Explore Problems That Students Encounter In Conducting Their Research Work

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Abstract: Research has become an important part of the education and getting learning different skills involved in it helps in enhancing the variety of knowledge, increasing the level of understanding and giving them a chance to explore new areas and the gaps. The topic which the researcher chose for the research work is "exploring the research problems of students/researchers: a case study of IER"; the researcher liked to work on this topic because researcher used to see how different students use to face different types of problems during their research work and how they use to overcome it and complete their research work. The objectives researcher designed for the research was to identify students experiences of research skills and explore problems that students encounter in conducting their research work. The nature of the study was qualitative, researcher designed a semi-structured interview. The population of the study was Institute of education and research, and the sample of the study was interviewing 18 students. The main findings of the research was that they use to face difficulty in collecting and analyzing the data, in selecting the topic, and the hostilities used to face financial issues, some of them lack the prior knowledge of the research and a little time management issues.

KEYWORDS: Academic Reading, Academic Writing, Technical Issues, Plagiarism.

Introduction
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Research is a systematic inquiry to describe, explain, predict, and control the observed phenomenon. Research involves inductive and deductive methods." Inductive research methods are used to analyze an observed event.

Research comprises "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to

devise new applications." It is used to establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous work, solve new or existing problems, support theorems, or develop new theories (Wahid, Mukesh& Farhan 2018).

Exploring research problem is important in a manner that it enable the researcher to tackle their problems, cooperate with their supervisor and make them able to do struggle to encounter these problems. Some problems that researcher face during their research lack of scientific training in the methodology of research, plagiarism, manipulation of data, lack of availability. In the light of the knowledge and experience of individuals who are in the process of scientific research, the level of awareness of students who have recently started research may be increased. In solving problems during research, it has been reported that adopting a work schedule/timetable using internet-based databases, constant monitoring of research already conducted and collaborative work are all beneficial (Yalcin, 2017).

This study aims to determine the difficulties encountered in the process of doing research. These include conceptual problems that students may encounter in the process intrusive supervisors, determining the topic of the thesis, participants who do not want to give up forms of education they are accustomed to, difficulties in obtaining legal permissions (Suna, Karadağ & Selanik, 2007), personal relationships, family responsibilities, financial issues, problems relating to work and health, as well as a reduction of interest in the topic and changes of career plans. These may vary from student to student. As developed countries are now moving to implement brain based learning approach because of the closer relationship with attitude and motivation. It is believed that this study may help to minimize these problems.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Research is a fundamental component of higher education, as it develops students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and academic writing skills. Despite its importance, many students encounter significant difficulties while conducting research work. These challenges often hinder the quality, completion, and effectiveness of student research projects.

One major problem faced by students is the lack of adequate research skills, including difficulty in formulating research questions, selecting appropriate research designs, and applying suitable data collection and analysis methods. Studies have shown that insufficient training in research methodology leaves students feeling confused and overwhelmed during the research process (Kothari, 2004; Creswell, 2014). As a result, students struggle to produce systematic and scientifically sound research.

Another persistent issue is limited access to academic resources such as scholarly journals, books, and reliable online databases. In many developing countries, students rely heavily on outdated or non-peer-reviewed sources due to poor library facilities and limited internet access, which negatively affects the credibility of their research work (Iqbal & Mahmood, 2011). Additionally, poor information literacy skills make it difficult for students to identify relevant and authentic sources.

Time constraints and poor time management also pose serious challenges. Students often juggle coursework, examinations, and personal responsibilities alongside research activities, leading to stress and rushed work (Ameen, Batool, & Naveed, 2012). Furthermore, inadequate guidance and limited interaction with research supervisors can result in unclear directions, low motivation, and delayed completion of research projects.

Given these challenges, it is evident that many students face substantial barriers in conducting effective research. If these problems are not properly identified and addressed, they may continue to negatively impact students' academic performance and the overall quality of research output. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the problems encountered by students in conducting their research work in order to recommend strategies for improving research support and capacity building.

