

Academic Procrastination and Its Relationship to Psychological and Social Adjustment among University Students

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Abstract

This study sought to identify the levels of academic procrastination and psychological and social adjustment among Hashemite University students and to reveal whether there are any differences in the psychological and social adjustment attributable to the variables of gender, college, and academic level. Moreover, the study examined the correlation between academic procrastination and psychological and social adjustment. The study recruited (350) students from Hashemite University. The Academic Procrastination and the Psychological and Social Adjustment scales were utilised to achieve the objectives. The findings showed that (65.1%) of the students had a medium level of academic procrastination, and (4.6%) of the students had substantial levels and a moderate level of psychological and social adjustment. The results demonstrated that the gender variable contributed to statistically significant differences in the degree of psychological and social adjustment. Finally, academic procrastination and psychological and social adjustments were found to be negatively and statistically significantly correlated. The study recommends providing support to university students, by helping them identify the challenges they face, find solutions for them, and overcome them with the aim of achieving their ambitions, in a way that enhances their psychological and social adjustment.

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions seek to prepare students in all areas of life, with the aim of achieving comprehensive growth in all aspects of their cognitive, social, and emotional personality. This requires providing an active, effective, and safe educational environment that helps students acquire knowledge, information, and experiences that will bring about the desired change in the learner's personality and achieve acceptable levels of psychological and social adjustment (Khasawneh et al., 2023).

To achieve self-satisfaction and avoid the psychological tensions and conflicts linked to fear and anxiety, one must first establish psychological adjustment and stability. Indeed, one of the critical components of an individual's personality is how well they adapt to their surroundings and their own circumstances (Kozlova et al., 2024). This helps them develop a sense of personal cohesion, self-acceptance, and acceptance of others, leading to comfort, satisfaction, and academic success. Psychosocial adjustment is crucial to an individual's

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existence since it is one of the ways they might overcome the obstacles and pressures they encounter (Taylor & Stanton, 2007).

While the psychological and social adjustment of a student at this time is highly impacted by academic procrastination, it is a crucial part of a student's mental health and academic success. The inability to adjust psychologically leads to stress, anxiety, or low self-esteem in students. They are more prone to 'procrastinating' – to escape temporary discomfort. This dual nature of procrastination this leads to decreased academic functioning and increased resistance to adaptive psychological and social adjustment. Consequently, it fosters maladjustment both internally and externally, compounding the harm done by deferment in academic engagement to student success. A study of Srivastava and Kumar (2024) found that academic procrastination and adjustment negatively correlate. Moreover, the study of Hadi (2021), which showed a negative correlation between academic procrastination and academic adjustment among university students.

Academic procrastination is a common problem prevalent among most university students. Academic procrastination is also an obstacle to achieving significant educational and professional achievements and one of the most critical factors that cause problems in the educational process. Its negative consequences include anxiety due to fear of failure, guilt, and dissatisfaction with outcomes (Al-Adamat & Bani Khaled, 2023). These negative consequences may impact students' academic adjustment.

Steel (2007) analyzed procrastination from several theoretical angles, focusing on its relation to mental health and academic outcomes and concluding that procrastination is a powerful predictor of psychological maladjustment. Additionally, Sirois and Pychyl (2013) perceived procrastination to be an increasing tendency to avoid activities that include anything that provides immediate dissatisfaction and can hinder long-term adaptation academically and socially. In the last section of the article, the researchers put forward the assertion that academic procrastination does indeed harm students' mental health, as a negative correlation between the two variables was observed. The procrastinating student may feel unnecessary psychological stress and anxiety due to their inability to fulfill those responsibilities, and this adversely affects his psychological and social adjustment.

However, there is a pressing need to conduct more research on the relationship between academic procrastination and psychological and social adjustment within Arab environments. This study explores several key aspects of academic procrastination and psychosocial adjustment among students at Hashemite University. Firstly, it aims to determine the level of academic procrastination exhibited by the students. Secondly, it investigates the level of psychosocial adjustment within the same population. Additionally, the study examines whether there are statistically significant differences in psychological and social adjustment based on variables such as gender, college, and academic level. Lastly, it seeks to identify the correlation between academic procrastination and psychosocial adjustment among these students.

