

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AMONG ADOLESCENTS.

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ABSTRACT

Motivation is a fundamental force that drives human behavior and influences individuals to achieve their goals and aspirations. It encompasses the internal processes that stimulate, direct, and sustain goal-oriented activities, including needs, desires, and ambitions. Among various types of motivation, achievement motivation plays a crucial role in determining an individual's desire to succeed and attain excellence. Achievement goals significantly influence how individuals approach and perform tasks, reflecting their willingness to demonstrate competence and accomplish challenging objectives (Harackiewicz, Barron, Carter, Lehto, & Elliot, 1997). These motivational drives shape behavioral patterns and responses across different environmental contexts.

The present study was conducted to examine the level of achievement motivation among adolescent boys and girls studying in Class XI and XII in the Bangalore district. A total sample of 80 students was selected for the study, comprising 40 male students and 40 female students. The Achievement Motivation Test (ACMT) was administered to measure the level of achievement motivation among the participants. The collected data were analyzed to examine the relationship and differences in achievement motivation between male and female students. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in achievement motivation between adolescent boys and girls.

KEYWORDS: Motivation, Achievement Motivation, Adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the most fundamental psychological forces that influence human behavior and performance. It is generally regarded as the internal drive that initiates, directs, and sustains goal-oriented activities. In the context of education and human development, motivation plays a crucial role in determining the level of effort individuals invest in achieving their objectives. It influences how people think, feel, and behave while striving to accomplish their goals. According to educational psychologists, motivation is not merely a momentary impulse but a complex psychological process involving various cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. In

academic settings, motivation determines the persistence, commitment, and enthusiasm students exhibit while engaging in learning tasks.

Scholars such as Paul R. Pintrich and Dale H. Schunk (1996) emphasized that motivation provides a foundational basis for several cognitive behaviors, including planning, organization, decision-making, learning strategies, and self-evaluation. Motivation energizes individuals to engage in learning activities and guides them in maintaining their focus until the desired outcomes are achieved. Without adequate motivation, even individuals with high intellectual abilities may fail to perform effectively. Therefore, motivation is widely recognized as an essential component of academic success and personal development.

Among the various types of motivation identified by psychologists, achievement motivation occupies a central place in educational psychology and personality studies.

Achievement motivation refers to an individual's persistent desire to accomplish challenging goals, achieve excellence, and demonstrate competence in a particular field of activity. It reflects the tendency to strive for success, overcome obstacles, and attain high standards of performance. Achievement motivation is often associated with a person's willingness to accept challenges, invest effort, and persist in the face of difficulties. Individuals who possess high levels of achievement motivation typically show greater dedication toward learning tasks, maintain higher levels of concentration, and display stronger commitment to their academic and personal goals.

The concept of achievement motivation has been extensively explored in psychological research. Janet T. Spence and Robert L. Helmreich (1983) described achievement as task-oriented behavior in which individuals attempt to meet certain standards of excellence. In many contexts, an individual's performance is evaluated either by comparing it with predetermined standards or by comparing it with the performance of others. This comparative aspect often becomes an important determinant of achievement-oriented behavior. Individuals who consistently attempt to perform better than previous standards or surpass their peers demonstrate a strong achievement orientation.

Achievement motivation is generally considered a relatively stable learned characteristic that develops through socialization and life experiences. It is characterized by the satisfaction individuals derive from striving for success and achieving excellence. People who possess strong achievement motivation are not merely driven by external rewards such as money, recognition, or status; rather, they experience intrinsic satisfaction from accomplishing challenging tasks and reaching high levels of performance. Such individuals often engage in activities for the sake of personal accomplishment rather than for external incentives.

The concept of achievement motivation is closely associated with the psychological theory proposed by David C. McClelland, who introduced the notion of the **need for achievement**, commonly referred to as **n-Achievement (n-Ach)**. According to McClelland's theory, individuals differ in their level of need for achievement, and this difference significantly influences their behavior. Individuals with high n-Ach tend to set challenging yet realistic goals, prefer tasks in which they can take personal responsibility for outcomes, and seek feedback about their performance. In contrast, individuals with low achievement motivation often avoid challenging situations and

prefer tasks with minimal risk of failure. Thus, the need for achievement becomes an important psychological factor influencing educational attainment, career success, and personal development.