RESEARCH QUESTION:
- What problems do students encounter in conducting their research work?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:
This research will help the new researchers and their supervisors, in understanding that what kind of problems students can come across during the research and how should supervisor help the researcher. In other ways before starting their research if they go through these thesis the researcher will come across different terms and points which he may have taken for granted that they might not cause any problem in the progress of the research. After viewing this, they will work on those parts where they feel they are lacking behind others before starting their research work so that different problems don't hinder the progress of their research. In helping people with their research work this thesis will play the role of a guideline for them. Research is so fundamental to a study that students may sometimes overlook its importance. Or, someone may just not be strong researcher, which can be addressed by using resources and through the assistance of a librarian also.

DELIMITATION
Due to limited resources and time constrains the study is limited to:
Institute of education and research university of Peshawar
Male and female students

LITERATURE REVIEW
In this section, from the previous studies existing in the literature, we introduce the significant challenges/difficulties facing researchers while writing the research. Manchishi, Ndhlovu, and Mwanza, (2015) investigated the mistakes and challenges faced by postgraduate students in the school of education. An interesting case study was conducted to investigate research postgraduate students' problems and self-initiated strategies they improved to explore the challenges. The data was collected from postgraduate students for the study through questionnaire and interview. The findings of the study explored that the challenges facing participants were mainly related to research issues. He found various problems in academic writing and gave many suggestions to develop the research writing of the undergraduates, The major reasons for low proficiency in writing is due to various factors such as grammatical weakness, educational background, weaknesses in using appropriate verbal items (Javid & Umer, 2014). In Yemen when they write their graduation research projects it is found that the predominant problems the students encountered while writing research were broadly; the weak academic level of the students might in research, the lack of well-equipped library with open access to e. resources and websites, and students' difficult circumstances and their negative attitudes towards research projects (Kikula; Quorro & Repoa, 2007). Kombo and Tromp (2011), have consensus to find many crucial problems students face while they are writing their research proposals. Some common mistakes include writing broad titles with no clear and focused content in the introduction. The statements of the problems were not stated clearly to guide the readers and writers were not able to identify the correct research techniques. The literature reviews were not adequate and the research methodology including research questions were not formed well. It is shown that the results were not presented well. Ahmed and Mahboob (2016) presented an indispensable contribution work to analyze the research proposals and challenges faced by a set of 32 postgraduate students in medicine. In this study, they found many challenges including: research methodology, formulating research questions and hypotheses, setting the background and introduction section, gathering information and data collection, objectives and references citation. In this study, the quantitative ground theory approach was implemented. The study concluded that a high rate of graduate students had challenges in preparing research proposals, particularly the lack of proper guiding and supervision, and suggests some points to strengthening supervision and guiding skills. Writing skill is a difficult skill for most of learners, forming a good piece of writing requires not only high proficiency of the Second language' linguistic rules but also demands good cognitive skills in

organizing and presenting ideas. Students usually have difficulty in writing as a productive skill which requires highly good cognitive abilities. The study explored that the learners have a difficulty in presenting the ideas. Writing as process is challenging and writing anxiety is prevalent amidst researcher and they fear from writing process as it requires good command of the language and the ability of put forth the ideas coherently and logical manner. Many studies conducted on writing anxiety which we would like to highlight the challenges of researchers and how they receive anxiety. It is found that the productive skills, writing and speaking show high anxiety among learners more than other language skills, Many genuine steps and proposed studies have been done towards developing skills in formulating their proposals and research projects in effective way in their early stage of writing research proposals/ projects. Alfakih (2017) investigated the impact of a training program on enhancing students' research skills in preparing a research. After designing a training program for improving skills of writing research proposals, questionnaire was used to be given for the participants. Pre-test and post-test tool were used to get clear results for examining students skills. The results showed improvement and effectiveness of the training program in enhancing the student's skills and this was clear from the participants' performance between pre-test and posttest. The study showed that students should acquire specific knowledge to prepare research. The courses designers and supervisors should have practical insight and clear identification of the students' skills and attempt to develop students' research proposals through courses content and activities in research methodology. Many interesting works are available in the literature which show clearly the good steps of writing research proposals/projects and can be useful for supervisors and researchers in the early stage of writing research (Kombo & Tromp, 2011).

