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DETERMINING THE REASONS FOR Y GENERATION INDIVIDUALS TO COOK AT HOME: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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Abstract

It can be deduced that eating at home will take the place of eating outside in the future since we are living in the communication age where individuals are conscious, egocentric, and have prosumer characteristics. However, it is understood that there is not a sufficient number of relevant literature in Turkey which will bring the subject to an understandable level. In a small number of studies on home cooking, it has been tried to determine what the reasons of home cooking are. The main question that needs to be addressed in the study is how Y Generation individuals lead to cooking at home. Since the individuals of Y Generation are now conscious and inquisitive consumers who cover a large part of working life as of nowadays, individuals of this generation were selected. In other words, it was assumed that Y was a generation who became willing to eat at home with this increase in consciousness. This study has a qualitative design. In August 2018, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 11 participants determined by snowball sampling method. Participants were asked six open-ended questions and demographic questions about characteristics (age, occupation) via semi-structured questionnaires. The findings show that Y-generation individuals tend to prepare meals at home because of health and hygiene reasons, economic reasons and, enjoyment. The results of this study are important in terms of contributing to the knowledge of cooking at home behavior and the knowledge of the Y generation.

Key words: Postmodern Consumer, Eating Out, Cooking at Home, Y Generation.

Introduction

Nutrition is the intake of necessary nutritional elements into the body and utilization from them for growth, improvement and a healthy and long life (Bulduk, 2005 p.45). Considering the age, gender and physiological state of an individual, adequate intake of all required nutritional elements must be secured for a healthy nutrition (Saygin et al., 2011, p. 43-44). In other words, consuming healthy foods in all meals of a day is of great importance. However, a changeover in nutritional habits occur together with the social switch and urbanization process. Technological changes and transition from an agro-society to an industrial one leads many people to prefer consuming foods that are prepared by other people and outside of the house; rapid progress in communication tools, industrialization and western culture are influential in the quick change and expansion of food habits (Bulduk, 2005 p.65).

While most of the studies about the subject have focused on consumption outdoors, those which are about cooking and consuming at home stayed in the background. In fact, it is also known that there is a group of consumers who object the rapidly rising tendency to eat outdoors and habituate cooking and eating at home. In addition, how much worthwhile the food consumed outdoors for health is also a widely current and discussed issue in the recent years. According to the results of a scientific study, which was declared in a meeting of American Heart Association, the risk of getting diabetes for those who eat at home is lower than of those who eat outdoors. According to the results of the study conducted on 100.000 people, the risk of getting Type-2 diabetes for those who eat 11-14 main meals (lunch and dinner) in a week as home-cooked is 13 % lower than of those who eat half of the week outdoors. At the same time, at the end of eight years of research period, it was discovered that those who consume home-made food gained much lesser weight than those who eat outdoors. It follows from this that, eating outdoors is an activity almost bringing along obesity (Cnnturk, 2016).

Consumers' tendencies, preferences and desires towards nutrition finds reciprocity in the food and beverage sector. The fact that healthy, organic and natural products can easily create a market for themselves may be connected to this cause (Grand Thornton, 2011). Besides, cooking at home and postmodern era behaviors such as self-production, IKEA effect, and hobby and prosumer cultures are complementary in feature. Because, in the postmodern era, the consumer makes a more conscious and informed impression that is striving to return to the old and willing to produce and consume himself (Atakan and Seraj, 2016 p.128). Toffler (2008, p.230-240) emphasizes that the consumer profile of the postmodern era, the so-called third wave, displays a creative profile which criticizes the goods and services with a negative impact on environment and affects the whole of the society with his life style and behaviors. Parallel to this, it is inevitable describing eating outdoors unhealthy and tending towards cooking at home. However, there is a limited number of studies in the literature that tries to find out the reasons that make people cook at home instead of eating outdoors. With this study, deep interviews were made with people who cook at home and it was aimed to contribute to the knowledge created by the existing studies.

