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THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS' LEVEL OF HOPELESSNESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEACHING PROFESSION¹

ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ UMUTSUZLUK DÜZEYLERİ İLE ÖĞRETMENLİK MESLEĞİNE İLİŞKİN TUTUMLARI

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the correlation between prospective teachers' level of hopelessness and attitude towards teaching profession.

The research population consists of 650 4th –grade students and the sampling group consists of 300 students determined by simple random sampling method. "Personal Information Form", "Beck Hopelessness Scale" and "Attitude towards Teaching Profession Scale" are used for data collection. Descriptive statistics such as the arithmetic mean and standard deviation, T-test, One-way MANOVA, Tukey HSD test and Spearman's correlation analysis have been used for data analysis.

Data analysis shows that prospective teachers have a low level of hopelessness and a high level of positive attitude towards teaching profession. Significant intergroup differences have been found in the dimension of hopelessness with respect to gender variable; in the dimensions of both hopelessness and attitude towards teaching profession with respect to program variable; in the dimensions of both hopelessness and attitude towards teaching profession with respect to the variable of the reason for the choice of profession and in the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession with respect to the variable of employment expectation. A moderate level of negative correlation has been found between hopelessness and the attitude towards teaching profession.

Qualitative research methods are used in the research. Qualitative research methods could be used to reveal the factors leading to hopelessness. Correlations between the other factors in the school environment and the level of hopelessness could be investigated. As for application, teacher training and appointment system could be adjusted, and the student populations of teacher training institutions could be revised depending on the needs of the country.

Keywords: Prospective teacher, Hopelessness, Profession, Attitude

ÖZ

Bu araştırma, öğretmen adaylarının ümitsizlik düzeyi ile öğretmenlik mesleğine yönelik tutumları arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Çalışma grubu, 650 dördüncü sınıf öğrencisinden basit rastgele örnekleme yöntemiyle belirlenen 300 öğrenciden oluşmaktadır. Veri toplamada "Kişisel Bilgi Formu", "Beck Umutsuzluk Ölçeği" ve "Öğretmenlik Mesleğine İlişkin Tutum Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde aritmetik ortalama ve standart sapma, T testi, Tek yönlü MANOVA, Tukey HSD testi ve Spearman'ın korelasyon analizi gibi tanımlayıcı istatistikler kullanılmıştır.

¹ This study was partly presented at the Vnd International Eurasian Educational Research Congress in Antalya 02-05 May 2018

Verilerin analizi, öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine karşı düşük düzeyde umutsuzluğa ve yüksek düzeyde olumlu tutuma sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Cinsiyet değişkenine göre umutsuzluk boyutunda; program değişkenine göre hem umutsuzluk hem de öğretmenlik mesleğine yönelik tutum boyutlarında; Mesleği seçme nedeni değişkeni açısından; umutsuzluk ve öğretmenlik mesleğine ilişkin tutum boyutlarının her ikisinde; İş bulma beklentisi değişkeni açısından öğretmenlik mesleğine ilişkin tutum boyutun gruplar arasında anlamlı bir farklılaşmanın olduğu görülmektedir. Umutsuzluk ile öğretmenlik mesleğine yönelik tutum arasında orta düzeyde negatif bir korelasyon olduğu bulunmuştur.

Araştırma bulgularına dayanarak öğretmen adaylarının umutsuzluk düzeyi azaldıkça öğretmenlik mesleğine ilişkin **daha olumlu tutum gösterdikleri söylenebilir.**

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen adayı, Umutsuzluk, Meslek, Tutum

1. INTRODUCTION

Hopelessness, which is defined as a person's describing himself/herself with negative features, one's having negative expectations about the future and assuming adverse experiences to be unchangeable (Abramson, Metalsky and Alloy, 1989), affects one's life in a negative way, hinders the person from taking action, reduces motivation and concentration in one's job. High level of hopelessness could be stated to be hindering individuals from putting sufficient amount of efforts when preparing for a profession, acquiring the qualifications required or improving themselves professionally.