PROBLEMS THAT STUDENTS ENCOUNTER IN CONDUCTING THEIR RESEARCH WORK

This study aims to determine the difficulties encountered in the process of doing research. These include conceptual problems that students may encounter in the process intrusive supervisors, determining the topic of the thesis, participants who do not want to give up forms of education they are accustomed to difficulties in obtaining legal permissions (Suna, Karadağ & Selanik, 2007), personal relationships, family responsibilities, financial issues, problems relating to work and health, as well as a reduction of interest in the topic and changes of career plans. These may vary from student to student.

As developed countries are now moving to implement brain based learning approach because of the closer relationship with attitude and motivation. It is believed that this study may help to minimize these problems. In the light of the knowledge and experience of individuals who are in the process of scientific research, the level of awareness of students who have recently started research may be increased. In solving problems during research, it has been reported that adopting a work schedule/timetable using internet-based databases, constant monitoring of research already conducted and collaborative work are all beneficial.

Now a days, three tasks of universities can be referred as; training-education, scientific research and public service (Erdem, 2013). Within the scope of the historical process, it can be claimed of primarily three basic changes as; from the training and education orientation in higher education to the scientific research orientation and from the research orientation to the training-education orientation. This change caused the task definitions of the academicians to come together around the dilemma of teaching based academics and research based academics. The academicians behaving as teaching based academics remove them from the scientific research functions of the universities. The mission of the academicians is training-education, research, contribution to the science, support to the management and public service (Esen & Esen, 2015). Yet, the academicians are not able to perform their tasks adequately because of the reasons such as; quick promotion in office, their wishes of being admitted and famous, the thought of becoming popular with the more published academic researches and providing more fund for support, personality or personal disorders, deficient education that they got during their improvement as becoming a scientist and insufficient discipline and ethical consciousness that they gained (; Özcan & Balcı, 2014; Öztürk & Bayrak, 2015).

The reasons such as; the loss of the popularity working at a university especially in certain fields, different and satisfying choices which the private sector enable, the decrease of the academicians' effectiveness in the

managements of the universities and faculties, the decline in the reputation of being academicians in society can be given as reasons that the students are not satisfied with their universities. Moreover, factors such as sufficient buildings, technological infrastructure, and equipment and library facilities of the universities have a significant effect on the level of satisfaction of the students. Therefore, the behaviors of the students demonstrating the desired performance are most influenced by the collaboration/cooperation environment. Academic incentive affects academics positively and negatively at the same time and we routes them to prepare scientific article (Tabancalı, 2004).

Writing scientific papers for publication is also very important in terms of the future and career of an academician. An academician, who is successful in the scope of the scientific researches, has better career and reputation. Academicians have some difficulties in the process of preparing scientific articles because of the fact that they are housed in many rules, have a long process, and the language used is different from literary and everyday language (Tok & Gönülal 2016). As the researchers addressed to a high-quality readers, it is necessary for the researcher to present his thoughts in content that is more qualified and form in his studies. Furthermore, it can be expressed that the academicians encounter various problems in all around the world. Some steps are being taken by the higher education institution to deal with this problem. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the steps taken precisely solved the problem. In this research, it was aimed to investigate the problems that academicians have experienced during the research process. It is thought that with the help of this research, it can be contributed to the research problem and the qualified research problem. With this purpose, the findings of the research are thought to be significant for the literature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
RESEARCH DESIGN
There are various traditions and patterns to conduct research that fulfills the requirements of a dissertation. However, the addressed problem in the research needs to choose the best suitable method for a proper understanding of the research problem.

The method used in this research is the case study, qualitative method, exploratory research. The research instrument in this study is the interview. The data was collected through conducting interviews with the students who have already been through the research process with open-ended questions. The interview was designed according to the themes.

NATURE OF THE STUDY
It is a survey type of research (exploratory research). It involves collection, analysis and interpretation of data in order to find out the view of students at university of Peshawar about the problems they face while conducting research, which was done according the following method.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY
The defined population of study is B.Ed (Hons.), B.Ed (1.5), M.Phil of the institute of education and research, University of Peshawar. The whole population was 56 students.

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE
Non-random convenient sampling technique was used to collect the data . The interview was collected from the students of institute of education and research and I collected the data from 20 students.