Related Studies

Research of the eating behavior outdoors necessitates a multi-disciplinary attitude. In accordance with its multi-disciplinary structure, eating is of interest to academic disciplines such as anthropology (Douglas 1975; Levi-Strauss 1983), sociology (Mennell et al., 1992; Finkelstein 1989), economy (Cullen 1994), marketing (Riley 1994), tourism management (Wood 1994; Olsen et al.. 2000; Knight et al. 2009) and nutrition (Kant and Graubard 2004). A direct correlation can be found between the phenomenon of eating outdoors and especially the food and beverage management as a sub-field of tourism management among these academic disciplines (Riley 2005; Wood 2007; O'Mahony 2007). As a result of an extensive literature scanning, Johns and Pine (2002) specified the research subjects focused by the studies that inspect the phenomenon of eating outdoors with the perspectives of differing disciplines as food choice, restaurant choice, context of eating outdoors, economical dimensions of eating outdoors, sociology of eating outdoors, satisfaction and loyalty of the consumers who eat outdoors.

One of the phenomenal researches which reveal the factors that are effective in consumers' orientation in cooking at home was made by Costa, et. al (2007). In that study, profound face-to-face interviews were conducted with consumers and behavior of cooking at home was compared with fast-food consumption. As a result of this comparison, the researchers showed that the behavior of cooking at home is related with feeling healthy and alive, the feeling of fulfilling a duty, being in compliance with the group, enjoying, feeling successful and feeling self-conscious through keeping the weight in balance. In a study conducted in Belgium, Daniels et. al (2012) referred cooking process as a way for consumers to please both themselves and the others. In addition, this study shows that consumers

who doesn't work, especially housewives, consider cooking as a bounden duty in order to eliminate feeling guilty and shame and social criticism. In addition to the working conditions of consumers, their educational level also influences their perception of cooking. Daniels et al. (2012) set forth that those with lower educational level perceive cooking as an obligation, but not an activity to enjoy in free times. The same study also shows that cooking is seen as a display of love by families, especially those with kids.

A study conducted in the United States of America (Mintel, 2011) revealed that young population prefers cooking at home in order to feel sophisticated and clever, create reliability among peers, consume healthy food, gain different experiences, display love and relax-calm. Atakan and Seraj (2016), on the other hand, aim at revealing the connection between consumer motivations and the behavior of cooking at home via an ethnographic study. As a result of the study, physiology, security, autonomy and control, belonging and love, prestige, relaxing and calming, emotional satisfaction, cognitive stimulus, self-expression and creativity were detected as the motives of cooking at home.

Generations

Groups composed by people living in the same period and sharing common features are defined as a generation (Adigüzel et al., 2014, p.165). People's perceptions, thoughts, habits, expectations and behaviors change due to time concept. The fact that individuals born in close periods to each other share similar features and those born in distant periods share fewer common features directed researchers to make a closer inspection on the generation concept. Thanks to the researches, information gathered about the differences between generations, similarities, expectations and habits, and societies of the past (Adigüzel et al, 2014, p.166).

The most generalized classification of generations, as known, is made as Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, X, Y and Z. The generation called as traditionalists is also mentioned as the quiet or adult generation in some sources. This generation covers those born between 1925 and 1945 (Letho et al., 2006, p.238). Traditionalists, although they are not many in number but still active in the working life, are the ones who has built the work life. The fact that traditionalists are unique sources of knowledge and have a quick mind, made the members of this generation rise to critical positions in business (Zemke et al., 2013, quoted by Adigüzel et al., 2014, p.171).

Baby boomers generation is composed of those born between 1946 and 1964. Individuals who were born in the years of the population explosion following the 2nd World War, compose this generation. Changes observed in countries' political and economic structures at that period, during which economical welfare increased gradually, also affected the genius of this generation (ERC Report, 2011, p.10). Representatives of this generation, who think that quality living conditions can be obtained only through working very hard, have adopted the view "work hard now, you will get its worth in the future" (Aciloğlu, 2015, quoted by Aka, 2018, p.166).

X generation is composed of those born between 1965 and 1979. Other names of this generation, which follows the "Baby Boomers" generation, are "Baby Buster", "twenty something" and "f-you generation" (mtstajprogramları, 2018). It is a generation which tries to stay away from stressful jobs, simplify and try to enjoy the job that they conduct for living. Members of the X generation make a great effort to catch the changing conditions. However, this effort and race make them feel isolated as a result of the impressions it creates on them as "missing" and "failing to modernize" (Dias, 2003, quoted by Adigüzel et al, 2014, p.172).

