

2.4 Education

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Biennial PhD
Symposium on
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The Sustainable Development Strategy of Greek Universities, in their own words.

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In 2015, the United Nations unanimously approved the **Agenda 2030** towards Sustainable Development and the **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets**.

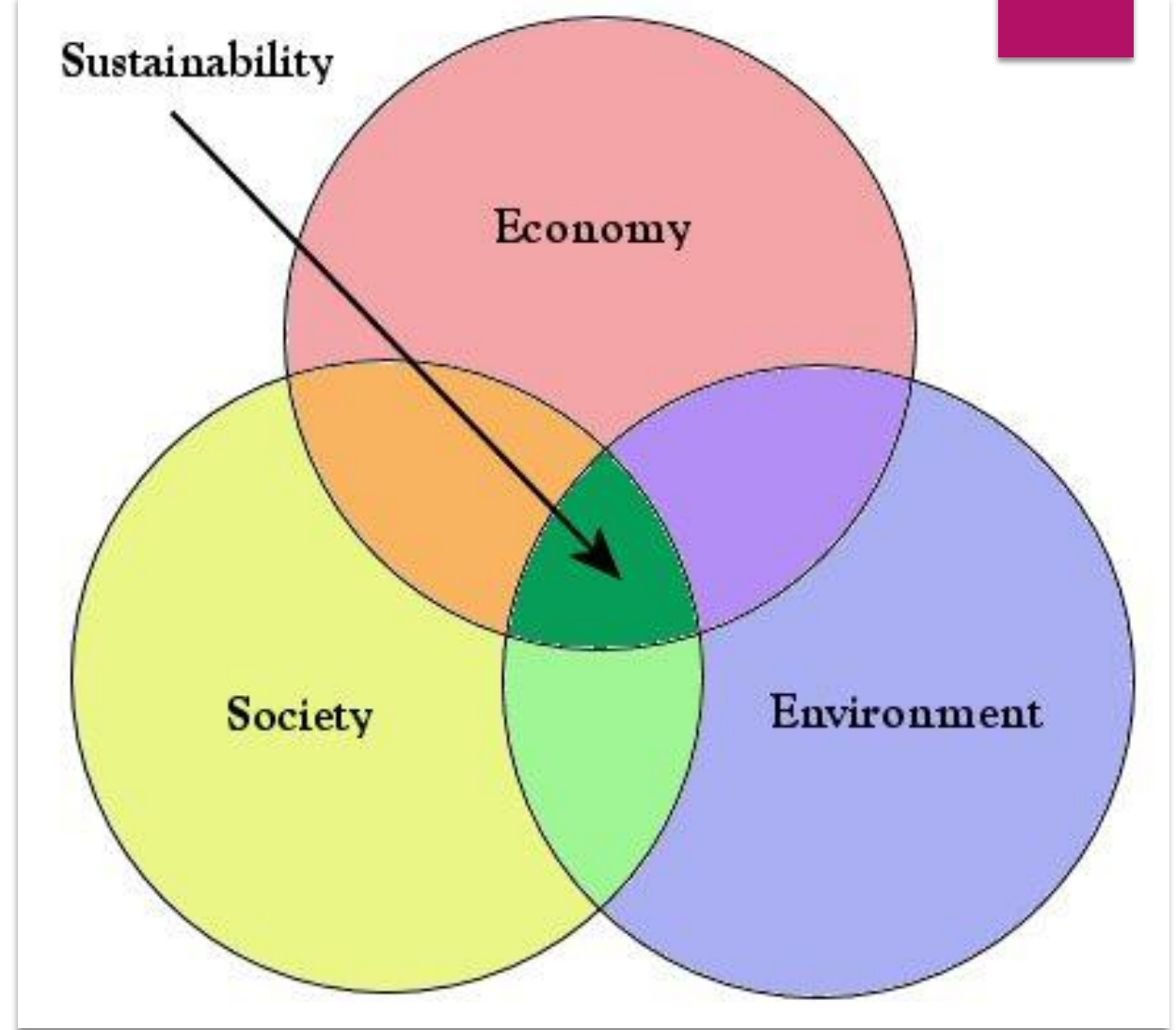


Sustainability VS Sustainable Development

- ▶ **Sustainability:** The first definition of sustainability is “the creation and use of resources that fulfill the requirements of the present without jeopardizing the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs” (UNESCO, 2021). Sustainability, therefore, is about finding methods to make sure that the choices and actions we make now do not have a detrimental influence on the future.
- ▶ **Sustainable development** is known as achieving human development objectives while preserving the environment and the resources required for the future. Being a complicated concept, sustainable development requires the cooperation of several parties, including corporations, governments, and civil society groups. Governments are crucial in advancing sustainability by creating policies and financial support for education, technology, and infrastructure. Businesses may contribute by creating more sustainable goods and services and investing in green technology like renewable energy. Organizations from civil society may assist by promoting more robust environmental protection and educating people about the value of sustainability.
- ▶ **What is the difference between sustainability and sustainable development?**
- ▶ Sustainability means wisely using resources to preserve them for future generations. It is an expansive notion that considers the impact of our consumer habits, economic activity, and way of life on the environment and its resources. Sustainable development relies on economic growth to provide for human needs and protect the environment for future generations. To guarantee that development is both fair and environmentally sustainable, it is a process that combines economic, social, and environmental goals.

The three pillars
(dimensions) of
Sustainability are

- ▶ Economic dimension
- ▶ Social dimension
- ▶ Environmental dimension



This paper presents the initial findings on the research question:

What is the Sustainable Development Strategy of Greek Universities?



Universities and SDGs

1. Universities play a vital role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through teaching, research, and their third mission of addressing societal challenges.
 2. Teaching: Universities should provide courses and programs focused on sustainable development and embed it in all study programs.
 3. Research: Universities can generate new knowledge, technologies, and solutions for sustainable development through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.
 4. Third mission: Universities have a social responsibility to use and transfer academic knowledge to address societal challenges and engage with communities.