Table:3.4 Sample Size

Class	Population	Sample size
B.Ed.(Hons.)	18	6
B.Ed.(1.5)	18	6
M.Phil.	20	8

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection process comprised of individual interviews with the respondents. To collect the data, semi structured interview was conducted to get the information from the respondents.

Semi-structure interviews as data collection tool

Interview is an important tool for data collection in social sciences as it is flexible (Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and helps the researchers in getting insight into a person's knowledge, perceptions, values and beliefs. Semi structured interview is best suited for the exploration of the opinion and perceptions of respondents regarding complex issues.

The data was collected through semi-structure interviews. Semi structured in depth interviews are the major mode of data collection in qualitative researches (Creswell, 2018). Since the study aims at exploring the research problems of the researchers through the perceptions and experiences of the respondents, semi–structured in-depth interview technique will be appropriate as it enables the researcher to get a deep understanding of participants' opinion on the phenomenon (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Moreover, semi-structured in depth interview technique is suitable in phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2012).

Interview was scheduled in the following themes.

Research Problem
DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of the data which gathered to find all answer of research questions in a thematic way. The topic needs to do an inquiry about the different problems that a researcher have come across during the research. Different themes were in cooperated to identify different work areas from where a researcher can come across the problems.

RESEARCH PROBLEM
Difficulties And Problems That You Faced In Making Decision Regarding Research Topic

As it was my first time of conducting a research I was very worried about the topic. I wanted to choose a good topic for my research in which my supervisor helped me. I had a lot of problems in level of decision making process in my thesis; I also lacked time and had no reliable data. There was no adequate support, lack of resources and had too many options that difficult to choose topic.

The difficulty which I faced in making decisions regarding my research topic was that I selected many topics and my supervisor rejected it and after one week my research topic was finalized. (**Respondent-8**)

Moreover, selecting the area and narrowing down to a specific topic was very difficult for me. It is because to make my research project different from other previous researches.

The difficulties and problems facing in regarding to choose the research topic are lack of knowledge about the literature review articles and other resources related to research topic. Unavailability of findings modern specialized and related references. And also the acceptance of new topic for research work. (**Respondent-11**)

Furthermore, initially I faced problems in a sense that I would choose a topic but then could not get its literature review and then could not get appropriate methodology or analysis method. Finally, he guided me in this regard and I got on the plan then. Getting everyone in the team on the same page, choosing a topic on which you can work within the allowed funds, access to the participants.

Managing Your Research

I managed to do my research slow and steady as it was in the COVID situation but having a prior knowledge of research methodology benefited me a lot. After that I managed my research work, first of all I identified my research question, mastered the literature, learned planning skills, identified my checkpoints, used technology and took notes. I managed to gather the data in less period of time from less respondents.as due to

covid 19 I waited for the universities to open. I manage my work under the guidance and supervision of my supervisor in timely manner. Completing the steps on by one and proceed forward.

Firstly I select the topic then Identify research question, because research questions is the core of research work. I Read literature review and articles related in my topic and make proper planning related for research steps. (**Respondent-15**)

Moreover, managing my research was easy because my proposal was quite planned and sequenced and I knew what to do next, thus, I had enough time for it and literature review and collection of data with analysis was done in time and smoothly. By making necessary efforts and by cooperation of the team.

Hindrance of Financial Issues

If you choose a research where u need finances and having no money in that situation can hinder your progress. Even in a normal research not having enough money to travel to different places for data collection and to create multiple photocopies of questionnaires can greatly affect your research greatly.There was no financial issues.

I also encountered financial problems in my research work, spent a lot of money on collecting data for my research. And when there was a shortage of money, there would be a lot of stress, which affected my performance badly. (**Respondent-9**)

I have many financial issues in my research when I have printed the documents many times. And the other one is data collection process, so I have start part time job and take loan. When I had financial issues so, I cannot take this type topic which I have used money in the survey. (**Respondent-11**)

Moreover, not at all. Actually there was no such aspect involved. I had an easy access to the participants to collect data and then SPSS software and laptop was already available to smoothen my work activities. They make logistical management difficult, limiting our options.