Y generation is composed of those born between 1980 and 1999. (Keleş, 2011, p.129). Y generation is composed of the children of Baby Boomers and X Generation. As of their ages they comprise an

important part of the working life today. This generation is perceived as “digital society” (Meier and Crocker, 2010, p.68, 69). People among this generation are smart, free-spirited, devoted to technology and also who knows to use it very well. Living a comfortable life means a lot to this generation, who spend nearly fifteen hours a day interacting with media and communication technologies. For this generation, technology is the symbol of many things in their life (Mengi, 2011). In this study, concerning its technologically focused, informed, rogatory and self-obsessed personality, Y generation is regarded as a generation that can prefer cooking at home instead of eating outdoors.

Z generation is the one which represents those born after 2000 and also called as the “crystal generation”. Experts define this generation as “deeply emotional” (dijitalajanslar, 2013). This generation have never experienced a period that internet did not exist. Representatives of this generation, who communicate via smart phones, prefer to talk through emojis and icons in the social media instead of talking and writing on the phone. Representatives of this generation, who are interested in social events, are sensitive to technological developments, environment, social injustice, economy and inequality (ik ve iletişim, 2014).

Method

This study has a descriptive design. Main purpose of the study is to find out the reasons that lead the members of the Y generation to cooking at home. The questions that are formed in accordance with this purpose and of which answers are sought are as follows:

- What are the reasons for cooking and eating at home?
- What could be the benefits of cooking and eating at home?
- What do you think about your habit of cooking at home? How did you habituate that?
- Do you advise to cook and eat at home to your circle?
- Do you think that the population who cook and eat at home will increase in the future? What could be the main reasons of this?

In the research, a semi-structured interview form was used in gathering data from source people. A form composed of six open-ended questions was created for the interview. In addition to the above-mentioned questions, participants were also asked questions about demographic features, such as age and occupation.

Determination of Source People and Collection of Data

The reason of choosing individuals from Y generation is that they compose the largest part of the currently working people. Because the members of Y generation are economically independent, they can prefer to eat outdoors without the obligation of cooking at home. The reasons which direct individuals who cook at home, without having obligation for that, are tried to be understood and Y generation members are supposed to be suitable for this.

Persons who are interviewed within the framework of the research are selected via snowball sampling method. The first source person, who is a representative of the Y generation and who cooks at home, is a previously known person by the researchers. Following the first interview, this person was asked to direct the researchers to someone else showing the same characteristics. Face-to-face interview method is adopted in the collection of data. The interviews were held in Bursa, between 10 August and 14 August 2018. The places where source persons live were visited for the interviews. Interviews were held at the decided time which were determined through getting appointments and 11 source persons were interviewed. Interviews were recorded with tape recorders. Source persons were asked to sign the written permission forms for that. Voice records were then put down on paper and transcript were generated.

Credibility of the Data

In order to strengthen the reliability and validity of the research, only participants with specific features are included. Conditions that the participants are to be (i) representing Y generation (1980-1999), (ii) working, and (iii) cooking and consuming at home are fulfilled. It was thought that the data gathered from these 11 participants are sufficient within the framework of this research's purpose. Because, when the data reach to a specific satisfaction level in qualitative research, the number of participants is accepted to be adequate (Şencan, 2005; quoted by Özel et al., 2018, p.219). It was also thought that making citations from the participants can increase the reliability of the study (Coşkun, et al, 2015, p.324).

Findings

Findings of the study are given under this title, as sub-titles. In order to keep the participants' personal information confidential and ease the presentation of the findings; their names and working places were not mentioned and participants were coded as K1, K2, K3. As it can be seen in Table 1, all the interviewed participants are woman between the ages of 25 and 33. Source persons, except K11, are undergraduates. Eight of the participants are married and three are single. Among the participants, most of whom are teachers, there is one geological engineer, two accountants and one servant.

