaged employees perceive value not only in investing in themselves but also in contributing to the organisation as a whole (Robertson-Smith & Markwick, 2009). Engagement can stem from various sources - ranging from emotional attachment, through a sense of moral obligation, to a rational evaluation of the benefits and costs associated with remaining in the organisation (Kinowska, 2025). An engaged employee is focused on their tasks, performs them with passion and enthusiasm, maintains a positive attitude toward the organisation - or their work - and takes actions that serve the company's interests (Juchnowicz, 2012). Engagement can be linked to specific employee behaviours such as loyalty, productivity, dedication, emotional involvement, and energy. These elements are interrelated and together form an ecosystem of behaviours that constitute employee engagement (Wilczyński, 2023). Equally important are the actions taken by managers towards the teams they lead. Research indicates that a high level of collaboration, grounded in the development of positive relationships, stimulates group dynamics and strengthens organisational engagement (Mahbub, 2025). HR professionals also play a critical role in creating support systems that allow employees to engage more effectively in achieving organisational goals (Ali & Swart, 2025). Furthermore, the quality of the work environment is a significant factor in fostering employee engagement (Kwon, Jeong, Park, & Yoon, 2024).

3. The nature of solidarity in the workplace

Solidarity refers to behaviour that sustains the relationship as a whole, rather than merely protecting individual interests (Sezen & Yilmaz, 2007). It has long been considered essential to work, often serving as a foundation for collective action that embraces diversity, openness, and participatory engagement, coordinating groups with differing goals and skills (Heckscher & McCarthy, 2014). According to É. Durkheim, solidarity is most commonly defined as the bonds between individuals (Sztompka, 2002); it encompasses concern for the common good, a sense of connexion and shared fate with others, and a willingness to act for collective benefit (Herman, Oleksyn & Stańczyk, 2016); it also involves mutual sympathy and group responsibility, promoting reciprocal support (Wilde, 2007); the ability of people to pursue common goals effectively for the benefit of the organisation, without focussing on individual interests or interpersonal relationships (Sneha & Sugirtha, 2016); and a particular emotional and ethical relationship, characterised by collective emotions and mutual recognition (Laitinen & Pessi, 2015).). These definitions point primarily to joint action, readiness to collaborate, and mutual support among colleagues. Through such behaviours, solidarity can contribute to greater participation in assigned tasks.

Based on a review of the literature on solidarity in the context of employee engagement, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H: Solidarity within a team increases the engagement of individual employees' in assigned tasks.

4. Research methodology

The research presented in this article is part of the project entitled "Solidarity in the Workplace – a generational perspective", conducted in 2024. Due to the uniqueness of the topic, the study was based on a proprietary survey questionnaire developed through a review of both the Polish and international literature. Respondents were asked to rate their responses on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree". A quantitative methodological approach was adopted, employing descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests for data analysis. Pearson's Chi-square test was selected due to its suitability for

comparing nominal variables in cross-tabulations. Before conducting the study, a critical significance level α was established, corresponding to the acceptable risk of committing a Type I error. The standard significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. A p-value lower than the critical threshold (p < 0.05) was interpreted according to the following levels: p < 0.05 (*), p < 0.01 (**), p < 0.001 (***). By grounding the methodology in recognised standards and appropriate empirical frameworks, this study ensures reproducibility and offers valuable insights into employee engagement in the context of workplace solidarity. The study was conducted on a sample of 2,000 respondents, divided equally among the generational cohorts present in the labour market: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z (500 individuals from each generation). The women constituted 50.8% of the sample, while men accounted for 49.3%. The educational background of respondents was as follows: primary education – 1.4%, vocational – 6.6%, secondary – 40.5%, and higher education – 51.6%. Participants represented diverse employment statuses: 11% were both studying and working, 83.2% were employed. and 5.8% were retired but still working. Employment types included: full-time contracts – 78.4%, mandate contracts - 16.1%, B2B arrangements - 2.8%, and other forms - 2.8% (primarily selfemployment). Respondents held various positions within their organisations: 22.5% occupied managerial roles, while 77.6% held non-managerial positions. Their length of service was distributed as follows: up to 3 years - 34.1%; 4-10 years - 32.6%; 11-20 years - 8.7%; 21-30 years – 9.3%; and over 30 years – 5.5%. Participants were employed in organisations of varying defined by the Polish Ministry of Climate and www.gov.pl/web/nfosiw/wielkosc-przedsiebiorstwa2, 2025): micro-enterprises (up to 9 employees) – 18.2%; small enterprises (10–49 employees) – 24.5%; medium-sized enterprises (50-249 employees) - 26.7%; and large enterprises (250 employees or more) - 30.7%. Respondents also worked in teams of different sizes: 1–3 people – 29.2%; 4–10 people – 40%; 11-20 people - 16.8%; and more than 20 people - 13.6%. The surveyed individuals represented a variety of industries (see Table 1).

