

Quality and Relevance of College Education in Capiz State University - Pilar Campus

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Abstract— The study aimed to assess relevance of academic programs as well as the ability of the institution to provide the necessary skills, values and training that are expected by future employers. This research adopted the Philippine Graduate Tracer Survey by the Commission on Higher Education and served as the data gathering instrument. The subjects of the study were the 103 graduates of Capiz State University- Pilar Campus whose names were drawn randomly from the master list of 343 graduates of the different academic programs offered by the University from batch 2010 to 2014. Findings of the study revealed that majority of the graduates from batch 2010 to 2014 are employed on contractual basis. Generally, the graduates indicated that they received quality and relevant education. They suggested that adequate and up-to-date educational facilities and equipment and hiring of highly qualified and competent teachers are necessary to ensure quality and relevance of the academic programs in the institution.

Keywords— employment, quality and relevance, quality education

I. INTRODUCTION

Like most other countries in the world, the Philippines is rapidly changing its views on higher education. External pressures such as the Bologna Process, the Washington Accord, ASEAN 2015, and APEC have made us realize that higher education must be drastically reengineered in the face of a rapidly changing world. If all goes well, by 2015, the 11 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, including the Philippines, will have transformed into a “borderless” region where there is free flow of goods, services, investment capital, skilled labor and professional mobility. Asian integrated economy by 2015 will open up to qualified applicants from member countries all kinds of employment within member countries. Hence Filipinos graduates will be competing with job-seekers from other countries in the region who may be better educated and prepared for what the times and the industries will need. Competition for jobs and education is no longer just national but rather international, global.

With the threats and opportunities pose by this economic integration, Professional Regulation Commission highlights the need for more data-driven and evidence-based assessment of the global competitiveness of Filipino professionals. Likewise, the Commission on Higher education directed Higher Learning Institutions a periodic conduct of graduate tracer studies to assess programs that are in demand and responsive to the needs of industry, both domestic and international.

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This is to ensure the aligning higher learning institutions’ programs with national development goals.

In line with this, several studies were conducted to trace the quality and relevance of college education of the Philippine graduates. ^[3]Gines (2014) found out in a tracer study at Philippine Normal University (PNU) that with regards to the degree of satisfaction with school facilities, only three were rated with “Moderate Satisfaction”-these are communication facilities, equipment and computer laboratories. The top problems perceived by teachers that hinder their effective teaching includes inadequacy of laboratory facilities and equipment, insufficient library references and classrooms which are not conducive for teaching-learning process. Generally, results concur with the findings yielded by the Undergraduate Alumni Survey (2011) of University of California, Berkeley that alumni respondents expressed a very high degree of satisfaction with the quality of faculty instruction, availability of library materials, and access to various types of courses ^[8]. In addition, it was also found out by Butler (2004) in a similar study at University of California- Davis that alumni reported consistently high levels of satisfaction with their undergraduate education. Over 96% of responding graduates said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their undergraduate education. Finally, this goes in harmony with study of ^[6]Monahan and Fernandez (2015) which revealed that the services in the library, guidance, registrar, socio-cultural, cashier, canteen, assessment, scholarships/grants, and publication of Capiz State University, Pilar Campus, Capiz Philippines are effective.

In response to these call, the researchers embarked on this study to conduct a graduate tracer study on the experiences of its graduates from 2010 to 2014. This study aims to study the various aspects of the graduates’ experiences as they transition from university life to their chosen fields of professional practice. Results of this study shall help determine how relevant and responsive the campus curricular offerings to the demands of the industry. The survey results will also serve as important inputs for the future plans of the university and higher education in general.

Specifically, it aims to

1. Determine the personal and professional background of the graduates in terms of age, sex, batch graduated, course, professional eligibilities, highest level of education attained, and the graduates’ present employment;
2. Determine the graduates’ assessment of the institution in terms of
 - a. Quality of college education received
 - b. Relevance of college degree earned
 - c. Proficiency in computer software and communication,

- d. Relevance of college activities
 - e. Satisfaction to the college course taken; and
3. Determine strategies to improve the quality of education of the institution.

II. METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted from June 2014 – July 2015. The respondents of the study were the graduates of CapSU- Pilar from batches 2010 to 2014. Based on record a total 343 students graduated for the last five years. Seventeen (17) from Bachelor of Science in Social Work, 72 from Bachelor of Science in Management, 87 from Bachelor in Elementary Education, 106 from Bachelor Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management, 33 from Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and 28 from Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. Convenience sampling was used to determine the respondents. A total of 103 participated in the survey. This figure represents 33% of the total population of graduates of the campus for the period covered in the survey. The content of survey questionnaire was adapted from the Philippine Graduate Tracer Survey 2012. Frequency, percentage, ranking, mean, t-test and analysis of variance were employed to interpret the data using SPSS.

III. FINDINGS

Quality of College Education Experienced by Graduates

Fifteen indicators were used in this regard to gauge aspects relating to quality of the college education experienced by graduates.

Overall, graduates rated the quality of their college education in Capiz State University Pilar Campus as “above average” (3.58). This implies that the quality of education received by graduates meets and often exceeds their expectations. This further implies that respondents, in general, acknowledged the positive contribution of their college education to their personal development.

The mean scores obtained ranging from 3.94 to 3.42 indicated that 10 out of 15 indicators included in this survey were rated by graduates “above average”. These include provision of work placements and other work experiences such as OJT, internships, practicum (3.94); participation in research projects (3.87); quality of instruction (3.86); extracurricular activities (3.80); opportunity for faculty consultation beyond class hours (3.79); curriculum of degree program (3.78); opportunity for extension or community activities (3.76); grading system (3.67); availability of scholarship/financial assistance; and variety of courses offered (3.42). It means that the quality school related factors such as students’ services and development, curriculum, instruction, faculty, administration and supervision were found to be very relevant and often exceeds the expectations of the graduates. This result was found to be relevant to the study of ^[1]Arboleda et al (2012) among 50 BS Hotel and Restaurant Management Graduates of Capiz State University Pilar Campus from 2009 to 2011. Results of the study revealed that the graduate were satisfied on the skills they learned from the institution.

On the other hand, 5 out of 15 indicators obtained mean scores ranging from 3.40 to were rated by graduates as

“average”. These include student participation in the formulation of school policies (3.40); supply of teaching materials (3.39); library collection and facilities (3.23); technical equipment (3.22); and computer/internet facilities (3.04).

It can be concluded that the university just meet the expectation however it cannot be denied that the services on these area were perceived to be not delivered fully well to the graduates when they were still in the university. It can be noted that all of these except for one (student participation in the formulation of school policies) were dependent on budgetary of financial resources of the university. It is fact that the availability and adequacy of up-to-date and hi-tech physical plant and facilities, including equipment, laboratories, and educational supplies and materials relies solely on funds that can be generated internally and externally by the university. Hence, the administration needs to allot extra ordinary effort on its financial management so as to provide the needed services to students.

TABLE 1. MEAN SCORES OBTAINED IN TERMS OF THE QUALITY OF COLLEGE EDUCATION EXPERIENCED BY GRADUATES.

Areas	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Provision of work placements and other work experiences (OJT, internships, practicum)	3.94	Above average
Participation in research projects	3.87	Above Average
Quality of Instruction	3.86	Above average
Extracurricular activities	3.80	Above average
Opportunity for faculty consultation beyond class hours	3.79	Above average
Curriculum of degree program	3.78	Above average
Opportunity for extension or community activities	3.76	Above average
Grading system	3.67	Above average
Availability of scholarship/financial assistance	3.60	Above average
Variety of courses offered	3.42	Above average
Student participation in the formulation of school policies	3.40	Average
Supply of teaching materials	3.39	Average
Library collection and facilities	3.23	Average
Technical equipment	3.22	Average
Computer/internet facilities	3.04	Average
OVERALL	3.58	Above average

Quality and Relevance of College Degree in terms of developing Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies of the Graduates

Graduates also assessed the how well their college degree helped them to learn, develop, and apply the knowledge, skills, and competencies for their life after graduation.