 5. SDSN guides: SDSN Australia/Pacific published guides outlining how universities can contribute to the SDGs, covering research, education, governance, operations, and public engagement.
 6. Italian and Spanish universities: Universities in Italy and Spain have shown good performance in sustainability rankings and have been leaders in monitoring greenhouse gas emissions and climate change mitigation efforts.
- Overall, universities have the potential to shape future leaders, conduct impactful research, and contribute to sustainable development through their teaching, research, and engagement with society.

Greek Universities and SD

1. Greece has expressed commitment to sustainable development through national strategies, but there is currently no concerted effort by Greek universities to adopt sustainable development principles or contribute to sustainable development.
2. Annual rankings such as UI Greenmetrics and Times Higher Education Impact rankings assess universities' performance in sustainable development. Greek universities' participation in these rankings is limited, with only a few universities choosing to participate.
3. The available research on Greek universities' contribution to sustainable development mainly focuses on education for sustainable development, and there is room for improvement in integrating sustainability into curricula.
4. The Rectors' Synod in Greece signed sustainability charters in 2011 and 2022, emphasizing the commitment of Greek universities to sustainable development principles and the need for a holistic approach.
5. Evaluations conducted by Greece's Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency and the annual report of the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education provide some insight into the environmental policies and performance of Greek universities.
6. Overall, there is a research gap in understanding the current situation and commitment of Greek universities to Agenda 2030 and sustainable development, highlighting the need for further investigation and exploration of alternative sources of information.

Methodology

Previous secondary research in scientific publications did not yield significant findings, leading to a focus on additional channels.

Two additional resources were identified: the websites of Greek universities and grey literature, which often go overlooked but are approved by scientific committees or university leadership.

1. University websites were chosen due to their suitability for publishing sustainability strategies, reports, and official documents, providing up-to-date and real-time information on university operations.
2. University websites also offer transparency, good governance, and accountability, essential elements of sustainable development.
3. Grey literature was selected to explore ongoing research, contemporary themes, and student involvement, as it is published in the national language and provides insights into current trends.
4. Grey literature reflects student awareness, commitment, and involvement in achieving SDGs and implementing Agenda 2030 in their future careers and life choices.
5. By utilizing these channels, the research aimed to uncover the current situation and trends related to sustainable development in Greek universities.