Table 1. Industry sector of the respondents

Industry	Percentage (%)
Agriculture	1,6
Finance and insurance	6,0
Real estate market	0,9
R&D, Advertising	1,3
Education	6,2
Healthcare and social assistance	ce 6,3
Culture, entertainment, and rec	reation 2,5
Services	10,5
Public administration	8,0
Other	9,9
Mining	0,5
Manufacturing	14,2

Energy sector	1,5
Construction	5,3
Trade	11,6
Transport	6,5
Gastronomy	2,2
IT and telecommunications	5,3

Source: own study

The highest number of responses came from participants employed in the manufacturing sector (14.2%), followed by those working in trade (11.6%) and services (10.5%).

5. Research findings

The analysis of the research results on employee participation in the context of solidarity indicates that the vast majority of respondents perceive a connexion between these two elements (see Table 2).

Table 2. Solidarity increases the participation of individual employees' in assigned tasks (%)

The' responses of the respondents	1	2	3	4	5
Overall	4,9	11,0	28,9	36,0	19,3

Source: own study

The majority of the respondents expressed a positive view that solidarity improves the engagement of individual employees in task execution. However, the fourth level ("agree") received the highest score at 36%, while 19.3% of respondents selected the highest level ("strongly agree"). This noticeable difference may stem from a lack of full awareness regarding the value of solidarity and its impact on employee engagement. It is therefore important to examine the results across various dimensions presented by the respondents. The analysis was conducted in relation to team size, organisation size, length of service, type of position (managerial vs non-managerial), industry sector, type of employment contract, employment status, level of education, generational cohort currently active in the labour market, and gender. This multidimensional approach provides a broader understanding of how solidarity is perceived as a factor contributing to employee engagement within organisations. The results were further broken down by gender (see Table 3).

Table 3. Respondents' responses by gender (%)

Gender	1	2	3	4	5
Women	4,6	10,6	28,8	35,7	20,3
Men	5,2	11,3	29,0	36,3	18,2

Source: own study

The distribution of responses in these groups is more or less even; however, a higher indicator of the relationship between solidarity and engagement at the highest level was shown by women, and this is two percentage points more. This may be due to personality traits that differentiate between genders (Table 4).

Table 4. The responses of the respondents by education level (%)

Education	1	2	3	4	5
Primary	3,6	17,9	35,7	25,0	17,9
Vocational	3,1	8,4	31,3	38,2	19,1
Secondary	5,4	9,9	30,2	34,5	20,0
Higher	4,7	11,9	27,4	37,2	18,7

Source: own study

People with vocational and secondary education perceive the connexion between solidarity and engagement in work within the organisation more clearly. Respondents with higher education refer to this relationship with greater caution, which may result from the fact that they hold higher positions, where task execution is more individual and takes place at an expert level. However, in the overall balance of the positive reception of solidarity as a factor generating increased engagement, higher education employees achieve the second highest result at the level of 55.9%. In first place are people with vocational education – 57.3%.

The distribution of the responses of the respondents' according to the length of service is interesting (Table 5).

Table 5. Respondents' responses by length of service (%).

Length of service	1	2	3	4	5
< 3 years	4,6	10,8	30,2	36,9	17,5
4-10	5,0	11,0	29,7	36,3	18,0
11-20	5,1	11,5	28,7	34,1	20,5
21-30	7,4	9,8	21,3	34,4	27,0
>30	2,5	11,3	21,3	35,0	30,0

Source: own study

The employees with the shortest service term agree at the level of 37% that solidarity increases individual employees' engagement in task performance, while their responses at the highest level are around 18%. This means they are not entirely convinced of this relationship. The situation changes slightly with increasing length of service. The medium level is shaped in the range of 34–35%, while the highest level reaches 30%. In this case, the professional experience of the respondents may play a significant role. The results concerning length of service in a specific position present a slightly different picture (Table 6).).