Difficulties Regarding Time Management

Conducting a research needs a lot of time and energy and so it is quite difficult to manage your other activities and research simultaneously one needs to be smart enough to manage time both for research and other daily life activities.

I faced a lot of challenges in time management in my research work. I failed to prioritize, started my day late, ineffectively scheduled tasks, procrastinated, and failed to manage distractions, undervalued the time something would take to finish, multitasked. (**Respondent-4**)

Furthermore, there were a lot of problems like exams, assignments and house chores but still I was able to finish it on time.

I made a time frame in which I assigned specific time to different steps of research and followed it which helps me a lot. One the difficulties was completing my research work along with bringing groceries. (**Respondent-9**)

Moreover, while working in field i made it a bit difficult to manage the time because that step was really time consuming. Furthermore gathering data was also a time consuming step. I face difficulty in managing time in collecting data. It becomes difficult to catch up on piled up research work once I fall behind on schedule.

The only thing I had to do alongside my research was my office job which was not that hard to hinder. My office setup was quite suitable for research activities which helped and supported me a lot. (**Respondent-15**)

Issues And Problems While Conducting Research Methodology

I had a problem with the fact whether I was doing everything right or not as I had little support from my supervisor. Also the quarantine due to COVID proved very problematic for my research.

Similarly, I faced many problems in doing research methodology. I lacked of standardization in the research process for distance education learning, incentivized participation, dependence of self-reported data, there was absence of culture, accessed individual level data. (**Respondent-5**)

Moreover, selecting a method was a very difficult and tiring task. It was very hard to select the method

because here I have to be more vigilant in selecting the method because it will affect my research results and will negatively affect my work. Designing proper tool and selecting the proper method of collecting data was one of the problem. Data collection is one of the major problems in my research work.

Initially at the time of proposal writing I could not work out how to select methodology but after reading, reading, reading and guidance of supervisor finally I got clear. Then in practice while doing research, I came across problems like how to arrange data, collect data and how to enter in sass. Other than this deducing findings and discussion points from methodology led analysis was also an issue which got resolved later. (**Respondent-14**)

Furthermore, access to the participants, questions of validity of data, being able to gather data from a representative sample, being able to check data for reliability, keeping the method as standardized as possible.

Effects Of Technical Issues

Most of the respondents respond that; they didn't face any technical issues during my research.

I faced survey fatigue, students complained about the length of survey and therefore, they were less likely to participate in that form of data collection. (**Respondent-5**)

Moreover, electricity was the main technical issue which I faced it during my research. As it wastes time and made my work delay. One of the issues was unavailability of electricity and second was getting access to certain articles which required registration and payment.

I have not find easily in my topic related data, many time waste in searching and the other side electricity problem is also a big hurdle. Another people do not gave proper answer for the data collection. (**Respondent-9**)

Not more but sometime SPSS or MS EXCEL got hanged or spoil data due to updating laptop programs. Putting research focused under operational definitions was also an issue initially. Along with our libraries lacked latest books on my topic.(**Respondent-15**)

Furthermore, lack of adequate equipment and networking facilities in remote field areas.

Support of Parents

My parents were very supportive throughout my research they did not bother me with house chores or family functions and gave me all the time that I needed for my research.

My parents had been very supportive, encouraged me as much as possible. They provided a quiet environment at home which was very helpful. And invested in additional education. (**Respondent-2**)

Furthermore, they helped me in providing friendly environment, finance and good suggestions. Their motivation also make me work hard to achieve my goal. They provided there support in term of motivation and finance. They help me in my data collection procedure and gave me moral and financial support.

My father is deceased, however, my mother would take care of my rest and food and spare time. She would often ask somebody else to bring food stuff from market and let me work with needed focus and concentration. (**Respondent-10**)

Moreover, they provide encouragement and moral support for me to be able to pursue my work.

Effect of Support From Home

Support from home enhances one's progress a lot. Emotional support can give you a lot of strength and boost your moral. Hold up for home enhances the improvement of my research by providing help in collecting data, result calculation and making the product graphs.