The importance of the study from a theoretical perspective is highlighted in shedding light on how psychological and social adjustment is affected by academic procrastination among university students, and in providing a theoretical understanding of the nature of the study variables, namely psychological and social adjustment and academic procrastination. From a practical standpoint, the importance of this study is evident in its results and literature, which may provide those in charge of the educational process, psychologists, and academic counsellors with facts that will help them prepare guidance programs to reduce academic procrastination among university students. Explaining the role those educational institutions, in general, and universities, in particular, must play towards students' well-being and help them to achieve the satisfaction of their essential needs for a psychological and social adjustment that allows them to deal appropriately with stress and poor adaptation to the surrounding environment within the university to increase their motivation and productivity. It is also hoped

that the results of this study will benefit researchers and specialists by preparing programs to improve students' psychological and social adjustment levels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological and Social Adjustment

Adjustment refers to a person's assimilation and comprehension of their feelings, thoughts, and behaviour to create plans and methods to deal with life's situations. Adjustment is the ongoing process of engaging with oneself and those around them. Additionally, adjustment encompasses two domains: psychological adjustment, which is the capacity to balance an individual's needs, motivations, and social role, and social adjustment, which is the capacity to balance an individual's relationship with those around them by achieving social goals and satisfying social needs and motives (Rababaa & Al-Shamali, 2018).

Psychosocial adjustment is a continuous process in which the individual adjusts his behaviour and achieves a balance between himself and his environment in a way that achieves his self-acceptance and acceptance of others. Psychological adjustment means achieving self-acceptance. In contrast, social adjustment conveys an individual's acceptance of others (Alanani, 1998). Social and psychological adjustment are interconnected concepts. A person cannot be able to adapt to their surroundings and form wholesome social bonds while also being unable to adapt to themselves. Conversely, he is incapable of both self- and other-adaptation. Since each person has an integrated personality, one element cannot be ignored, while another should receive priority over the other (Alanani, 2000). Psychological and social adjustment are priorities, as the individual needs to adapt to emerging situations to fulfil his needs and desires. Adjustment is considered a subjective, interactive psychological state that represents all the internal activities of the individual, in addition to the extent of the individual's acceptance of those changes that occur as a result of it, where the general goal is to reach a state of harmony (Leung, 2001).

According to Tarasova et al. (2017), psychological and social adjustment is a set of psychological reactions and responses of the individual underlying its interaction with current circumstances. It aims to enable one to enjoy internal stability when interacting with others. The ability to adapt to new situations or behaviours that allow one to thrive in a variety of settings, including resolving day-to-day conflicts and interacting positively with others and the social structure of the community in which one lives, is another definition of psychological and social adjustment. This includes the capacity to live in harmony and agreement with others and forge fulfilling relationships through positive interactions (Abuajamia & Arbiat, 2022). Casper and Card (2017) reported a set of indicators that point to the possibility that the person has not yet reached a point of positive adjusting. These indicators include the person's experience of isolation, reluctance to participate in social activities, and verbal or physical aggression towards others. Additionally, the person's poor favourable adjustment may result in impulsivity and lack of attention.

The study of Nabuzoka et al. (2009) indicated that the level of psychological and social adjustment among the study sample was high and that there were statistically significant differences in the level of psychological adjustment due to the gender variable and in favour of females. Study showed moderate psychological and social adjustment levels among the study sample and no statistically significant differences in psychological and social adjustment due to the gender variable (Meliani, 2017). The study of Abuajamia and Arbiat (2022) indicated that the level of psychological and social adjustment among the study sample was average and that there were statistically significant differences in psychological and social adjustment due to the gender variable favouring females.

Academic Procrastination

Academic procrastination is the student's tendency to postpone or delay completing academic tasks or assignments until the last moment despite knowing the adverse effects of their procrastination (Steel, 2007). Procrastination in the academic field is manifested when students unjustifiably postpone completing the required academic tasks until the last possible moment. This act is typically referred to as academic procrastination, a maladaptive behaviour due to its negative effects. Pathak and Joshi (2017) define academic procrastination as postponing, suspending, delaying, or procrastinating in performing tasks. Abood et al. (2019) describe academic procrastination as an individual's tendency to voluntarily postpone academic tasks until the last inappropriate moment despite being aware of the effects.