Table 1. Information about the participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Marital status	Occupation	Educational level	Length of interview
K1	27	Female	Married	Teacher	Undergraduate	06:02
K2	27	Female	Married	Teacher	Undergraduate	10:55
K3	28	Female	Single	Teacher	Undergraduate	14:15
K4	27	Female	Married	Geological engineer	Undergraduate	09:06
K5	33	Female	Married	Accountant	Undergraduate	05:05
K6	29	Female	Married	Teacher	Undergraduate	07:10
K7	25	Female	Single	Teacher	Undergraduate	05:13
K8	25	Female	Married	Teacher	Undergraduate	07:27
K9	27	Female	Single	Teacher	Undergraduate	11:33
K10	29	Female	Married	Accountant	Undergraduate	04:02
K11	32	Female	Married	Servant	Primary school	05:37

Findings about the Reasons of Cooking and Consuming Meals at Home

Participants indicated that they had concerns about health and hygiene while eating outdoors and verged to cooking at home because of that. K1's explanation on the issue is as follows: *"First of all, consuming must take place at home but not outdoors for the health aspect. Use of syrup instead of sugar, use of GMO products, use of oil over and over again; because we do not witness, there must not be high amounts of consumption. I think that this may cause cancer in the future, and for this I do not want to consume outdoors too much"*. K6 explained the reasons of not consuming outdoors as;

"Because I do it myself, I know how I use and clean, I think it is better for hygiene and at the end of the day we do not know how many times the food, frying we eat outdoors is cooked in the same oil. Hygiene and health are my primary reasons." K10 and K11 mentioned their doubts about cleanness and hygiene with these words; *"for health and hygiene reasons, it is better to cook and eat at home instead of eating outdoors and worrying about it"*, and said that they verged to cooking at home for this reason.

Although health and hygiene are matters of concern, some participants regard the health and hygiene concern as a secondary issue. It is unfolded that these participants enjoyed spending time in the kitchen. About the issue, K3 said that *"Health is a factor to me but the most important thing is to enjoy. I love kitchen. Trying different things, having guests, doing something for someone else.."*. K4 stated the reason of cooking at home as; *"Above all, I like cooking, I cook very well. Eating outdoors is not attractive for us, we prefer to eat at home also because my husband also likes eating homemade meals"*. Cooking at home also seemed to be a pleasing activity to the participants for providing good time at home. K8 explained this situation as; *"The most important reason is the time we have while cooking at home. I don't like cooking alone to, mom and I used to cook together, I used to be her assistant. And consuming it in time at home together, conversations held at the same time.."* Concerns of flavor also matter concerning cooking at home. This can be understood from K8's *"Health is not much of a priority for me, strictly speaking, flavor is important to me. I think the most important reason.."* statement.

Another reason detected in cooking at home is the financial concern. K1 explained this as *"Besides, budget doesn't too much tolerate eating outdoors"*. On the other hand, K5 said *"It makes more sense to use what we already have at home, instead of spending outdoors. What I do, what I know is better"*. Participants who verged to eating at home also went to changes in their shopping routines. The statement made by K2 as, *"My husband and I very much like Sunday shopping. Instead of groceries, we prefer to choose our fruit and vegetable from public-market in the weekends as much as possible."* also confirms this fact. The necessity to pay high amounts to eat a qualified meal outdoors despite the existence of many choices is expressed by K9 with these words, *"I started to consume less meat outdoors because of doubts I have about their taste, even the expiration date. There are too many choices but if you want to eat something good or tasty at a good place, you pay high amounts to meet that, and this affects."*

Participants were also asked where they got the information that cooking at home is healthier from. As a response, K2 emphasized that daytime women programs on TV, schools and doctors always suggest the same thing and she got this information from these sources; and TV shows and doctors also distinguished in the statements of K5, K6 and K11.

Findings on the Benefits of Cooking at Home

Cooking at home is found economic and good for health by most of the participants. About the issue, K1 said, *"Above all for health, and then budget"*; K4 said, *"We have a healthy diet, in addition to that it is also profitable in economical means"*; K7 said, *"I believe that cooking and eating what I know in ingredients is healthier. At the same time the unhygienic food that we buy from outdoors is both unhealthier and more expensive"*; K11 said *"there are economic reasons but the most important point is that we don't know how the food we buy from outdoors is prepared, we know what we cook and use as ingredient at home, we buy the vegetables and fruits that we use by choosing"*. Some participants find cooking at home good only for health: *"Because I know the calories of the food I cook myself, I feel more comfortable, it is healthier"* (K6). It is understood from K6's words that in addition to that the meals cooked at home are healthy, availability to consume without dependency on the location is also a factor, *"We can also consume outdoors what we cook at home. We can take it to school for breakfast or we prefer to prepare and eat at a park or somewhere else while meeting with friends"*.