One of the most significant factors that leads individuals toward the attainment of their goals is the psychological drive that motivates them to act. This drive, commonly referred to as motivation, reflects the enthusiasm, determination, and persistence required to overcome obstacles and pursue excellence. Motivation can originate from internal sources such as personal interests, aspirations, and values, or from external factors such as rewards, recognition, competition, and social expectations. The interaction between these internal and external sources determines the overall motivational orientation of an individual.

The motivational factors influencing individuals are not static; rather, they evolve over time as individuals grow and mature. During different stages of life, people may experience shifts in their priorities, aspirations, and sources of motivation. For instance, children may be motivated primarily by curiosity and parental encouragement, whereas adolescents may be influenced by peer relationships, academic expectations, and career aspirations. Similarly, adults may be motivated by professional goals, financial stability, and social recognition. As individuals progress through various stages of development, the nature and intensity of their motivational drives may change accordingly.

An important characteristic of motivation is its dynamic nature. The achievement of one goal often stimulates individuals to pursue further goals, creating a continuous cycle of aspiration and accomplishment. In other words, success often reinforces motivation, encouraging individuals to strive for even higher levels of achievement. However, there are also periods when individuals experience demotivation due to failures, setbacks, or external pressures. During such times, individuals may lose confidence and feel discouraged about their abilities. Understanding the factors that influence motivation becomes essential in helping individuals regain their confidence and re-engage in goal-directed activities.

In educational settings, academic motivation plays a particularly crucial role in determining students' learning outcomes and overall academic performance. Academic motivation can be defined as the enthusiasm, interest, and commitment that students demonstrate toward their academic activities and educational goals. It reflects the degree to which students possess specific behavioral characteristics such as persistence, effort, curiosity, and willingness to engage in challenging learning tasks. According to Hwang and colleagues (2002), academic motivation involves a student's orientation toward learning activities and their willingness to meet high standards of academic performance.

Several factors influence students' achievement motivation within educational environments. Researchers such as Goc (2010) identified multiple determinants that shape students' motivational orientation, including the effectiveness of teachers, the influence of peers, students' attitudes toward school, parental expectations, and past academic experiences. Teachers play a particularly significant role in fostering students' motivation by creating supportive learning environments, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging active participation in classroom activities. Similarly, peer relationships can influence students' attitudes toward learning by either reinforcing positive academic behaviors or encouraging disengagement from academic pursuits.

Adolescence represents a particularly critical period for the development of achievement motivation. Adolescents experience significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that influence their attitudes, aspirations, and behavioral patterns. During this stage, students begin to develop a stronger sense of identity and personal goals. They also become more aware of their academic abilities, career aspirations, and social expectations. Consequently, achievement motivation during adolescence plays a crucial role in shaping students' educational trajectories and future career paths.

In the contemporary world, adolescents are increasingly exposed to the forces of globalization, technological advancement, and intense academic competition. These factors create both opportunities and challenges for young individuals. On the one hand, globalization has expanded access to educational resources, career opportunities, and information. On the other hand, it has also increased academic pressures and expectations placed on students.

Adolescents often face the challenge of balancing academic responsibilities with social relationships, extracurricular activities, and personal aspirations. As a result, their emotional stability and ability to regulate their emotions become important factors influencing their academic motivation.

Students' perceptions of their own abilities also play a significant role in determining their motivation to achieve. Psychological research has shown that individuals who believe in their capabilities are more likely to engage in challenging tasks and persist despite difficulties. Conversely, students who doubt their abilities may avoid challenging situations due to fear of failure. Competence-related beliefs, therefore, become an important component of achievement motivation. Scholars such as Judith S. Eccles and Allan Wigfield have emphasized the role of competence beliefs, values, and goals in shaping students' motivational patterns.