Ozer and Ferrari (2011) contend that procrastination is one of the most crucial risks facing students' academic performance at every educational stage. They reported that based on the reviewed literature that focused on university students' procrastination, (70%) of the students typically procrastinate their academic assignments; the study confirmed that school students likewise procrastinate their schoolwork but at lower rates. Martinez and Payro (2019) pointed to some internal or external causes of academic procrastination, such as a lack of future orientation and self-control, weak intrinsic motivation, and the inability to ward off distractions while studying. Furthermore, poor self-regulation, the tendency to postpone activities due to lack of time, poor time-management skills, failure to arrange priorities, feelings of discomfort when performing a task, and lack of clear instructions can be among procrastination. They identified other factors, including inappropriate relationships with others (Audinia et al., 2023), instructional methods used by the teacher in the classroom, experienced habits and behaviours that influenced the current behaviours, and parental parenting styles that are not directed towards assuming responsibilities and independence.

Wilson (2012) revealed that the two most frequent reasons for procrastination are unpleasant and dull tasks. Individuals who procrastinate commonly avoid working under pressure and prefer to work on tasks that please them. These individuals also have no future orientation and a lack of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Therefore, they postpone actions that they believe may fail to accomplish. AlQudah et al. (2014) reported that 83.6% of the sample exhibited high levels of academic procrastination, 9.7% moderate levels, and 6.7% low levels. Mahasneh et al. (2018) revealed that 7% of the students had a high level of academic procrastination, 67% had a medium level, and 26% had a low level. Zoghbi (2020) indicated that compared to worldwide rates, the prevalence of academic procrastination among university students with academic specialism was relatively high at 56.4%. According to a study by Onwuegbuzie (2004), 40–60% of college students put off reading weekly assignments, writing research papers, and getting ready for tests regularly.

Table 1. Distribution of the study sample by variable.

Variables	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	male	103	29.4
	female	247	70.6
Collage	Humanity	185	52.9
	Scientific	165	47.1
Academic level	first year	66	18.9
	Second Year	101	28.9
	third year	157	44.9
	Fourth-year	26	7.4
	Total	350	100.0

METHODS

Population and Sample

The population consists of all bachelor's students at Al al-Bayt University in the second semester of the academic year (2023/2024), counting (28,178) male and female students, according to the University's Admission and Registration Department statistics. In contrast, the study sample comprises (350) male and female students selected using the convenient method. Table 1 presents the distribution of the study sample by its variables.

Instruments

The Academic Procrastination Scale.

The scale developed by Abu-Zreik and Jaradat (2013) was adopted in this study. This one-dimensional scale comprises (15) items measuring student procrastination in their assignment and course activities. Abu-Zreik and Jaradat (2013) calculated the scale's reliability using the Cronbach alpha method; the internal consistency coefficient was (0.76). Examples of scale items include "I postpone my assignment until the last minute" and "I tell myself that there is still a long time to prepare for exams."

The Psychological and Social Adjustment Scale

The psychological and social adjustment scale was modified to suit the sample of the current study and developed by benefiting from the studies (Agbaria, 2020; Hammouda & Diwa, 2023; Frehad & Al-Taj, 2024; Khasawneh et al., 2023). The initial form of the one-dimensional scale included (24) items. A five-point Likert scale was used (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) corresponding to the scores (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) respectively for all items, with the scores of negative items reversed during statistical processing. To determine the highest prevalence of procrastination and psychological and social adjustment, the following statistical criterion was used based on the arithmetic means: the highest score - lowest score/number of levels, i.e. $1-5/3 = 1.33$, and thus the levels were graded as follows: Low (1–2.33), Average (2.34–3.67), and High (3.68–5).