Table 6. Respondents' responses by length of service in current position (%)

Length of service	1	2	3	4	5
< 3 years	4,8	11,3	31,7	34,5	17,6
4-10	5,4	10,4	30,1	37,2	16,9
11-20	4,5	12,0	25,1	39,6	18,7
21-30	4,3	10,3	26,5	29,7	29,2
>30	4,6	9,2	21,1	36,7	28,4

Source: own study

When analysing the results of Table 6 in relation to Table 5, a significant change can be observed for the length of the service group from 11 to 20 years at the fourth level, where the result changed from 34.1% to 39.6%, and in the second length of service range from 21 to 30 years, where it dropped from 34.4% to 29.7%. It can be stated that people working in one organisation for a long time build appropriate relationships within the team and act in solidarity. However, with a length of service exceeding 21 years, solidarity behaviours remain at a high level but "lose momentum" and decrease, reaching the result of more decisive opinions at 29.2%. On the other hand, it can be generally stated that as the length of service in a position increases, the perception of solidarity as a factor enhancing engagement shifts in a positive direction and reaches, in total for both levels (4 and 5): 52.1% for service below 3 years; 54.1% for service between 4–10 years; 58.3% for service between 11–20 years; 58.9% for service between 21–30 years; and 65.1% for service over 30 years.

The analysis was also conducted in terms of the type of formal cooperation between the organisation and the employees (Table 7).

Table 7. Respondents' responses by type of employment contract (%)

Type of employment contract	1	2	3	4	5
Employment contract	4,7	11,1	28,0	36,6	19,6
Contract of mandate	4,7	10,3	32,4	33,3	19,3
B2B	7,1	10,7	33,9	37,5	10,7
Other	8,9	10,7	28,6	33,9	17,9

Source: own study

The group indicated as "other" mainly consists of people running their own businesses. The highest positive result (sum of levels 4 and 5) was indicated by people working under a so-called "employment contract" (56.2%), which are usually long-term agreements. Time spent in the organisation, within teams, leads to the building of positive relationships that form the basis of solidarity in the group and can be said to naturally enforce increased engagement in the work performed. The lowest result was achieved by people whose cooperation with organisations is based on the B2B model (48.2%). Here, the reason lies in the nature of the cooperation itself, which is based rather on loose relations with the organisation. It is more independent work, settled via invoices, and this very fact reflects a business-oriented approach rather than identification with the organisation through a signed employment contract, which from a psychological point of view strengthens the bond between the employee and the employer.

When considering the topic of solidarity in the context of employee engagement, it is also worth examining the size of the organisation in which employees perform their tasks (Table 8).

Table 8. Respondents' responses by organisation size (%)

Organisation size	1	2	3	4	5
Up to 9 employees	5,8	10,7	30,8	31,9	20,9
10-49 employees	4,5	9,8	31,0	34,7	20,0
50-249 employees	3,2	10,1	28,3	37,1	21,2
More than 250 employees	6,2	12,7	26,6	38,5	16,0

Source: own study

The greatest value of solidarity needed to increase employee engagement can be observed in organisations with 50 to 249 employees (58.3%). Such a result may be caused by the organisation's development and the growth of employment. A small enterprise, which also sees solidarity as a shared part of its development (54.7%), builds and passes on close relationships within a relatively small group to newly hired employees, and this solidarity is naturally spread to new team members. It is important to nurture this state, as there may be a decline in solidarity behaviours and, consequently, a decrease in work engagement, as shown by the results for large enterprises (54.5%). The next category of analysis in the conducted research concerned the industry in which the respondents work (Table 9).