Key findings

Grey Literature:

1. Sustainable development and Green Universities are topics being discussed and researched in Greek universities.
2. The University of The Aegean, particularly the Department of Environment, has produced the most graduate and postgraduate theses on environmental strategy of universities, Green Universities, and green campus initiatives.
3. Various other universities have unpublished theses on sustainable development and universities, Green campus, or Green Universities.
4. Democritus University of Thrace has been researched as a case study of a Green University, and the unpublished PhD dissertation is publicly accessible.
5. Financial and human factors are identified as the main inhibiting factors for the effective implementation of environmental policy in Greek universities.

Overall:

1. The universities mentioned can serve as good examples for other universities looking to adopt sustainable initiatives or develop a solid sustainable development strategy.
2. The overall impression is that the roadmap towards sustainable development is not well-prepared for Greek universities.

University Sites:

1. National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) has a sustainability strategy and a Senate Committee for Energy Management & Sustainability overseeing its implementation.
2. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) has implemented an Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) plan, making it the first green university in Greece.
3. University of West Attica shows a strong commitment to environmental sustainability, with initiatives in energy efficiency, recycling, water management, and more.
4. University of Patras has established the Sustainable Green University Committee and implemented circular economy solutions, improved environmental performance, and reduced energy consumption.
5. University of Piraeus promotes the pillars of sustainable development through studies, research, and its strategic plan.
6. National and Kapodistrian University of Athens has published its strategic development planning and shows commitment to sustainable development through reports and programs.

Discussion, Summary of Main Points:

1. Universities play a crucial role in achieving SDG 4 (Quality Education) by providing education for sustainable development, promoting sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, peace, and cultural diversity.
2. Universities can contribute to almost every SDG through teaching, research, and their commitment to gender equality, justice, peace, good governance, sustainable consumption, health, and well-being.
3. University campuses have an environmental impact through energy consumption, CO2 emissions, and infrastructure needs, which can be addressed through goals related to energy (Goal 7) and climate action (Goal 13).
4. Universities can contribute to affordable housing (Goals 9 and 11) by providing affordable dormitories, reducing economic barriers for less privileged students.
5. Greek universities have been under-researched in terms of their efforts towards achieving the SDGs, and there is limited available documentation on their SDG implementation.

Discussion, Summary of Main Points: (2)

6. The slow progress in publishing measurable results may indicate that Greek universities are still in the process of setting frameworks and addressing challenges.
7. Most scientific publications from Greek universities focus on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which is a key initiative but does not cover the full spectrum of the SDGs.
8. Initial findings suggest that some Greek universities, such as National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), University of Patras, and University of West Attica, have embedded SDGs in their strategies and have taken initiatives towards becoming green universities.
9. Many Greek universities assign graduate, postgraduate, and PhD theses on SD and university sustainability, indicating the emerging importance of these topics in the academic community.
10. The identified SD strategies and initiatives indicate a partial readiness of Greek universities to contribute to the 17 SDGs of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Summary of Conclusions:

1. Universities have the potential to contribute to sustainable development (SD) through various means, including offering relevant courses, conducting research, and creating inclusive campus communities.
2. The research findings indicate that Greek universities lack solid evidence of having sustainable development strategies or actively working towards SD goals.
3. Existing scientific publications in Greece primarily focus on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), a UN initiative introduced two decades ago.
4. The research highlights the potential of additional resources, such as university websites and unpublished graduate theses and dissertations, to provide hidden data and evidence on sustainability strategies and initiatives among Greek universities.
5. The majority of Greek universities do not have a holistic approach to sustainable development embedded in a comprehensive strategy.
6. The reasons behind this lack of emphasis on sustainability are not clear, but it may be due to a low priority placed on the sustainability agenda within universities or the absence of a horizontal initiative by the Ministry of Education in Greece.
7. Greek universities participating in the ERASMUS European Universities initiative have the advantage of international cooperation and learning from other European universities that have made significant progress in SD.
8. These European alliances can act as living labs and foster global partnerships for sustainable development, contributing to SDG 17.