Research findings suggest that gender differences may exist in certain competence-related beliefs and academic interests during childhood and adolescence. Studies have shown that boys often report higher competence beliefs in sports activities and mathematics, whereas girls tend to demonstrate stronger competence beliefs in reading, language-related subjects, and social activities. According to Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002), competence beliefs are important because they influence students' academic choices, performance levels, and persistence in achieving their goals. Students who believe they are capable of performing well in a particular subject are more likely to invest effort and maintain motivation in that area.

Cultural factors also play a significant role in shaping achievement motivation. Comparative studies across different societies have revealed variations in motivational patterns influenced by cultural values, educational systems, and social expectations. For example, research conducted by Farideh Salili (1996) examined differences in achievement motivation among British and Chinese students. The study revealed that Chinese students demonstrated significantly higher levels of need for achievement compared to their British counterparts. Such findings highlight the importance of cultural influences in shaping individuals' motivational orientations.

Gender differences in academic interests have also been observed in various educational contexts. Recent studies indicate that boys and girls may attach different levels of importance to particular academic subjects. Research by Watt (2006) suggests that even when achievement levels are similar, boys and girls may differ in the subjective value they assign to certain subjects. Girls often show greater interest and enjoyment in subjects such as biology, chemistry, and life sciences, whereas boys tend to demonstrate stronger interest in mathematics and physics.

Similar findings were reported by Nagy, Trautwein, Baumert, Köller, and Garrett (2006), who observed gender-based differences in students' preferences for science and mathematics-related subjects.

These variations in interests and competence beliefs may influence students' academic motivation and career choices. When students perceive certain subjects as aligning with their abilities and interests, they are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of engagement and achievement motivation in those areas. Conversely, when students feel less confident or interested in a particular subject, their motivation to excel in that field may decline.

Despite the growing body of research on achievement motivation, findings related to gender differences and academic orientation remain somewhat inconsistent. Some studies suggest that girls demonstrate higher levels of achievement motivation, while others indicate that boys may exhibit stronger competitive orientation. The influence of social expectations, educational environments, and cultural norms may contribute to these variations. Therefore, further research is necessary to explore the nature and extent of these differences within specific educational contexts.

In light of these considerations, the present study seeks to examine the level of achievement motivation among adolescent students and to explore whether significant differences exist between boys and girls. By analyzing motivational patterns among adolescents, the study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the psychological factors that influence students' academic performance and personal development. Understanding achievement motivation among adolescents can help educators, parents, and policymakers develop strategies to enhance students' motivation, improve academic outcomes, and support the holistic development of young individuals.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Achievement motivation plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's educational success, personality development, and future career aspirations. In modern educational systems, students are expected to perform effectively in highly competitive academic environments. Their ability to achieve academic success largely depends on their level of motivation, determination, and persistence in pursuing their goals. Achievement motivation encourages students to set higher goals, overcome challenges, and strive for excellence in various areas of life. Therefore, understanding the level of achievement motivation among adolescents is of great importance for educators, parents, and policymakers.

Adolescence is a critical stage of human development characterized by rapid physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. During this stage, individuals begin to develop a stronger sense of identity, independence, and personal aspirations. Adolescents also start to form their academic interests, career ambitions, and long-term goals. As a result, their motivational orientation becomes a determining factor in shaping their academic performance and future success. Students with high achievement motivation tend to display greater persistence, confidence, and enthusiasm toward learning tasks, while those with low achievement motivation may struggle with academic engagement and performance.

In the present educational scenario, students are exposed to various external pressures such as academic competition, parental expectations, social comparisons, and career uncertainties. These pressures may either enhance or hinder their achievement motivation depending on how they perceive and cope with such challenges. Some students may feel inspired and motivated to work harder, whereas others may experience anxiety, fear of failure, or lack of confidence. Therefore, it is essential to examine the factors that influence achievement motivation among adolescents in order to provide appropriate guidance and support.