Features related with teaching profession are mostly acquired during pre-service education. It could be claimed that hopelessness of prospective teachers in this period could have an adverse effect on the acquisition of the qualifications required for teaching profession.

Review of researches have shown that hopelessness, which is undesirable for an educational organization, has positive and negative correlations with several concepts (Dinçer, 2013, Dursun and Aytaç, 2012, Güler, 2015, Özkan and Argun, 2003). One of these concepts is the attitude towards teaching profession. Considering that attitudes are among the factors affecting behaviors, individuals' displaying the behaviors required by the profession is dependent upon their development of positive attitude towards the profession. A prerequisite of entering a profession, which is defined as the overall activities performed to produce goods and services useful for people and to earn money in return, which are based on systematic knowledge and skills acquired through a certain education (Kuzgun, 2000), is to receive a relevant vocational education. In vocational education which intends to prepare the individuals for the profession, it is aimed to help the individuals acquire the knowledge and skills required for such profession. Vocational education plays a key role as it is the context where the individual's attitude towards profession begins to take shape for the first time. There are several researches that aim to determine prospective teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession. While some of these researches study prospective teachers with respect to their attitudes towards teaching profession (Akpınar, Yıldız and Ergin, 2006; Aksoy, 2010; Bozdoğan, Aydın and Yıldırım, 2007; Demirtaş, Cömert and Özer, 2011; Pehlivan, 2008; Pektaş and Kamer, 2011; Tanel, Şengören and Tanel, 2007; Taşkın and Hacıömeroğlu, 2010; Uğurlu and Polat, 2011; Üstüner, Demirtaş and Cömert, 2009), some others aim to study prospective preschool teachers Girgin, Akamca and Ellez, 2010; Üstün, Erkan and Akman, 2004), non-thesis master's degree students (Can, 2010; Ocağ and Demirden, 2008; Özben, 2010), prospective Turkish teachers (Temizkan, 2008) and prospective physical education and sports teachers (Semerci and Semerci, 2004; Yamaner and Kartal, 2001) with respect to their attitudes towards teaching profession.

The quality of vocational education has a key role in the development of attitude towards teaching profession. Prospective teachers gain their initial experience, which is to have an important effect on the development of their attitude towards their profession, in education faculties. In the process where these experiences are gained, many context-related factors, as well as the individual ones, are important. When prospective teachers are anxious about appointment after graduation, they may have several psychological problems and may fail to put sufficient amount of efforts to acquire professional qualifications during the pre-service period. Researches have shown that prospective teachers who are highly anxious about employment have a high level of hopelessness and that, the level of hopelessness increases as the class grade increases (Gençay, 2009, Kırmoğlu, 2010).

Based on the researches it can be stated that, as it is important for prospective teachers to have a high positive attitude towards teaching profession for the acquisition of professional competencies, hopelessness can highly prevent prospective teachers from acquiring professional competencies. Therefore,

determination of the correlation between the attitude towards teaching profession and the level of hopelessness would be a step in the reduction of the adverse effects caused by hopelessness.

1.1. The objective of research

This research aims to determine the correlation between the level of hopelessness experienced by the 4th graders studying in an education faculty and their attitudes towards teaching profession. Sub-objective of the research is to determine whether the 4th grader prospective teachers' levels of hopelessness and attitude towards teaching profession change depending on the variables of gender, program, and the reason for the choice of profession and employment expectation.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research model

The research is designed as a descriptive research based on the correlational survey model. This research aims to study prospective teachers studying in the fourth grade of Education Faculty in order to determine the correlation between their attitudes towards teaching profession and level of hopelessness and to find out whether these two levels change with respect to the variables of gender, program, and the reason for the choice of profession and employment expectation.