Highlighted Results:

Greek universities lack solid evidence of sustainable development strategies.

Existing publications primarily focus on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Additional resources like university websites and unpublished theses can provide hidden data on sustainability initiatives.

The majority of Greek universities lack a comprehensive approach to sustainable development.

The Ministry of Education's role is crucial in promoting SD initiatives within universities.

ERASMUS European Universities initiative offers opportunities for international cooperation and learning.

European alliances can act as living labs and foster global partnerships for SD.

Greek secondary school teachers' and educational officials' views on teacher evaluation.

Implications for school culture and teachers' autonomy.

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Abstract

Teacher evaluation policies are important for improving the quality of education.

Teachers in Greece resist these policies due to threats to their autonomy and professional identity.

The study aims to explore reasons for resistance and recommendations for more acceptable policies.

The study uses Scott's institutional theory, Bourdieu's habitus theory, and Fullan's educational change theory.

Mixed-methods approach used, including questionnaire and interviews with teachers and officials.

Findings suggest habitus shaped by historical and cultural factors.

Study proposes effective communication, negotiation, and recognition of habitus to address resistance.

Keywords: teacher evaluation, resistance, autonomy, culture, reform

Research aims

To describe how teachers and educational officials perceive teacher evaluation models.

To illuminate what teachers and educational officials consider as the main reasons why teacher evaluation policies have not been implemented in the Greek educational context.

To investigate whether teachers and educational officials believe that teacher evaluation affects teachers' professional autonomy and school culture.

To discover whether there are issues, such as lack of trust and resistance, in the implementation of teacher evaluation in Greece.

To analyse the interaction between the central administration and teachers.

To identify the mechanisms which might enhance the successful implementation of teacher evaluation in Greece.

To inform the policy about best practices to implement teacher evaluation.

Research questions

What are teachers' perception and experience of teacher evaluation, its purposes, and the extent this affects their work?

What are educational leaders' perception and experience of teacher evaluation, its purposes, and the extent this affects teachers' work?

What is the juxtaposition between teachers' perception and educational leaders' perception of teacher evaluation in Greece?

Theoretical framework

Scott's institutional theory (2001) examines how the wider social, cultural, and political context of education in Greece shapes teachers' and educational officials' attitudes towards teacher evaluation policies.

Fullan's educational change theory (2015) provides insights into the factors that facilitate or impede the implementation of teacher evaluation policies in schools.

Bourdieu's habitus theory (1977) investigates how teachers' individual dispositions, attitudes, and behaviours are shaped by their social and cultural backgrounds, as well as how their habitus interacts with institutional and policy environments.

Why I chose to research this topic

Teacher evaluation has been a frontrunner internationally as an important strategy in measuring teaching effectiveness and quality in education, as well as promoting professional development.

Some researchers assert that well-designed evaluation plays a key role on the teaching quality and effectiveness.

‘Teacher quality is the most important school-level factor affecting student achievement’ (Looney 2011: 440).

If teacher performance and pedagogy play a crucial role to student achievement, then teacher evaluation comes to the fore, can stimulate professional development (Tuytens and Devos 2014) and can be considered as a quality assurance mechanism (Danielson and McGreal 2000; Kleinhenz and Ingvarson 2004).

Rationale of the research

Personal interest in the research topic as I worked as a state schoolteacher in Greece.

The implementation of teacher evaluation has been implemented in many countries.

However, implementation has encountered significant challenges in some countries, including Greece, where it remains largely inactive due to various confrontations and concerns, situating Greece as an anomaly when compared with other European countries.

Research Methodology

Mixed-methods approach used, including a questionnaire and interviews.

Participants include teachers and educational officials.

Questionnaire was answered by 256 participants.