Table 9. Respondents' responses by industry (%)

Answer	1	2	3	4	5
Agriculture	3,1	0,0	34,4	37,5	25,0
Finance and insurance	4,2	13,4	23,5	39,5	19,3
Real estate market	11,8	0,0	11,8	35,3	41,2
R&D, Advertising	3,8	7,7	34,6	38,5	15,4
Education	3,3	8,1	25,2	39,8	23,6
Healthcare and social assistance	3,2	16,7	26,2	35,7	18,3
Culture, entertainment and recreation	4,0	12,0	26,0	40,0	18,0
Services	2,9	11,9	31,9	32,4	21,0
Public administration	6,9	14,4	31,3	28,1	19,4
Other	5,1	9,1	29,4	34,0	22,3
Mining	0,0	0,0	33,3	55,6	11,1
Manufacturing	6,7	14,8	29,6	35,6	13,4
Energy sector	13,3	20,0	10,0	46,7	10,0
Construction	3,8	9,4	27,4	33,0	26,4
Trade	5,2	9,1	30,2	36,2	19,4
Transport	5,4	6,2	36,4	35,7	16,3
Gastronomy	2,3	4,5	27,3	47,7	18,2
IT and telecommunications	4,7	8,5	26,4	42,5	17,9

Source: own study

Here are two particular issues. The first concern the result of 0% in responses classified as negative (levels 1 and 2), and the second is the high percentage of responses at level 4. The first part refers to the mining industry, where both level 1 and 2 received a result of 0%, while

level 4 reached as much as 55.6%. This picture may be conditioned by the work environment itself and its specificity, where a high level of trust between co-workers must exist during task execution, and thus solidarity-based actions that jointly lead to engagement in the tasks performed. High results were also obtained in the following industries: gastronomy (47.7%), energy (46.7%), IT and telecommunications (42.5%), and culture, entertainment and recreation (40%). These industries are characterised by collaborative activities based on teamwork, and thus shared, solidarity-based actions that, to some extent, enforce greater engagement.

The next area considered in the research was the professional status of the respondents, i.e., whether the surveyed individuals, apart from working, also fulfilled other roles reflecting the professional life cycle. The categories of division were as follows: studying and working, working, retirement, and working (Table 10).

Table 10. Respondents' responses by respondent status (%)

Status	1	2	3	4	5
Studying and working	5,0	10,9	27,6	36,7	19,9
Working	5,0	11,1	29,3	36,2	18,4
Retired and working	3,4	8,6	25,9	31,9	30,2

Source: own study

The highest values regarding the connexion between solidarity and employee engagement in work are observed among people who have retired but remain professionally active. This may result from many years of professional experience and working in various teams, encountering different situations that have shown that solidarity is a value worth nurturing in interpersonal relationships. It is a value that unites people within a team and can therefore influence their engagement. A positive conclusion is also the fact that at level four – indicating a positive association between solidarity and engagement – the results were above 36% for people who are both studying and working, as well as for those who are working. This is important because it shows that they recognise and accept solidarity-based behaviours within the group, which may lead to greater engagement in work. As can be seen, they need more "professional time" for these values to be transferred to a higher level – level five.

An important piece of information from the research results was the analysis based on the number of people in the teams in which the respondents work. The groups were divided into several size categories (Table 12).

Table 12. The responses of the respondents by the number of people in the team (%)

Team size	1	2	3	4	5
1-3	6,2	10,6	31,7	33,6	17,8
4-10	4,6	10,0	28,5	37,0	19,9
11-20	3,6	12,8	26,0	38,2	19,4
More than 20	4,8	12,1	27,6	35,3	20,2

Source: own study

When analysing the research results, it can be observed that while the average response level regarding the impact of solidarity on engagement is 28.9%, the positive perception of this relationship increases with the number of people in the group: for groups of 1-3 people -51.4%; 4-10 people -56.9%; 11-20 people -57.6%. However, in groups of more than 20 people - i.e. in larger teams where relationships tend to be more relaxed and solidarity-based actions are more difficult to implement - the result drops to 55.5%.

The results were further aggregated based on the type of positions held by the respondents, i.e., managerial and non-managerial positions (Table 13).

Table 13. The responses of the respondents by type of job position (%)

Job position	1	2	3	4	5
Non-managerial	5,3	11,9	29,5	35,8	17,5
Managerial	3,6	7,6	26,9	36,5	25,4

Source: own study

The results presented in Table 13 indicate greater awareness among managers that appropriately building solidarity awareness among employees will increase their engagement in the tasks performed. This is evidenced by the positive perception of this situation: for managers, it is 61.9%, while for non-managerial employees it is 53.3%. What is important in this context is the preparation of appropriate workshops aimed at developing awareness of solidarity-based behaviours and their impact on engagement, as well as greater use of teamwork in task execution.