Sixteen indicators were used to assess this context. Generally, the graduates acknowledged the positive contribution of their college degree to their personal development. The overall mean of 3.91 indicated that their college education helped them to be well prepared meet challenges and demands after graduation.

Notably, all indicators included obtained mean scores ranging from 4.07 to 3.52 with equivalent adjectival rating of “very well” which means that their college degree was found to

be very relevant and prepared them well in applying the knowledge they learn, developed their skills and competencies which is necessary for their life after graduation.

Indicators included are the as follows: show independence and initiative in identifying solving problems (4.07); act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind (4.05); work well with others irrespective of age, gender, race, religion or political persuasion (4.02); contribute to learning at the knowledge (4.00); adapt to varied roles, job responsibilities, schedules and context (3.98); demonstrate initiative to advance skill levels toward a professional level (3.98); field-specific knowledge of methods and laws/regulations (3.96); field-specific and cross-disciplinary theoretical knowledge (3.95); assume shared responsibility for collaborative work and value individual contributions in team efforts (3.95); apply a range of strategies to problem solving (3.94), articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, and non-verbal communication skills (3.94); use information accurately and creatively to solve problems or issues (3.89); reflect critically on learning experiences and processes (3.87); interpret information and draw conclusions using analytical skills (3.84), use technology as a tool for research, organization, management, evaluation and communication (3.60) ; and possess a range of IT skills (3.52).

TABLE II. MEANS SCORES OBTAINED ON RESPONDENTS' ASSESSMENT ON HOW WELL THEIR COLLEGE DEGREE HELPED THEM PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER GRADUATION.

Knowledge/ Skills/ Competencies	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Show independence and initiative in identifying solving problems	4.07	Very well
Act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind	4.05	Very well
Work well with others irrespective of age, gender, race, religion or political persuasion	4.00	Very well
Contribute to learning at the workplace	4.00	Very well
Adapt to varied roles, job responsibilities, schedules and context	3.98	Very well
Demonstrate initiative to advance skill levels toward a professional level	3.98	Very well
Field-specific knowledge of methods and laws/regulations	3.96	Very well
Field-specific and cross-disciplinary theoretical knowledge	3.95	Very well
Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work and value individual contributions in team efforts	3.95	Very well
Apply a range of strategies to problem solving	3.94	Very well
Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, and non-verbal communication skills	3.94	Very well
Use information accurately and creatively to solve problems or issues	3.89	Very well
Reflect critically on learning experiences and processes	3.87	Very well
Interpret information and draw conclusions using analytical skills	3.84	Very well
Use technology as a tool for research, organization, management, evaluation and communication	3.60	Very well
Possess a range of IT skills	3.52	Very well
OVERALL	3.91	Very well

Graduates' Skills in Computer Software

The respondents were asked to rate their ability to use computer software at the time they graduated from college compared to the present. They were assessed on the basis of four indicators relating to the computer software skills.

Results showed that graduates rated their skill in computer software as "good" upon graduation in word processing (3.30), use of spreadsheet (3.27), subject/profession-related software (2.84), and in database creation or management (2.72). However, they rated themselves "fair" in terms of their ability in programming languages (2.57).

At present, significant improvement were apparent in terms of their skills in programming languages (3.56) and in word processing (3.44). They claimed that they were now very good on use of this computer software. Similarly, a significant increase on their skills in terms of database creation or management (2.94) and use of spreadsheet (3.03) were claimed by graduates. However, the increase recorded in terms of their skill on the use of profession-related software was found to be not significant. Hence, the skill upon graduation compare to the present is still the same.

This means that graduates were still accumulating knowledge and skills out of experiences they encountered after graduation. This proves that experiential learning is an effective tool for life. In fact, ^[5]Manowaluilou (2008) stated that information technology skills were being viewed as one of necessity and required skills for all employees of the new era .Personal computer applications, such as word processing, and spreadsheets were gaining popularity in education and businesses. In addition, Adams (2014) confirmed that proficiency with computer software programs is one of the 10 skills employers say they seek from graduates.