The research population consists of 650 4th grade undergraduate students studying in Adıyaman University Education Faculty in 2017/2018 Academic Year. The sampling group of the research consists of 300 students determined by simple random sampling method. 300 scales are used in the study group and 296 of these are assessed. Statistics regarding the prospective teachers in the sample group are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics For Sampling

Variables		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Famale	229	77,4
	Male	67	22,6
Program	Primary school	48	16,2
	Math.	63	21,3
	Science	49	16,6
	Preschool	46	15,5
	Arabic	42	14,2
	Guidance	48	16,2
The Reason For Choosing The Profession	own	175	59,1
	Family	33	11,1
	examination	88	29,8
Job Expectation	Optimistic	224	75,7
	Pessimistic	72	24,3

2.2. Data collection tools

“Beck Hopelessness Scale”, “Attitude towards Teaching Profession Scale” and “Personal Information Form” are used in the research as the data collection tools.

Personal Information Form: This form covers items about research participant prospective teachers' gender, program, and financial condition, the reason for the choice of program and appointment expectation.

Attitude towards Teaching Profession Scale: Attitude towards Teaching Profession Scale developed by Üstüner (2006) is used for collecting data about the attitude towards teaching profession. The scale consists of a single dimension and 34 items. It covers 10 negative and 24 positive statements about the teaching profession. The lowest score to be obtained from the scale is 34 and the highest score is 174. The below ranges are used in the assessment of the scores gained in the scale.

Table 2. Beck Hopelessness Scale Ranges Ratings

Score Ranges	
0-3 points	Normal range
4-8 points	Slight hopelessness
9-14 points	Intermediate level
15-20 points	Intense hopelessness

Hopelessness Scale: “Hopelessness Scale” developed by Beck, Weissman, Lester and Trexler (1974), translation and validity and reliability tests of which were performed by Durak and Palabıyıköğlü (1994), consists of 20 items. The statements in the scale are responded as “Yes/No” and the results of the scale reflects the negative expectations. The lowest score is “0” and the highest score is “20”. The below ranges are used in the assessment of the scores gained in the scale.

Table 3. Attitude Scale on Teaching Profession Ranges Ratings

Score Ranges	
34-61 points	Very low
62-88 points	Low
89-116 points	Intermediate level
117-143 points	High
144-170 points	Very high

2.3. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical methods and techniques were used in the resolution of the sub-problems addressed in the research. Descriptive statistics of the data obtained from scales, such as the arithmetic mean and (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (Sd) were measured as the first step. In data analysis, T-test was used to compare two groups and the one-way MANOVA analysis technique was used to compare more. F-statistics method was used to determine the intergroup differences. When an intergroup difference was found, equality of the variances was checked using Levene statistics. Then, Tukey HSD test was performed. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbac’h Alpha) for the Attitude towards Teaching Profession Scale was found as .95 and the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbac’h Alpha) for Beck Hopelessness Scale was found as .87.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Attitude towards Teaching Profession and the Level of Hopelessness with respect to Gender Variable

T-test was applied to determine whether the attitude towards teaching profession and the level of hopelessness changed depending on gender variable. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The Results of The t Test to Find The Attitude Towards Teaching Profession and The Hopelessness Level According to Gender Variable

Dimensions	Gender	n	X	Ss	t
Total of hopelessness	1.Famale	229	5,14	4,62	-2,965*
	2.Male	67	7,03	4,51	
<i>(sub-dimensions)</i> Feelings about the future	1.Famale	229	1,08	1,37	-3,999*
	2.Male	67	1,87	1,54	
<i>(sub-dimensions)</i> Loss of Motivation	1.Famale	229	1,72	1,98	-2,042*
	2.Male	67	2,28	2,06	
<i>(sub-dimensions)</i> Expectation for the future	1.Famale	229	1,70	1,44	-1,951
	2.Male	67	2,09	1,43	
Total Attitude	1.Famale	229	133,63	23,3	1,956
	2.Male	67	127,06	26,7	

*p< .05

As can be seen in Table 4, there are statistically significant intergroup differences in the sub-dimensions and dimensions of hopelessness ($t = -2.965$; $p < .05$), feelings about the future ($t = -3.999$; $p < .05$) and motivation loss ($t = -2.042$; $p < .05$). Analysis of the differences shows that male prospective teachers have a higher average score ($x = 7.03$) than female prospective teachers ($x = 5.14$) in the dimension of hopelessness. Male prospective teachers have a higher average score ($x = 1.87$) than female prospective teachers ($x = 1.08$) in the dimension of feelings about the future. Male prospective teachers have a higher average score ($x = 2.28$) than female prospective teachers ($x = 1.72$) in the dimension of motivation loss. Considering these figures, it could be stated that while both groups have a low level of hopelessness (4-8 points), male prospective teachers have a higher level of hopelessness compared to female prospective teachers. There is no significant difference in other dimensions.