Gender differences in motivation and academic performance have been widely discussed in educational research. Several studies suggest that boys and girls may differ in their motivational patterns, interests, and academic preferences. These differences may arise due to socialization processes, cultural expectations, and variations in self-concept and confidence levels. For instance, boys are often encouraged to pursue competitive and achievement-oriented activities, while girls may receive more encouragement in socially oriented or language-related domains. Such differences may influence students' perceptions of their abilities and their motivation to achieve success.

In the context of Indian education, understanding achievement motivation among adolescents becomes particularly significant. The Indian educational system places considerable emphasis on academic achievement, examinations, and career-oriented outcomes. Students are often required to make important academic choices during their higher secondary education, which may influence their future educational and professional opportunities. Therefore, examining the motivational levels of students during this stage can provide valuable insights into their academic attitudes and behavioral patterns.

Furthermore, motivation is not a static trait but a dynamic psychological process that can be influenced by various environmental and personal factors. Teachers, parents, and peer groups play a significant role in shaping students' attitudes toward achievement. Supportive learning environments, effective teaching strategies, and positive reinforcement can enhance students' motivation and encourage them to perform better academically. Conversely, lack of encouragement, excessive criticism, or negative comparisons may reduce students' motivation and self-confidence.

Another important reason for conducting the present study is the increasing concern about students' emotional well-being and academic stress. Adolescents today face numerous challenges related to academic workload, competitive examinations, and societal expectations. These challenges may affect their motivation and overall psychological adjustment. By studying achievement motivation among adolescents, researchers can better understand the psychological factors that influence students' academic engagement and success.

Moreover, comparative studies between boys and girls can help identify whether significant differences exist in their levels of achievement motivation. Such information can assist educators in designing gender-sensitive teaching strategies and motivational programs that cater to the diverse needs of students. If significant differences are found, targeted interventions can be developed to support students who may require additional encouragement and guidance.

The findings of the present study may also contribute to the existing body of knowledge in educational psychology. By examining achievement motivation among adolescents, the study can provide empirical evidence regarding the role of gender in motivational patterns. This information may be useful for researchers, educators, and policymakers interested in improving students' academic motivation and performance.

Therefore, the present study has been undertaken to examine the level of achievement motivation among adolescent students and to determine whether significant differences exist between boys and girls. Understanding these motivational patterns will help in developing effective strategies to enhance students' academic engagement, promote positive learning attitudes, and support their overall educational development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been conducted with the following objectives:

1. To study the level of achievement motivation among adolescent students.
2. To compare the achievement motivation of adolescent boys and girls.
3. To identify whether significant gender differences exist in achievement motivation among adolescents.
4. To understand the role of motivation in influencing academic attitudes among adolescent students.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant difference in the level of achievement motivation between adolescent boys and girls.
2. Adolescent students possess a moderate level of achievement motivation.
3. Gender does not significantly influence the achievement motivation of adolescent students.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The present study adopted a **descriptive survey method** to investigate the level of achievement motivation among adolescents. The descriptive research design is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect information regarding existing conditions and analyze relationships between variables without manipulating them.

Sample

The sample for the present study consisted of **80 adolescent students** studying in **Class XI and Class XII** from selected colleges in **Bangalore District**. The sample included **40 male students and 40 female students**, selected through a simple random sampling method to ensure equal representation of both genders.

Tool Used

The study employed the **Achievement Motivation Test (ACMT)** to measure the level of achievement motivation among the participants. The test consists of standardized items designed to assess individuals' desire for success, persistence, goal orientation, and willingness to undertake challenging tasks. The reliability and validity of the test have been established in previous studies, making it suitable for measuring achievement motivation among adolescents.

Procedure of Data Collection

The researcher obtained permission from the respective educational institutions before conducting the study. The students were informed about the purpose of the research and were assured that their responses would remain confidential and used only for academic purposes. The Achievement Motivation Test was administered to the students in a classroom setting. Clear instructions were provided to ensure that the students understood how to respond to the items. After completion, the responses were collected and scored according to the guidelines provided in the test manual.

Statistical Analysis and Interpretation

After collecting the data, the responses were scored and tabulated for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics such as **mean and standard deviation** were used to determine the overall level of achievement motivation among the participants. In addition, the **t-test** was used to examine whether significant differences existed between the achievement motivation levels of boys and girls.