TABLE III. COMPARISON OF THE COMPUTER SOFTWARE SKILLS OF GRADUATES UPON GRADUATION AND AT PRESENT.

Computer Software Skill	Upon Graduation Mean	At Present Mean	t-value	p-value
Word processing	3.3	3.44	-3	0.004*
Programming languages	2.57	3.56	-8.9	0.000*
Use of spreadsheet	3.27	3.03	2.4	0.019*
Database creation or management	2.72	2.94	-3	0.003*
Subject/profession-related software	2.84	3.11	-1.9	0.063

* significant

** non significant

Graduates' Communication Proficiency

The communication proficiency of graduates was assessed on the basis of comparing four indicators which include their proficiency in speaking and in writing English and Filipino languages upon graduation in college and at present.

Upon graduating to college, the graduates rated themselves "good" in speaking (3.37 and 3.34) and writing (3.35 and 3.33) in both Filipino and English.

Results indicated that the slight increase on the means obtained (3.42 and 3.39; 3.39 and 3.36 respectively) at present is not significant. Hence, their proficiency upon graduation is still the same at present.

Indeed, it cannot be denied that proficient communication is a skill that every graduate must possess in order to land a decent job. In fact according to Sto. Tomas (2005), a mini-survey of 50 employers who used the PhilJobnet for their hiring requirements showed that one of the reasons why despite of the preliminary matches between a jobseeker and a potential job, most applicants did not get the job due to poor communication skills. Hence, the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently is a must have attribute, for according to the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) in 2012, four of ten fresh graduates and young jobseekers are not hired because they lack three key qualities—critical thinking, initiative, and effective communication skills.

TABLE IV. COMPARISON OF THE COMMUNICATION PROFICIENCY OF GRADUATES UPON GRADUATION AND AT PRESENT.

Communication Skills	Upon Graduation	At Present	t-value	p-value
	Mean	Mean		
Spoken Filipino	3.37	3.42	-1.2	0.253**
Written Filipino	3.35	3.39	-1	0.32**
Spoken English	3.34	3.39	-1.3	0.198**
Written English	3.33	3.36	-0.8	0.441**

* significant
 ** non significant

Quality and Relevance of the Activities in College to Life After Graduation

As to the preparation of the College/University on the lives of the respondents after graduation, six indicators were used to gauge this aspect.

Results showed that two of the activities obtained a mean of 4.32 and 4.21 and were rated with “excellent.” These are report and thesis-writing and OJT and internships respectively. Activities such as group or team activities, regular class attendance, projects and problem-based learning scenarios and study visits obtained mean scores of 4.19, 4.14, 4.07 and 3.94 were rated “above average”. Generally, the college/university obtained an above average rating in terms of preparing the students to life after graduation.

Results was found to be relevant with the findings of Mercado (2010) in a tracer study involving the graduates of Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation which revealed that a great number of the respondents claimed that the training they received in the undergraduate program was very much and much related to the tasks they perform in their current employment. Macatangay (2013) likewise found out in tracer study of BSCS Graduates of Lyceum of the Philippines University that the respondents agreed that the services and activities being offered by community extension, linkages and research were very relevant to their job placement. The respondents agreed that the services and activities being offered by community extension, linkages and research were very relevant to the job placement of the respondents . Moreover, her study revealed that linkages with other institutions and OJT really help the students to grow professionally and helped them be exposed with the real world specifically in the conduct of their On-the-Job training. Same is true with the development of

research activities and community extension services. It helps them be aware of extending their efforts and services to the community.

TABLE V. ACTIVITIES IN COLLEGE IN PREPARATION TO LIFE AFTER GRADUATION.

Activities	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Regular class attendance	4.14	Above average
Projects and problem-based learning scenarios	4.07	Above average
OJT and internships	4.21	Excellent
Report and thesis-writing	4.32	Excellent
Study visits	3.94	Above average
Group or team activities	4.19	Above average
OVERALL	4.15	Above average

Quality and Relevance of College degree to Future Employment

Graduates were asked to rate on how well did their college studies helped them for their future employment

When it comes to the efficacy of the college studies to the respondents, the result yielded the highest mean scores of 4.36 and 4.24 interpreted as “Excellent” in terms of personality development and getting a job. Long-term career prospects on the other hand obtained a mean score of 4.14 and was interpreted “Above average”.