It is discovered that, in addition to budget, health and hygiene issues, participants also consider factors such as learning something new in the kitchen, preparing something for whom they love and they find cooking at home useful for this reason. *"Cooking at home, in your own kitchen is very enjoyable and nice, and it is really pleasing if you are cooking your favorite foods"* (K2); *"First it is economic, I am confident about the hygiene, and what I learn about cooking.."*(K8); *"First economic, second the time spend in the kitchen actually contributes to you. It is important who you spent your time with and for. I am pleased when I am cooking for someone I love, their admiration or the expectation of admiration makes me happy. Thinking that it is my kitchen and I will cook in it makes me happy"* (K9).

Thoughts about Cooking at Home and Findings on how this Behavior is Habituated

Participants generally have positive thoughts about cooking at home: *"When we have a problem of time limit, we verge towards eating outdoors but our preference is to eat at home"* (K2); *"I don't consider it as an obligation because I like it, you are doing something you already like in a more enjoyable way, so it is not a problem"* (K6). In addition, it is also among the findings that cooking at home provides a mental refinement and motivates the person to live a regular and healthier life. About this subject, K3 said *"Many people tend to chop something, cut into small pieces when they are angry, and kitchen is a nice place for it. Cooking lets oneself go, changes the focal point and at the end makes you feel more motivated when you decorate and eat what you have prepared. Because it is yourself the producer, eating feels happier"*. K4 expressed her desire of a regular life with a healthy diet with these words: *"I side with eating at home for a regular diet, eating from everything, taking vitamin and nutriment from everything"*. The unifying and moral side of cooking at home is also among the mentioned subjects: *"Family unity is important to me, to prepare and present something to my family in the same house is better than eating something outdoors prepared by someone else. I take the moral side mostly"* (K5); *"Cooking regularly at home brings much more soul to the house I guess. I started this behavior compulsorily but then started to like it, especially when my husband says my meals are very delicious. It is some kind of a mixture of obligation and pleasure"* (K8); *"If I am alone, I don't seek for food at home. But if there is someone, I cook and eat while they are at home. Existence of someone pushes me to cook and eat"* (K9).

As understood from the findings, behavior of cooking at home is generally obtained after marriage and then becomes a pleasing activity: *"I did not cook too much before I married, after marriage, I have been cooking every other day and having good time"* (K1); *"I did not have a cooking habit at home pretty much. My life came to a different point within these few months, I got married. So, I had to do but discovered that I like it"* (K8). There are also participants who accept cooking at home as a habitual behavior as a result of family traditions or culture included: *"I am the daughter of an Aegean family, we consume quite much vegetables and herbs, I don't slog too much in cooking at home thanks to that"* (K2); *"Cooking at home is not hard for me because I had that habit even before marriage"* (K6); *"Cooking at home mostly originates from family structure, the reason that made me get this habit is, I guess, my mother"* (K7). K11 expressed that cooking at home is a mandatorily habituated behavior for herself: *"I lost my mother when I was a child, I had to take care of my siblings, I have been cooking since I was nine years old"*.

Findings on the Opinions about the Future of Cooking at Home

Participants think that cooking at home will gradually decrease in the future. The phenomenon that the population cooking at home is going to decrease as a result of women's participation in the work life is expressed by K6 with these words, *"There are fast-food products everywhere outdoors, it is hard surely for working women, for that I don't think that the population cooking at home will increase"*; and by K8 as *"People will probably verge to fast-food associated with women getting in the work life and men not helping them"*. Contrary minded K4 expressed her belief in the increase in cooking at home despite the effectiveness of work life with these words: *"because the working population and*

the number of working women is high, eating outdoors is leaned towards. But on my side, the number of people cooking at home will be much more.”

There are also those who think that cooking at home is an ordeal and not preferred because of this. K5 expressed this as “I think they verge to outdoors because of easiness, now youngster do not very much like cooking, they prefer to take the easy way out”, and K7 as “I strictly don’t think that there will be an increase. A generation getting used to the easy one is coming. People’s hand start to focus on these works during childhood. Cooking will be difficult in the advanced ages for those who are not used to cook in the childhood”.