3.2. Attitude towards Teaching Profession and the Level of Hopelessness with respect to Program Variable

F-test was applied to determine whether the attitude towards teaching profession and the level of hopelessness changed depending on program variable. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The Results of MANOVA to Find The Attitude Towards Teaching Profession and The Hopelessness Level According to Program Variables

Dimensions	Program	n	X	Ss	f	Eta kare	Difference Tukey HSD
Hopelessness	Primary	48	4,98	4,77	1,649*	,04	Science>Arabic
	Math.	63	5,77	4,84			
	Science	49	7,53	4,68			
	Preschool	46	5,28	5,13			
	Arabic	42	4,43	3,85			
	Guidance	48	5,17	4,01			
Attitude towards the teaching profession	Primary	48	144,56	16,11	2,643*	,11	Prim.>Math. Science Guidance Math.<Arabic, Prim Science<Prim. Arabic>Guidance Math. Guidance<Prim
	Math.	63	123,16	25,78			
	Science	49	129,04	19,05			
	Preschool	46	131,89	25,54			
	Arabic	42	142,83	23,23			
	Guidance	48	125,56	26,04			

*p< .05

As can be seen in Table 5, there are statistically significant intergroup differences in the dimensions of hopelessness ($f= 1.649$; $p < .05$) and the attitude towards teaching ($f= 2.643$; $p < .05$) with respect to program variable. Analysis of the source of differences shows that prospective Science teachers have a higher level of hopelessness ($x = 7.53$) than prospective Arabic language teachers ($x = 4.43$) in the dimension of hopelessness. Considering that et square value has a moderate level of effect, it could be stated that the difference in negligible.

In the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession, prospective teachers studying the programs of Classroom Teaching ($x=144.56$) and Arabic Language Teaching ($x=142.83$) have higher average scores compared to prospective teachers studying in the programs of Elementary Mathematics Teaching ($x=123.16$), Psychological Counselling and Guidance ($x=125.56$) and Science Teaching ($x=129.04$). Considering that et square value has a moderate level of effect, it could be stated that the difference in negligible.

3.3. Attitude towards Teaching Profession and the Level of Hopelessness with respect to the Variable of the Reason for the Choice of Profession

F-test was applied to determine whether the attitude towards teaching profession and the level of hopelessness changed depending on the variable of the reason for the choice of profession. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. The Results of The MANOVA Test to Find Attitude Towards Teaching Profession and the Level of Hopelessness with respect to the Variable of the Reason for the Choice of Profession

Dimensions	Choice	n	X	Ss	f	Eta kare	Difference Tukey HSD
Hopelessness	Their	175	4,91	4,48	7,928*	,05	own<exam score family<exam score exam score> own, family
	Family	33	4,69	3,90			
	Exam score	88	7,18	4,90			
Attitude towards the teaching profession	Their	175	139,66	19,50	23,868 *	,14	own>exam score family>exam score exam score<family, own
	Family	33	123,21	24,63			
	Exam score	88	120,53	27,14			

*p< .05

As can be seen in Table 6, there are statistically significant intergroup differences in the dimensions of hopelessness ($f= 7928$; $p < .05$) with respect to the variable of the reason for the choice of profession. Analysis of the source of differences shows that the average score ($x=7.18$) of the group referring to their

examination result as the reason for their choice of profession is higher compared to the groups stating that this is their own choice ($x = 4.91$) and the choice of family ($x = 4.69$) in the dimension of hopelessness. Prospective teachers who had to choose the profession as a result of their examination score, have a higher level of hopelessness compared to other two groups. Considering that et square value has a greater size of effect, it could be stated that the difference is remarkable.