In general, the graduates rated their college studies a rating of excellent in terms of helping them prepare for their future employment.

This suggests that the respondents highly regard and appreciate their college education for according to a New York Federal Reserve study (2014), despite the recent struggles of college graduates, investing in a college degree may be more important than ever before because those who fail to do so are falling further and further behind. Students who gain a college education often have higher lifetime earnings and experience a variety of other benefits, including a better quality of life. People who lack educational degrees are more likely to be limited to basic jobs in service, manufacturing and construction industries. While employees with a high school education may secure jobs with good benefits, college graduates typically fare better, entering higher-level careers with greater salaries. They are also more likely to receive promotions, earn raises and develop reasoning and communication skills that can be applied to their jobs.

TABLE VI. QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF COLLEGE DEGREE TO FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

Area	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Getting a job	4.24	Excellent
Long-term career prospects	4.14	Above average
Personality development	4.36	Excellent
OVERALL	4.25	Excellent

Viability of the Program and University to the Graduates

Respondents were asked if they were given a chance to retake their college years, the mean score of 3.45 obtained and interpreted as “Highly likely” that the graduates would still “choose same college/university”.

The means scores of 3.40 and 2.63 obtained from the graduates responses as to whether they would still “choose the same course” and “pursue a technical/vocational course instead of a college degree.”

A tracer study in college of Business Education (CBE) in Tanzania (2016) likewise found out that many of the respondents would prefer to pursue the same course. Moreover, ^[4]Lalican (2007) traced the graduates of College of Agriculture of University of the Philippines Los Baños with the aim of assessing its curriculum and discuss the relevance of its productivity with the present condition, it was found out that if given the chance to take their agriculture degree all over again, about 62 percent of the respondents said they would remain with their major field.

TABLE VI. VIABILITY OF PROGRAMS/COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY TO THE GRADUATES.

Options	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Choose the same course	3.40	Likely
Choose same college/university	3.45	Highly likely
Pursue a technical/vocational course instead of a college degree	2.63	Likely
OVERALL	3.16	Likely

Graduates Suggestions for the Program/Department Be More Responsive To the Needs of the Industry

As to the suggestions of the graduates on how the program or their department be more responsive to the needs of the industry, data revealed that graduates considered adequate educational facilities and equipment (20 Or 19.42%) as the top most priority followed closely by intensive on the job training or immersion to actual work of students (18 or 17.48). Other important considerations according to graduates are provision for unlimited internet/ Wi-Fi services, better time frame for laboratory/ hands-on/ practicum and wider linkages and networks which obtained 13 or 12.62% of responses.

In addition, the graduates suggested that to improve the program/ department there should be adequate and readily available educational supplies and materials (9 or 8.74%, functional/well equipped laboratories (7 or 6.80%), provision for computers/projectors/TV screen in the classrooms (6 or 5.83%), and teachers should be updated with the current trends in education (3 or 2.91%).

Generally, it can be noted that “aids” which could facilitate the learning and teaching processes such as ICT were the top most important suggestions made by the graduates to improve the department/program to make them more responsive to the needs and requirements of the industry. These means that these facilities and services are considered by graduates as very vital to the acquisition of knowledge and more importantly skills which helped them prepare meet the challenges and demands of their jobs

Therefore, it is very important that the management will always make sure that these facilities and services are always available, adequate and in good running condition to better facilitate learning between the teachers and the students thereby the goal of attaining the quality education for the graduates is always achieved.

On the other hand, in a tracer study by Ramirez, et. al.(2014) , it was shown that there is still a need to strengthen the skills/competencies that could make curricular offerings more relevant to current jobs specifically the skills on communication, critical thinking, Information technology, human relations, and problem-solving. Moreover, ^[4]Lalican (2007) traced the graduates of College of Agriculture of University of the Philippines Los Baños with the aim of assessing its curriculum and discuss the relevance of its productivity with the present condition, the respondents were asked about other courses that should be included in the BSA curriculum to help prospective graduates in the performance of their job. It was found out that the respondents need additional courses on management/economics, practical applications, additional courses in agriculture, and courses in communication, among others.