Support from home enhances the progress of research as good environment help you to conduct your research in a more systematic and effective way. The motivation and proper consoling from the parents also play a very important role in the progress of the research. (**Respondent-3**)

Furthermore, support for home enhances the progress of my research by providing help in collecting data, result calculation and making the result graphs.Topic selection, research methodology, Data collection, data

analysis, defences progress these all process my family help me and guide me.

Well, peace at home having children sent to grandmother's home or in-laws and finding support in terms of isolation with appropriate temperature and UPS back let me enhance my progress. (**Respondent-16**)

Moreover, family support lifts some of the household burdens which would otherwise have hindered my work progress.

Impact of Lack of Prior Knowledge

Not having a prior knowledge can extremely disturb your research as you have no idea what to do and how to do it. Lack of prior knowledge was a major challenge for me at that time. That was not only a challenge for me but also an important issue, in research process. Lack of prior knowledge made my work quite difficult and low in progress.

Lack off prior knowledge disturbs the research progress as it will not be standard one and will be unable produce the desired results. There will be no proper tool selection and method which means less authenticity of the research. Lack of prior knowledge will make the research difficult as he will unable to carry on with his topic without any no how so the result will be very invalid. (**Respondent-12**)

Moreover, if a person don't have prior knowledge he is unable to start his research project if he do so, it has great chances mistakes and result in the waste of time money and resources.

I think in Pakistan mostly researcher priority to select that topic which have available prior knowledge. Because the time is short and financial issues is also available mostly researcher.so they have no this time issues. (**Respondent-18**)

Furthermore, enormously. I would say to a large extend. Readiness is concept no one can deny and clear vision and plan is the first thing to avoid disturbance.It ends up being more time-consuming as a lot of steps must be retraced. It may also contribute to a tunnel vision view of the research process ahead.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study are the following:

Some managed to gather data on time, while some made weekly goals to achieve to fasten there research progress.

Most of them did not faced any financial issues at all but some of the hostilities faced financial issues because they used transportation to collect data or in some cases the supervisor used to ask them to bring only the printed material for checking which was costly.

All of them said that they faced difficulties in time management because they had to do other activities like exams, assignments, presentations etc., and those things used to take a lot of time in preparation because of which we could not give time to research at many times.

All of them did not faced and technical issues except for electricity which hindered their research progress a lot.

The respondents believed that support from home and support of parents motivates and make one person confident in doing their work. They all got full support from their parents and home , they did not bother them at any cost and even tried to helped them in the research process.

Some of the respondents did not had any prior knowledge to what is research and its process which caused them a lot of problems while conducting research. Some of them lack prior knowledge of conducting field work which made them take a lot of time but they got proper support from their supervisors in this area and even the respondents helped them in collecting data.

CONCLUSION

This research concluded that there are so many problems that arise while conducting he research which were used to be ignored. This study claims that the supervisors should give support and show interest in their research work. The supervisor should try to give response on time and should try to guide at every step.

Research plays a very important role as it opens the mind of the person, brings awareness about different

things, enhances the quality of knowledge, increases the level of understanding, and reduces the gap.

It has been proved from the above research that how support from home and parents have helped the researchers in different ways. Having prior knowledge about the research work, methodology have been counted as beneficial in the process of their work. It has been proved from the study that time management and being systematic is the only way to achieve the data correctly and complete the research on time.

The research showed the view of the students about academic reading and writing and literature review.

Good social and verbal skills have a great influence in expressing of views and ideas and while collecting data. And how being good in English and weak in English effects the research process. The one which knew how to use MS-word before did not faced any typing problems while other had to face difficulty in typing. The effect of proper sentence structure was that how much it attracts the reader and how much it gives mature look.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each department should initiate research work at all level starting from undergraduate level or even before it.
Supervisors should be appointed at the beginning of every program.
Orientation sessions should be conducted for supervisors and new researchers before starting research work.
Students/ researchers should be confident in their area of interest and supervisors can still facilitate them in selecting their topics according to their interest.
Supervisors themselves should be active researchers and show interest in it.
Supervisors should be encouraging, friendly and helpful to the researchers.
Supervisor should be present during the final viva.
All available resources should be wisely utilized by researcher and supervisors should facilitate them in it.

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