In the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession, there are no significant intergroup differences ($f=23.868$; $p<.05$). Analysis of the source of differences shows that the average score of the groups stating that teaching profession is the choice of themselves ($x=139.66$) or their family ($x=123.21$) is higher than the group referring to their examination score as the reason for their choice of profession ($x=120.53$). Prospective teachers who had to choose the profession due to their examination result have a lower level of positive attitude towards teaching profession. Considering that et square value has a small size of effect, it could be stated that the difference is negligible.

3.4. Attitude Towards Teaching Profession and the Level of Hopelessness with respect to Employment Expectation Variable

T-test was applied to determine whether the attitude towards teaching profession and the level of hopelessness changed depending on gender variable. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. The Results of The t Test to Find Attitude Towards Teaching Profession and the Level of Hopelessness with respect to Employment Expectation Variable

Dimensions	Job Expectation	n	X	Ss	t
Hopelessness	Optimistic	224	4,41	4,40	-5,869
	Pessimistic	72	8,22	4,45	
Attitude towards the teaching profession	Optimistic	224	135,82	21,31	4,763*
	Pessimistic	72	120,70	29,13	

* $p < .05$

As can be seen in Table 7, while there are significant intergroup differences in the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession ($t=4.763$) with respect to employment expectation variable, intergroup differences are insignificant in the dimension of hopelessness. In the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession where there is significant difference, average score of prospective teachers expecting to get employed in their field ($x=135.82$) is higher than the average score of prospective teachers who do not have such expectation ($x=120.70$). It could be stated that prospective teachers expecting to get employed in their field have a higher level of positive attitude towards teaching profession compared to those who do not have such expectation.

3.5. Correlation between the Level of Hopelessness and Attitude towards Teaching Profession

Spearman's Correlation analysis was made to determine the correlation between the attitude towards teaching profession and the level of hopelessness. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Spearman Correlation between the Level of Hopelessness and Attitude towards Teaching Profession

Variables	Feelings About the Future	Loss of Motivation	Expectations Regarding the Future	Hopelessness Total	Attitude
Feelings About The Future	1	,69**	,64**	,87**	-.39**
Loss of Motivation	,69**	1	,62**	,89**	-.42**
Expectations Regarding the Future	,64**	,62**	1	,84**	-.32**
Hopelessness Total	,87**	,89**	,84**	1	-.44**

As can be seen in Table 8, there is a moderate level of negative correlation between the level of hopelessness and attitude towards teaching profession ($r = -.44$). It could be stated that as the level of hopelessness increases, the level of positive attitude towards teaching profession decreases.

4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of research data with respect to gender variable shows that there is a significant difference between the groups of female and male prospective teachers in the dimension of hopelessness while there is no significant difference in the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession. In the dimension of hopelessness, male prospective teachers have a higher level of hopelessness than female prospective

teachers. This result concerning the dimension of hopelessness is consistent with the research findings of Waters and Moore (2002), Yüksel (2003), Dereli and Kabataş (2009), Şahin (2009) and Ceyhan (2004). On the other hand, in other researches performed on the same subject, Dinçer (2013) and Dinçer and Yılmaz (2015) found that the level of hopelessness was higher in female prospective teachers. Highness of male prospective teachers' level of hopelessness can be attributed to cultural factors and social expectations.