There is also a group of hopeful participants about the future of cooking at home. K3 expressed that there won’t be a decrease in the tendency of cooking at home thanks to factors such as health concerns, financial situation and will to consort, with these words; *“Especially when I look at the younger generation, I see that it becomes conscious. And this generation is showing effort to cook for both themselves and husbands, and their child if they are mothers or candidates. There is already an intensive work life, cooking at home will make them happier and will be more economic instead of having unhealthy fast-food meals outdoors in the spare time”*. K9 applied a bilateral approach to the economic dimension of cooking at home and emphasized with these words that income level is not an obvious factor in verging to eat outdoors: *“Actually, we can divide the upper-income level into two. Conscious parents, a family that is willing to grow up their child in a healthy way... on the other side, as long as there are families who follow the popular culture, want to show themselves and their child eating in a restaurant, or supporting their child in obtaining a hamburger toy seen on TV, there will be consumption outdoors”* (K9).

Statements of a participant underlines the solution found by the consumers who remain between consuming home-made food and eating outdoors but also worrying about living a healthy life, and new work branches that appear in this field: *“Although working intensity increases, there are pretty much works on the basis of home-made foods, for instance there are boutique kitchens, they make home service. In means of cooking at home, as a working women myself, it is not always possible, I think that in the following years there will be boutique places run by house wives or food made by house wives will be consumed “* (K2).

Evaluation and Conclusion

Conclusions of this study, in which the reasons that direct the members of the Y generation to cook at home are investigated, are grouped under three headings as “reasons of cooking at home”, “benefits of cooking at home” and “opinions on cooking at home”.

Living a healthy life and caring about the hygiene conditions came to the fore among the reasons pushing the members of the Y generation to cooking at home. Individuals have uncertainties about the ingredients and preparation processes of the food they eat outdoors and have concerns because of this. Another reason is economic concern. Although individuals are economically independent, they prefer to allocate a limited budget for eating outdoors. Feeling happy about cooking at home, having a pleasing time with the people they cook for are also among the reasons that direct the Y generation to cook at home.

Members of the Y generation think that cooking at home will be good for them mostly for health. Individuals stated that they do not worry about the hygiene of the foods with cooking at home. Another benefit is on the economic side. Decreasing effect of cooking at home on the money spent outdoors is one of the prominent benefits. In addition, individuals also feel happy with cooking at

home, trying new receipts and sharing these foods with people they love. Individuals emphasized that they enjoyed when the food they cooked is liked.

Members of the Y generation look positively to cook at home. Participants expressed that although they cooked by necessity at first, they liked this activity afterwards. They think that cooking at home has a moral dimension and creates a unification environment through spending time together at home. It came to exist that concerns about health also canalized individuals to cooking at home. However, individuals belonging to the Y generation think that cooking at home won't be preferred in the future. The reason is that they think that the coming generation will consider cooking at home as a difficult activity since women's attendance to the working life and fast food will be preferred.

With this study conducted, it is understood that the most critical issue for the Y generation about cooking at home is health. Y generation individuals' investigative personality and connection with the popular culture may lie under this concern. It is understood that the knowledge that cooking at home is healthier is reached through TV and doctors. On the other hand, economically independent Y generation does not prefer to eat outdoors. As it is known, Y generation is composed of individuals grown up by the X generation and they may be realizing this preference with future concerns. Y generation also knows how much valuable to spend time at home with family members. Therefore, they head for activities that will make them spend time together instead of activities that they can do separately. Cooking at home is a preferred activity for the Y generation because of enabling them spend time together and for advantages in the fields such as health, economy and hygiene.

As it happens in all researches, there also some points that this research is left limited. Only women were interviewed in the research. Interviews with men can also be conducted in the following researches and it can be understood if the reasons of cooking at home show difference between genders. Again, ingredients of the foods used in cooking at home can be subjected to a deeper inspection in the further research. By this means, the level of health concern can be searched through identifying whether natural or take-home foods are used in cooking at home. Finally, cultural, psychological and sociological dimensions of cooking were not subjected in this research. All mentioned fields are research fields in which cooking at home can be handle in different contexts.

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