TABLE VIII. GRADUATES SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE INDUSTRY.

Areas for Improvement	Percentage	Rank
Adequate educational facilities and equipment	19.42	1
Intensive OJT /immersion to actual work	17.48	2
Provision for unlimited internet and wi-fi services	12.62	4
Better time frame for laboratory/hands on	12.62	4
Wider linkages/networks for outside activities and exposures	12.62	4
Adequate and readily available educational supplies and materials	8.74	6
Functional/well equipped laboratory	6.80	7
Provision for computers/projectors/TV screen in the classrooms	5.83	8
Teachers should be updated with the current trends	2.91	9

Multiple Responses

Graduates Suggestions to Improve the Quality of Education in CapSU Pilar Campus

Graduates were asked to make valuable suggestions in order improve the quality of education of their alma mater. Out of the responses, seven core needs were identified.

Majority of the graduates (77 or 74.76%) suggested that the classrooms/ laboratories/libraries and other facilities should be well equipped and functional with readily available computers, projectors, TV, and internet/ Wi-Fi connection.

The greater percentage of the graduates (53 or 51.45%) considered as second top most important suggestion to attain quality education is the selection and hiring of highly qualified and competent teachers.

Other notable suggestion to achieved quality education are construction additional buildings and amenities (13 or 12.61%), conduct of more relevant trainings and seminars for students (10 or 9.71%), strict and firm policy implementation (5 or 4.85%),

students and parents should be more cooperative in terms of their financial obligations (5 or 4.85%), availability of technical facilities for research (3 or 2.91%).

The graduates considered “aids” to efficient teaching very relevant to attain quality education. These include technologies, facilities, equipment and services which facilitate the teaching and learning process and makes instruction efficient and effective. Likewise, it is worthy to note that the graduates gave high regard to teachers as significant factors in attaining the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they need to learn and acquire. This implies that quality education can be acquired through excellent, efficient and competent teachers.

Therefore, it is very important on the part of the administration to see to it that its teachers are highly qualified, competent and efficient in delivering quality instruction and that they aim to become lifelong learners. This can be attained by selecting and hiring the most qualified applicant for the position. This can also be attained by a strong support of the administration to assist in providing effective faculty development programs for their continuing professional education. It could also be traced that the graduates believed that effective and efficient management and supervision of the school can lead to attainment of quality education.

Overall, it can be deduced that physical, human and financial resources are of still equal importance in achieving the goals of education...the quality graduates.

On the other hand, in a tracer study by ^[7]Ramirez, et. al.(2014), it has been recommended to conduct review and upgrading of curricular offerings to ensure the provision of more skill/competency development programs specially for skills on communication, critical thinking, Information technology, human relations, and problem-solving. Macatangay (2013) suggested for Faculty development trainings to be given to the faculty member teaching professional subjects and the provision of relevant trainings for the teachers in professional subjects on how to integrate values in the subject.

TABLE IX. GRADUATES SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN CAPSU PILAR CAMPUS

Areas for Improvement	Percentage	Rank
Well-equipped and functional classrooms, laboratories/libraries/facilities should be well equipped with computers, projectors, TV, and internet/ Wi-Fi connection	74.76	1
Hiring highly qualified and competent teachers	51.45	2
Construction additional buildings and amenities	12.61	3
Conduct of more relevant trainings and seminars for students	9.71	4
Strict and firm policy implementation	4.85	5.5
Students and parents should be more cooperative in terms of their financial obligations	4.85	5.5
Availability of technical facilities for research	2.91	6

Multiple Responses

IV. CONCLUSION

Generally, the graduates received quality and relevant college education which they need for employment and personal development. Provision of work placements and other work

experiences such as OJT, internships, practicum and considered to be the most challenging and rewarding experienced during their college. Adequate and up-to-date educational facilities and equipment and hiring of highly qualified and competent teachers are the common suggestions of graduates to assure quality and relevance of education.

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