Validity and Reliability

The content validity of this study was checked by presenting the scales to a panel of nine specialists in educational psychology, measurement and evaluation from the Hashemite University faculty. They were asked to evaluate whether the items of the instrument are relevant and representative of the subject matter or concept under investigation and whether the language is suitable. The criterion (80%) was adopted for the arbitrators' agreement to modify the scale items. In light of the arbitrators' suggestions, some linguistic errors were corrected. Regarding the Psychological and Social Adjustment Scale, the panel suggested deleting some statements; thus, the final instruments included 20 items.

The construct validity of both scales was assessed using a pilot sample of 50 students from Hashemite University. Correlation coefficients were calculated between the items with the scale's total score and ranged between (0.49-0.87) for the Academic Procrastination Scale and between (0.44-0.93) for the Psychological and Social Adjustment Scale. All correlation coefficient values are statistically significant and appropriate for this study.

Regarding reliability, the scales were administered to a separate sample of 50 students. The internal consistency was verified using the Cronbach Alpha equation, and the Cronbach Alpha value for the Academic Procrastination Scale as a whole was (0.88), while it was (0.89) for the Psychological and Social Adjustment Scale as a whole.

Analysis Data

To address the research objectives, a number of statistical approaches were used in the data analysis. In order to determine the prevalence levels of academic procrastination and psychosocial adjustment among the participants, several descriptive statistics were used, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages. On the other hand a three-way ANOVA was conducted to explore differences in psychosocial adjustment based on gender, college, and academic level. Moreover, the Scheffé method was also used to identify significant pairwise differences. Finally, the Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationship between academic procrastination and psychosocial adjustment.

RESULTS

Academic Procrastination Profile of Participants

Descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation) was obtained to measure the level of prevalence of academic procrastination among Hashemite University students. Table 2. shows that 65.1% of the students have a medium level of academic procrastination and that 30.3% have a low level of academic procrastination, while the percentage of students with high levels of academic procrastination was (4.6).

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of the level of prevalence of academic procrastination among Hashemite University students.

Procrastination level	Frequency	%
low	106	30.3
moderate	228	65.1
high	16	4.6

Psychosocial Adjustment Profile of Participants

Descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation) was obtained to measure Hashemite University students' psychological and social adjustment levels. Table (3) demonstrates that the arithmetic means varied from (2.83–3.59). Item (15), which says, "My family supports me when I face difficulties," ranked first with the highest mean of (3.59), while item. (1), which says, "I remain calm in critical situations," came in the last place with the lowest mean (2.83). The overall mean of psychosocial adjustment was (3.20).

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for the level of psychosocial adjustment among Hashemite University students, arranged in descending order by the means.

N	Items	Mean	Std,	Level
15	My family supports me when I face difficulties	3.59	1.478	moderate
11	I share others' joys and sorrows.	3.56	1.554	moderate
13	I proactively offer help to those in need	3.50	1.538	moderate
9	I feel confident about my appearance	3.49	1.510	moderate
18	I have good relationships with my friends.	3.45	1.541	moderate
6	I can face challenges and difficult situations.	3.39	1.391	moderate
14	I have a good relationship with my family members.	3.35	1.474	moderate
5	I have high self-confidence.	3.25	1.361	moderate
4	I understand myself well.	3.23	1.481	moderate
19	I enjoy visiting my friends and neighbours.	3.19	1.649	moderate
10	I enjoy happiness.	3.15	1.332	moderate
3	I have confidence in my abilities.	3.14	1.504	moderate

17	I feel responsible towards my community.	3.14	1.549	moderate
16	I enjoy meeting new people and spending time with them.	3.08	1.534	moderate
8	I consider myself a successful person.	3.07	1.367	moderate
12	I feel comfortable being with others.	2.97	1.391	moderate
20	I look forward to building relationships with new people.	2.93	1.608	moderate
2	I succeed in controlling any negative feelings I may have.	2.92	1.348	moderate
7	I am characterised by emotional balance.	2.84	1.314	moderate
1	I remain calm in critical situations.	2.83	1.433	moderate
	Psychosocial adjustment scale	3.20	1.130	moderate

Differences of Psychological and Social Adjustment Due to The Variables of Gender, College, and Academic Level

The mean and standard deviation of the scale items were extracted to measure Hashemite University students' psychological and social adjustment levels by the study variables. Results in Table 4 exhibit significant differences in the means and standard deviations of the level of psychosocial adjustment among Hashemite University students attributable to the different categories of variables of gender, college, and academic level.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations for the level of psychosocial adjustment by gender, college, and academic level.