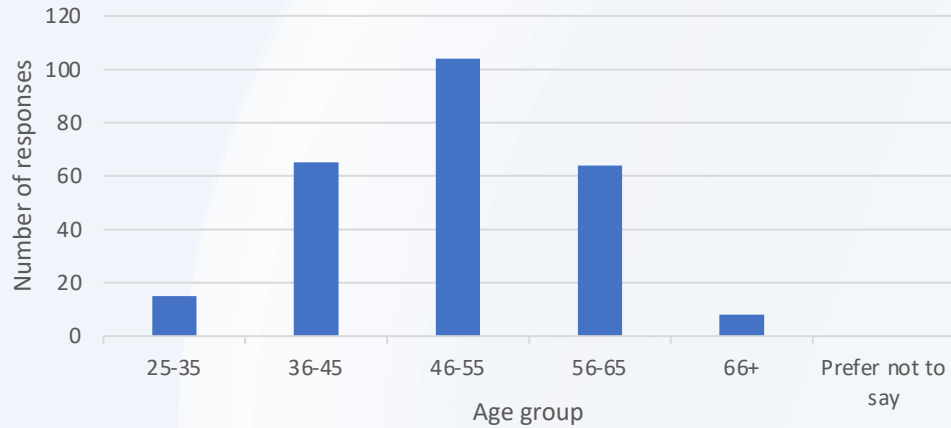
Quantitative data analysed using SPSS v. 26.

Semi-structured interviews with 13 participants.

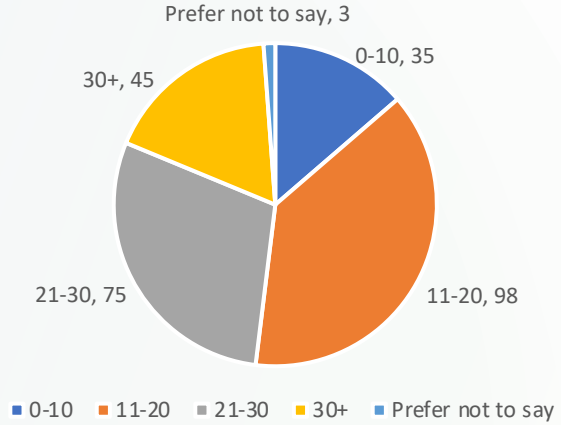
Qualitative data analysed using NVIVO v. 1.7.1 generating codes and themes.

Questionnaire demographics

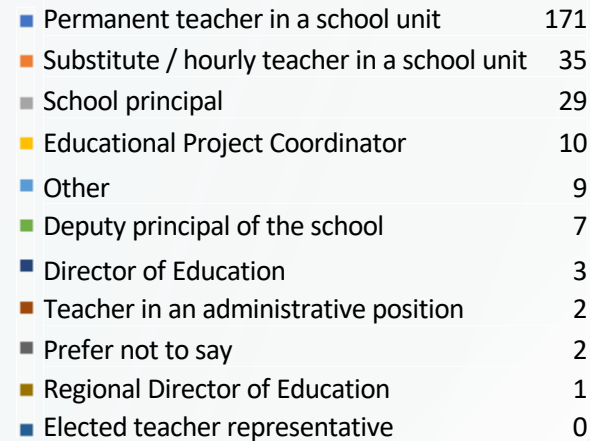
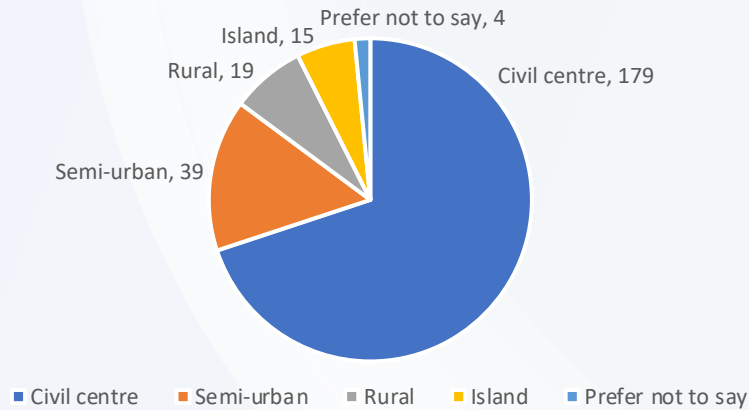
Participants' age groups