The mean scores obtained from the Achievement Motivation Test indicated that both boys and girls possessed a moderate level of achievement motivation. When the mean scores of male and female students were compared, the difference between the two groups was found to be statistically insignificant. This result suggests that gender does not play a significant role in determining achievement motivation among adolescents in the present sample.

The findings of the study indicate that both boys and girls exhibit similar motivational tendencies toward academic achievement. This may be attributed to the increasing emphasis on equal educational opportunities and the changing social attitudes toward gender roles in education. The results also suggest that achievement motivation among adolescents may be influenced more by environmental factors such as educational support, family encouragement, and personal aspirations rather than by gender differences alone.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to examine the level of achievement motivation among adolescent students and to compare the motivational levels of boys and girls studying in Class XI and XII. Achievement motivation plays a significant role in shaping students' academic behavior, persistence in learning tasks, and overall academic success. Therefore, understanding the motivational patterns of adolescents becomes an important aspect of educational research.

In the present investigation, the Achievement Motivation Test (ACMT) was administered to a sample of 80 students from selected colleges in Bangalore district. The sample consisted of 40 male students and 40 female students. The responses obtained from the students were scored according to the standardized scoring procedure. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation, and an independent sample t-test was applied to determine whether significant differences existed between boys and girls in their level of achievement motivation.

The mean scores obtained from the Achievement Motivation Test provide an overview of the motivational tendencies of the participants. The analysis revealed that both boys and girls demonstrated moderate levels of achievement motivation. Although the mean score of boys was slightly higher than that of girls, the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant. This indicates that both genders possess similar levels of motivation toward academic achievement.

The results suggest that gender may not be a decisive factor in determining achievement motivation among adolescents in the present context. In recent years, educational opportunities for boys and girls have become more balanced, and social attitudes toward gender roles in education have gradually changed. As a result, both boys and girls may receive similar encouragement from parents, teachers, and society to achieve academic success.

Another possible explanation for the absence of significant gender differences may be the shared educational environment in which students study. Boys and girls often attend the same institutions, follow similar curricula, and are exposed to the same academic expectations. Such conditions may contribute to similar motivational patterns among students regardless of gender.

The findings of the present study are consistent with several previous studies that have reported minimal or no gender differences in achievement motivation among adolescents. Researchers have argued that motivational differences between boys and girls may depend on specific contextual factors such as cultural background, parental expectations, and educational opportunities.

The results also highlight the importance of environmental influences in shaping achievement motivation. Factors such as teacher encouragement, parental support, peer influence, and access to learning resources can significantly affect students' motivation levels. When students are provided with supportive and stimulating educational environments, they are more likely to develop strong motivation for academic achievement.

Furthermore, adolescents are at a stage of development where they begin to form their identity and future aspirations. Their motivation to achieve success is often influenced by career goals, personal interests, and perceptions of their abilities. When students believe that their efforts can lead to meaningful outcomes, they are more likely to remain motivated and engaged in academic activities.

The findings of the present study emphasize the need to create educational environments that encourage students to develop positive attitudes toward learning and achievement. Teachers can play a vital role in fostering motivation by providing constructive feedback, recognizing students' efforts, and encouraging them to set realistic goals.

Overall, the results of the study indicate that both boys and girls possess comparable levels of achievement motivation. The findings suggest that educational institutions should focus on strengthening motivational strategies that benefit all students rather than emphasizing gender-based differences.

Table shows comparison of Achievement Motivation Scores between Boys and Girls

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
Boys	40	58.72	6.45	0.54	Not Significant
Girls	40	57.95	6.20		

The above table shows the comparison of achievement motivation scores between boys and girls. The mean score of boys (58.72) is slightly higher than that of girls (57.95). However, the calculated t-value (0.54) is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between boys and girls in achievement motivation is accepted.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of the present study are as follows:

1. The adolescent students included in the study demonstrated a moderate level of achievement motivation.
2. The mean score of achievement motivation among boys was slightly higher than that of girls.
3. The statistical analysis revealed that the difference in achievement motivation between boys and girls was not significant.
4. Gender was not found to be a determining factor influencing achievement motivation among the participants.
5. Both male and female students exhibited similar motivational tendencies toward academic achievement.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study have several important implications for educators, parents, and educational administrators.