Further analysis of the research results was based on Pearson's Chi-squared test, which is used to examine the relationship between two categorical variables. It allows us to determine whether the observed differences in the frequency of occurrence of particular categories are statistically significant or are simply due to chance (Table 14).

Table 14. Results of Pearson's Chi-squared test regarding the statement that solidarity increases individual employees" involvement in task performance

Metric	Chi-squared statistic	p-value
Gender	1,732763521	0,784757841
Education	9,680755382	0,651469706
Professional status	10,18608537	0,24555089
Type of employment	8,158776249	0,772845431
Industry	80,98336026	0,132773445
Job position	20,28798576	0,000438087 ***
Total work experience	19,02570795	0,26234753
Work experience in a current organisation	29,44679073	0,021395721 *
Number of employees in company	19,42631893	0,078746458
Number of people in team	10,84465836	0,54227639

Source: own study

The results indicate that the higher the value of the chi-squared statistic, the greater the difference between observed and expected frequencies, which suggests a stronger relationship between the variables. This effect was obtained in the case of industry, length of service in the current organisation, and job position. Statistically significant relationships were found for the variables: job position and length of service in a given position. Based on this, it can be concluded that managers are more aware that solidarity is a value that increases employee engagement in task execution. The second statistically significant relationship shows that as the length of service in a position increases, the perception of solidarity as enhancing

engagement becomes more positive, reaching 65.1% among people with over 30 years of work experience.

6. Research conclusions and summary

The research conducted on the perception of solidarity as a factor increasing employee engagement in task execution reveals actual dependencies. The results clearly show (55.3%) that this relationship is positively perceived by respondents (the sample consisted of 2,000 individuals). This connection is more positively received by: women (56%); people with vocational education (57.3%) and higher education (55.9%). Another variable was work experience. Here, the results indicate a high level of correlation between solidarity and engagement - however, it is worth noting that people with longer work experience appreciate solidarity more as a factor that increases engagement. Likewise, long-term employment within an organisation indicates a very positive perception of this relationship. Therefore, professional experience and the building of long-term relationships play an important role. Another important aspect is the stabilisation within organisations in the form of employees working under standard employment contracts, which typically imply long-term relationships with the organisation. The size of the organisation also plays a significant role. The strongest correlations were observed in medium-sized organisations employing between 50 and 249 people (58.3%). An interesting variable was the industry. In sectors where teamwork is somewhat enforced – such as mining, gastronomy, and energy - high results were recorded regarding the correlation between solidarity and engagement. Another variable shows that it is worthwhile to build long-term cooperation with employees, as their professional experience and relationships based on solidarity translate into increased engagement in task execution. A crucial factor in the analysis is the size of the team. Groups of up to 20 people show the strongest ability to act in solidarity and perform tasks with greater engagement. Beyond this threshold, relationships tend to loosen, and the influence of solidarity on engagement begins to decline. Noteworthy are the results concerning the positions held by respondents. Managers demonstrate greater awareness of how solidarity affects employee engagement. They should therefore focus on creating a positive work environment by fostering a healthy organisational culture that aims to combat quiet quitting and supports authentic engagement (Juchnowicz, Wolińska-Skuza, 2023), using organisational values - including solidarity - as a foundation.

7. Summary

The research conducted is unique due to the topic of solidarity and the variables used to analyse the results obtained. The large sample size is also significant, with a balanced distribution between men and women and equal representation across the four generations currently present in the labour market. The results confirm the hypothesis that solidarity increases employee engagement in their work. In general, across all variables, a positive level of agreement was obtained. It is important to examine the results in terms of individual research categories; here, the outcomes vary, and these differences are worth addressing within organisations. A key focus for both managers and specialists should be increasing the implementation of tasks through teamwork. It is worth maintaining and developing awareness of the impact of solidarity on engagement so that people who are currently studying and working can deepen this knowledge throughout their professional lives. Groups of more than 20 people present a challenge, where more time should be devoted to building awareness of how important solidarity-based actions are and how they can foster greater engagement in work. A limitation of the study may be the research method used, as the responses reflect the subjective

perceptions of the participants. Future research could also include cultural aspects, especially if it is conducted in international organisations.

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