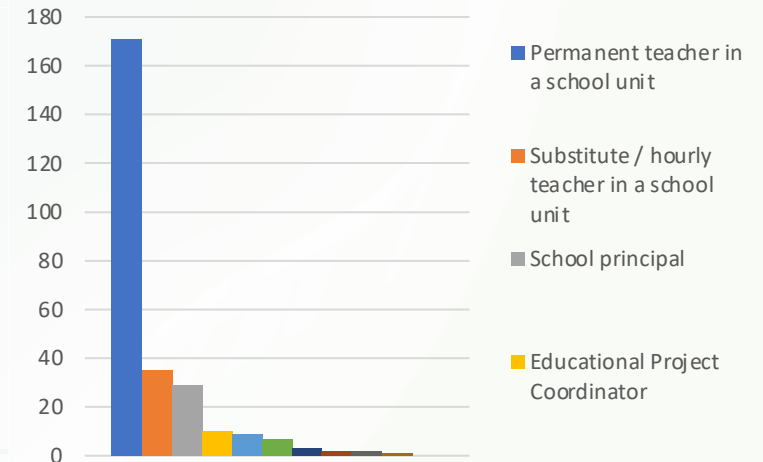
Participants' years of experience



Participants' school unit areas



Participants' position



Questionnaire results

68% believe that school culture is affected by teacher evaluation practices.

66% believe that teacher evaluation should be part of an overall school evaluation.

62% think that evaluation is necessary for teachers.

62% believe that teacher evaluation affects classroom autonomy.

48% believe that teacher evaluation is beneficial for teachers and their work.

Factors contribute to school improvement:

- Student/teacher ratio (96%)
- Staffing (96%)
- Better infrastructure (90%)
- Teacher training (89%)
- Teacher evaluation (52%)
- Parents' association involvement in school activities (43%)

Questionnaire results

Who should carry out teacher evaluation:

- School counsellors (50%)
- Headteachers (48%)
- Colleagues (28%)

Factors teacher evaluation should consider:

- School climate (74%)
- Teacher self-evaluation (70%)
- Classroom observations (52%)
- Internal school evaluation (47%)
- Student score results (9%)

Aim of teacher evaluation:

- The quality of the educational system (78%)
- Increase teacher self-awareness (77%)
- Improve educational practices (76%)
- Mental resilience and endurance (75%)
- Professional development (73%)

Interviewees' details

Special Education, Supply Teacher, Amelia, 8
Literature, Headteacher, Mary, 23

Mathematics, Educational Project Coordinator, Olivia, 30

Mathematics, Educational Project Coordinator, Robert, 36
School Nurse, Permanent Teacher, George, 9
Mathematics, Permanent Teacher, Kate, 20
Mathematics, Regional Director, Nick, 35
I.C.T, Permanent Teacher, Rosie, 12
Physics, Headteacher, John, 30
Mathematics, Permanent Teacher, Helen, 19
Mathematics, Educational Project Coordinator, Charlotte, 40

Mathematics, Permanent Teacher, Emma, 15
P.E. Permanent Teacher, Sarah, 20



Results

Historical and cultural factors shape teachers' habitus, including a legacy of resistance to external control and a cultural emphasis on independence and autonomy.

Teachers view evaluation as a threat to school culture, their autonomy and professional identity.

Resistance to evaluation policies can lead to a lack of trust in policymakers and education reforms.

Lack of an evaluation culture.

Disregard of the law.

Fear of the unknown.

Recommendations

Recognition of habitus is necessary for understanding teachers' views and behaviours.

Policymakers should engage in more effective communication and negotiation with teachers.

Teacher participation and empowerment in evaluation processes can improve acceptance and effectiveness of policies.

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Thank you!