Variables	Category	Mean	Std,	N
Gender	male	2.83	1.120	103
	female	3.36	1.100	247
Collage	humanity	3.26	1.110	185
	sceintific	3.13	1.151	165
Academic level	First-year	3.77	.640	66
	Second- year	3.36	1.063	101
	Third- year	2.93	1.228	157
	Fourth-year	2.78	1.094	26

Table 5. Three-way ANOVA for the effect of gender, college, and academic level on the level of psychological and social adjustment.

Source of variance	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F value	P value
Gender	35.158	1	35.158	32.963	.000
Collage	.649	1	.649	.608	.436
Academic level	58.436	3	19.479	18.262	.000
Error	366.914	344	1.067		
Total	445.568	349			

Table 6. Post-hoc comparisons using the Scheffe method for the effect of academic level on the level of psychosocial adjustment.

Variables	Mean	First-year	Second-year	Third-year
First-year	3.77			
Second-year	3.36	.85*		
Third-year	2.93	.41	.44	
Fourth-year	2.78	.99*	.14	.58

* A statistical significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

The results presented in Table 5 indicate several key findings. Firstly, there were statistically significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ level due to the effect of gender, with a F-value of 32.963 and a statistical significance of 0.000. These differences favored female students. Secondly, no statistically significant differences were found attributable to the impact of the college, as the P-value was 0.608 with a statistical significance of 0.436. Lastly, statistically significant differences were observed due to the effect of academic levels, with a P-value of 18.262 and a statistical significance of 0.000. Post hoc comparisons using the Scheffé method were conducted to identify significant pairwise differences between the arithmetic means, as detailed in Table 6, which reveals statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the first-year, second-year and fourth-year categories, and the differences favoured the first-year category.

Correlation between Academic Procrastination and Psychosocial Adjustment

The Pearson correlation coefficient was extracted between the level of academic procrastination and psychosocial adjustment among Hashemite University students to determine whether they are correlated. The results showed a statistically significant negative correlation ($R = -0.387$, $p = 0.000$) based on a sample size of 350 participants. This indicates that higher academic procrastination is associated with lower psychosocial adjustment.

DISCUSSION

The results of the first question revealed that (65.1%) of the students had a medium level of academic procrastination, (30.3%) had a low level, and (4.6%) had high levels of academic procrastination. Researchers believe this result stems from students' incapacity to estimate the negative effects of procrastination, their lack of time management, their fear of failing, and their tendency to avoid challenging academic tasks. As a result, they are unable to finish tasks on time. Students' lack of interest in their major significantly contributes to their procrastination, as they are occasionally compelled to study a particular major due to pressure from their parents or because their academic average obliges them to study a specific major. This result aligns with Noran's (2000) findings, which indicate that students' inability to plan and manage their time contributes to procrastination and preoccupation with worthless tasks contribute to their academic procrastination. This result is also consistent with the study (Mahasneh et al., 2018), which reported that (67%) of the participants have a moderate level. This study's result differs from the study's (AlQudah et al., 2014), which found that (83.6%) of the respondents had a high degree of academic procrastination.

Regarding the second question, the results revealed a medium social and psychological adjustment. The lack of university students' adaptation to the university environment may be the researchers' explanation for this result. Some students typically need adequate time to establish new friends and fit in at university since they struggle to meet their psychological and social demands, such as maintaining relationships with colleagues. University students may experience challenges when balancing their academic and personal lives and may suffer from emotional stress. Emotional stress may also affect students' psychological and social adjustment and ability to interact effectively with others.

The result of this study is consistent with the study (Meliani, 2017), which indicated an average level of psychological and social adjustment among the study sample. This study differs from the result of (Abuajamia & Arbiat, 2022; Nabuzoka et al., 2009) in that the level of psychological and social adjustment among the study sample was high.