Analysis of research data with respect to program variable reveals significant intergroup differences in the dimensions of both hopelessness and attitude towards teaching profession. While the difference has a small size of effect in the dimension of hopelessness, it has a moderate size of effect in the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession. The result obtained in the dimension of hopelessness is consistent with the research of Üstün et al. (2014). Although the difference has a small size of effect, the difference between program averages is remarkable. While the level of hopelessness is the highest in Science Teaching, it is the lowest in Arabic Language Teaching. Highness of the level of hopelessness in prospective Science teachers could be related with the conditions of appointment. For example, according to data for year 2017, the ratio of appointment among the graduates is 5.4% in Science Teaching and 17.4% in Classroom Teaching (Öğretmenlerhaber, 2017). In the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession, the highest averages are observed in Primary School Teaching and Arabic Language Teaching programs whereas the lowest averages are observed in Elementary Mathematics Teaching and Psychological Counseling and Guidance programs. While these findings are consistent with the research findings of Aksoy (2010), Çağlar (2013), Taşkın and Hacıömeroğlu (2010), Üstüner, Demirtaş and Cömert (2009), they are inconsistent with some others (Demirtaş, Cömert and Özer, 2011; Ocak and Demirdelen, 2008). It could be stated that, Elementary Mathematics Teaching and Psychological Counseling and Guidance programs where the averages are lower in the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession, the students' level of expectation increases as these programs accept higher examination scores. As the difference between high expectation and the opportunities offered gets bigger, attitude towards teaching profession can be expected to be less positive.

Analysis of research data with respect to the variable of the reason for the choice of profession reveals significant intergroup differences in the dimensions of both hopelessness and attitude towards teaching profession. While the difference has a small size of effect in the dimension of hopelessness, it has a large size of effect in the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession. The result obtained in the dimension of hopelessness is consistent with the researches conducted by Dinçer (2013), Dinçer and Yılmaz (2015) and Üstün et al. (2014). Accordingly, prospective teachers who have chosen teaching profession by their own will have a lower level of hopelessness than those who have had to choose that as a result of their examination result. In an environment where professional guidance is not proper, the majority of the students study at teacher training institutions as they have no other choice, which leads to an increase in their level of hopelessness. It is one of the most remarkable findings of this research that, in the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession, there is a significant difference, with a large size of effect, between the average scores of prospective teachers who have chosen teaching profession by their own will and those who have had to choose this profession as a result of their examination result. This finding is consistent with the research findings of Dinçer (2013). Considering that the effectiveness of undergraduate study, which is the preparatory step for teaching profession, is directly related with the positive attitude of the students towards the profession, it is obvious that lowness of the level of attitude towards profession would bring out prospective teachers with insufficient qualities. According to the data obtained in 2017 Teaching Content Knowledge Test, some prospective teachers have a low level of success in their answers to the questions about their study field, which is remarkable, indeed. For example, the ratio of right answers to 50 questions is 11.82 in Science Teaching, whereas it is 17 in Elementary Mathematics Teaching (OSYM, 2018). There may be several reasons for prospective teachers' displaying such a bad result in the examinations covering their study field. However, negative attitude of prospective teachers towards teaching profession could also be listed among these reasons.

Analysis of research data with respect to employment expectation variable shows that, while the difference between optimist prospective teachers and pessimist prospective teachers is insignificant in the dimensions of hopelessness, there is a significant difference in the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession. The average scores of the optimist group are higher than the average scores of the pessimist group in the dimension of attitude towards teaching profession. Prospective teachers who expect to get employed in their study field are observed to have a more positive attitude towards teaching profession. Accordingly, prospective teachers who expect to get employed in their study field will obviously put more efforts in the acquisition of professional qualifications during undergraduate study, which is the preparatory step for

teaching profession. So, it could be stated that, in environments where there is a high expectation of appointment, the preparation process will be more effective, and the outcome will be prospective teachers with better qualities.

The correlation between the level of hopelessness and attitude towards teaching profession, which is intended to be determined in this research, presents a significant negative correlation at moderate level. This finding is consistent with the research findings of Dinçer (2013). In general, the level of attitude towards teaching profession decreases as the level of hopelessness increases. In this respect it could be stated that, factors decreasing prospective teachers' level of hopelessness facilitate the increase of the level of attitude towards teaching profession.

4.1. Recommendations for Research and Application

Qualitative research methods are used in the research. Qualitative research methods could be used to reveal the factors leading to hopelessness.

Correlations between the other factors in the school environment and the level of hopelessness could be investigated.

As for application, teacher training and appointment system could be adjusted, and the student populations of teacher training institutions could be revised depending on the needs of the country.

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