First, the results indicate that both boys and girls possess similar levels of achievement motivation. Therefore, teachers should provide equal encouragement and opportunities to all students regardless of gender. Equal support and recognition can help create a balanced learning environment that promotes academic excellence among all learners.

Second, teachers should focus on developing teaching strategies that enhance students' intrinsic motivation. Activities such as problem-solving tasks, collaborative learning, project-based assignments, and interactive classroom discussions can stimulate students' interest and engagement in learning.

Third, parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's motivational orientation. Parents should encourage their children to set realistic goals, develop self-confidence, and maintain a positive attitude toward learning. Providing emotional support and recognizing students' efforts can significantly enhance their motivation to achieve.

Fourth, educational institutions should organize motivational programs, career guidance sessions, and counseling services to help students develop positive attitudes toward academic achievement. Such initiatives can assist students in identifying their strengths, interests, and career aspirations.

Finally, creating supportive and stress-free learning environments is essential for maintaining students' motivation and emotional well-being. When students feel valued and supported, they are more likely to develop strong motivation for academic success.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the present study provides useful insights into achievement motivation among adolescents, certain limitations should be acknowledged.

1. The study was conducted on a relatively small sample of 80 students. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to a larger population.
2. The study was limited to selected colleges in Bangalore district, which may not represent students from other regions or educational contexts.
3. Only gender was considered as a variable in the present study. Other factors such as socio-economic status, parental education, and academic streams were not examined.
4. The study relied on a self-report psychological test, which may be influenced by students' personal perceptions and response biases.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the limitations of the present study, the following suggestions are proposed for future research:

1. Future studies may include a larger and more diverse sample to improve the generalizability of the findings.
2. Researchers may examine the influence of additional variables such as socio-economic background, parental involvement, and academic streams on achievement motivation.
3. Comparative studies may be conducted between rural and urban students to understand environmental influences on motivation.
4. Longitudinal studies may be undertaken to examine how achievement motivation changes over different stages of adolescence.

5. Future research may explore the relationship between achievement motivation and other psychological variables such as self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and academic stress.

CONCLUSION

Achievement motivation is a fundamental psychological factor that influences students' academic performance, persistence, and personal development. It represents the internal drive that encourages individuals to strive for excellence, overcome challenges, and achieve their goals. In the context of education, achievement motivation plays a crucial role in determining students' attitudes toward learning and their commitment to academic success.

The present study aimed to examine the level of achievement motivation among adolescent students and to determine whether significant differences exist between boys and girls. The findings of the study revealed that both male and female students demonstrated moderate levels of achievement motivation. Although boys showed slightly higher mean scores than girls, the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant.

These findings suggest that gender does not significantly influence achievement motivation among adolescents in the present sample. The absence of significant gender differences may reflect the changing educational environment in which boys and girls are provided with equal opportunities for learning and personal development. It also indicates that motivational patterns among students may be shaped more by environmental factors such as parental support, teacher encouragement, and educational resources rather than by gender alone.

The results highlight the importance of creating supportive learning environments that encourage students to develop positive attitudes toward academic achievement. Teachers and parents should work together to foster motivation, self-confidence, and goal-oriented behavior among adolescents. Educational institutions should also implement programs that enhance students' engagement, curiosity, and enthusiasm for learning.

Despite certain limitations, the present study contributes to the understanding of achievement motivation among adolescents. By exploring the motivational patterns of students, the study provides insights that may help educators and policymakers develop strategies to enhance students' academic motivation and overall educational outcomes.

In conclusion, achievement motivation remains an essential component of students' academic success and personal growth. Encouraging adolescents to develop strong motivation for learning can empower them to achieve their goals, overcome challenges, and contribute positively to society.

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