Regarding the third question, there were statistically significant gender differences in the psychological and social adjustment levels favouring female students. The researchers may attribute this result to the fact that women usually receive higher levels of social support than men, and this social support may have a role in enhancing the psychological and social

adjustment of females. Social support may include emotional help, practical support, and participation in supportive social relationships. In addition, women usually exhibit a more interactive style and stronger social skills than men. This style can help establish healthy and supportive social relationships and obtain social support, essential in psychological and social adjustment.

The result of this study is consistent with the result of (Abuajamia & Arbiat, 2022; Nabuzoka et al., 2009), which indicated the presence of statistically significant differences in the level of psychological and social adjustment due to the gender variable and in favour of females. The result of this study differs from the study (Meliani, 2017), which indicated no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological and social adjustment due to the gender variable.

There are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological and social adjustment due to the impact of the college. The researchers may attribute this result to the fact that university students share the same learning environment regardless of the type of college they are studying in. Furthermore, there is equality in the quality of the university's services, such as student activities and supportive services. Similar academic and social support is typically offered to all students, regardless of their college, considering that it is a vital right for everyone. Personal factors may also majorly affect students' psychological and social adjustment. Personality, social skills, and ability to adapt may significantly impact the level of adjustment, regardless of college. Students may have similar personal factors, leading to the same psychological and social adjustment levels.

The findings demonstrated that the academic level significantly influenced psychological and social adjustment, with first-year students showing the highest differences. The researchers attribute this result to students' eagerness and strong desire to succeed in university courses. Their enthusiasm and earnestness about learning and developing new skills and information in their chosen academic subjects may facilitate their adaptive psychological and social adjustment.

The fourth question's findings demonstrated that among Hashemite University students, there is a statistically significant negative association between academic procrastination and psychosocial adjustment. The pressures of the economic and social life may contribute to students delaying academic assignments, feeling more pressure and anxiety regarding these duties, and seeking to cancel part of these duties to satisfy economic or social demands, which affects their psychology and academic achievement and thus affects their psychological and social adjustment.

This result may be attributed to the fact that academic procrastination leads to an accumulation of tasks and duties, which increases feelings of anxiety, tension and stress, and negatively affects self-confidence and self-esteem, which in turn hinders the individual's ability to build healthy and positive social relationships and affects his academic and professional performance. Moreover, procrastination is often associated with other psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety, which complicates the problem and affects the overall quality of life. Thus, procrastination represents a major obstacle to proper adaptation to daily life and success in it on the personal, social, academic, and professional levels. The result of this study is consistent with the result of (Hadi, 2021), which found an inverse relationship between academic procrastination and academic adjustment among university students, and the study (Srivastava & Kumar, 2024), which indicated an inverse relationship between academic procrastination and adjustment.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study was limited to bachelor's students at Hashemite University during the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, and its findings are influenced by the validity and

reliability of the tools used to collect data. Based on the results, it is recommended to provide support to university students by helping them overcome challenges to achieve their goals, thereby enhancing psychological and social adjustment. Additionally, developing training and counseling programs aimed at reducing academic procrastination through improved psychological and social adjustment is suggested. Finally, efforts should focus on improving the overall psychological and social adjustment levels of university students, particularly male students.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on revealing the relationship between two important variables in psychology; academic procrastination and psychosocial adjustment, especially among university students. This study highlights the prevalence of moderate levels of both academic procrastination and psychosocial adjustment. The results reveal significant gender and academic level differences in psychosocial adjustment, underscoring the importance of tailored support for these groups, particularly first-year male students. The negative relationship between academic procrastination and psychosocial adjustment further underscores the need for targeted interventions to address procrastination by reducing its negative psychological impact in order to enhancing students' overall well-being.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Dr. Mohammad Abood was responsible for conceptualization, data curation, theoretical background, previous literature, discussion, editing the first and final versions, and supported the research cost of publishing and results. Dr. Omar Al-Adamat was responsible for visualization, methodology design, writing the original draft, investigation, statistical analysis, results, discussion, and reviewing.

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