



Received: 23-06-2024  
Accepted: 03-08-2024

## International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

### Utilization of Computer and its Facilities for Technical Education Research at Colleges of Education in Rivers State

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#### Abstract

The study focused on the utilization of computer and its facilities for technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State. The study adopted an explanatory sequential research design. The population of this study comprised all the 42 technical education lecturers and 68 final year technical education degree students in Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku. The entire population was used because it was manageable, therefore, there was no sampling technique adopted for this study. Survey questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was face validated by two lecturers in the School of Secondary Education (Technical), Federal College of Education, Technical Omoku. The reliability of the instrument was established using Kuder Richardson 20 and Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient methods. Kuder Richardson 20 was used to test the reliability of section A, while Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient was used to test the reliability of Section B. The reliability coefficient achieved was .76 for Kuder Richardson 20 and .81 for

Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient. The researchers administered the questionnaires to the respondents. Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test Statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The study found among others that some of the computer facilities for Technical education research are available but are not highly utilized due to epileptic power supply, inadequate computer facilities in schools, lack of commitment and limited funding of Technical education programme, stealing of computer facilities by hoodlums, lack of students' access to computer facilities, lecturers' incompetence, limited exposure to research methodologies, inadequate training and guidance of students and limited integration of computer skills into the curriculum and students' incompetence, among others. It was therefore recommended among others that government should equip Technical education departments library with computer facilities that students can use when conducting research.

**Keywords:** Computer, Facilities, Research, Technical Education & Utilization

#### Introduction

Human quest for knowledge on the ugly trends in the world has resulted in the documentation of very vital information that in one way or the other contributed in solving some of these challenges. This regular quest for solutions to the myriad of human problems is regarded as research. Maduabum (2007) <sup>[6]</sup> described research as the formal systematic application of the scientific method to problem solving. Also, Nwankwo (2013) <sup>[8]</sup> stated that research is concerned with finding answers or solutions to questions raised about observed issues or phenomena or events in the environment through systematic and logical procedures. This is to say that through research, problems can be solved in different sectors in the world today. Hence, the enormous problems that are found in educational sector, which is noted as the bedrock of Nigeria development can be solved, and the aim of developing the technology of Nigeria through Technical Education will be achieved. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) <sup>[4]</sup>, Technical Education is the comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational processes involving the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Also, Ochogba and Deebom (2019) defined technical education as the education that provides the requisite skills needed for self-employment or for gainful employment in industries. From the foregoing, Technical education research could be described as the systematic application of scientific method in solving problems relating to acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relevant for

occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Prior to this dispensation, research work was seen to be stressful, time consuming and risky in the sense that sourcing for materials was done manually, which in some cases resulted in death of some researchers. However, the world witnessed the introduction of computer that transformed the manner of doing things, which includes research. Although the impact of this discovery was not felt early in Nigeria as compared to other developed countries in the world, its introduction has led to a major break-through in storing and analyzing information. Nwigbo (2003) <sup>[9]</sup> described computer as an electronic device which is to receive data, process the data and then supply the result of the data. In the same vein, Edefiogo (2007) <sup>[3]</sup> described computer as an electronic machine used for storing and analyzing information automatically. Therefore, computer is an electronic machine, operating under the control of instructions stored in its own memory that can accept data, manipulate the data according to specified rules, produce results, and store the results for future use.

According to Nwigbo (2003) <sup>[9]</sup>, computer does three things, such as; accept data (input), process the data and give result (output). Data in the computers are processed to create information. To process data into information, computer uses hardware and software. The former is the electric, electronic, and mechanical equipment that makes up a computer, while the latter is the series of instructions that tells the hardware how to perform tasks. More so, computer functions with several facilities, such as: Internet, software, printer, scanner, intranet and so on. These facilities contribute in one way or the other to the effectiveness of computer.

Computer and its facilities are very important in education today. It can be used in several ways. According to Obara (2014), computers are used to assist in teaching and learning process. In teaching, computers are used for instruction, which is known as Computer Aided Instruction (CAI), while in learning, students use computer for so many purposes, such as: Distance learning, assignment and research. Other uses of computer in schools include routine and clerical tasks such as registering students, storing data, issuing report cards, solving schedule problems and so on (Akaninwor, 2007) <sup>[1]</sup>. In terms of research, Modh (2014) <sup>[7]</sup> explained that computer is used in the conceptual, design and planning, data collection, data analysis and research publication phases. With the relevance of computer in research, it is expedient for higher institutions, especially colleges of education where students are expected to be properly groomed in research for them to impart the same knowledge to future generations, to be fully equipped with computer and its facilities that are frequently utilized.

However, authors have differed in this area. In course of research, some authors have found that some higher institutions are not equipped with computer and its facilities, and where it is available, it is not properly utilized. This is in line with Chisenga (2004) <sup>[2]</sup> who surveyed the use of computers and its facilities in public libraries in ten (10) Anglophone African countries. The study revealed that all libraries studied pointed out lack/inadequate computer personnel and lack of fund. Also, Yusuf (2005) <sup>[12]</sup> posits that the field of education has been affected by computers which have undoubtedly affected teaching, learning and research. On the contrary, Inyagu (2014) <sup>[5]</sup> investigated the utilization of internet and computer in undertaking

Technical education research in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and found that computer and its facilities are utilized for Technical education research in some higher institutions. Meanwhile, several factors have been noted to impede the use of computer and its facilities in higher institutions. According to Chisenga (2004) <sup>[2]</sup>, one major factor militating against the use of computer in tertiary institutions is erratic power failure. Also, Okwudishu (2005) <sup>[11]</sup> asserted that lack of adequate search skill and inability to access or use internet by instructors and students are responsible for poor usage of computer in research. Due to the relevance of Technical education in technology development of Nigeria which will aid in projecting the country as one of the developed countries in the world, it is expected that computer and its facilities that facilitates research should be properly utilized in order to elicit vital information that will help in effective implementation of Technical education. On this premise, the researchers deemed it fit to venture into a research on the utilization of computer and its facilities for Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State, in a bid to identify the facilities that are available and the extent of utilization.

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and final year Technical education degree students on the extent of utilizing computer and its facilities for Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State.

### Methodology

This study adopted an explanatory sequential research design in the sense that the researchers collected quantitative data, analysed it and followed up with qualitative data in order to explore or explain the result. The study was carried out in Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, which is the only college of education in Rivers States as at the time of this study. The population of this study comprised all the lecturers and final year technical education degree students in Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, which comprised Automobile, Building, Electrical and Mechanical Option Students. As at the time of this study, there were about 68 students and 42 lecturers in the departments under study. The entire population was used because it was manageable, therefore, there was no sampling technique adopted for this study. The instrument that guided this study was tagged "Utilization of Computer and its Facilities in Technical Education Research Survey Questionnaire (UCFTERSQ)". The questionnaire items were partitioned into sections A & B. Section A was a checklist on availability of computer facilities. Items in section B were structured in the pattern of 4-point rating scale of Highly Utilized (HU-4), Utilized (U-3), Poorly Utilized (PU-2) and Not Utilized (NU-1). The instrument was face validated by two lecturers in the school of secondary education (technical) in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku. The reliability of the instrument was established using Kuder Richardson 20 and Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient methods. Kuder Richardson 20 was used to test the reliability of section A, while Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient was used to test the reliability of Section B. This was achieved through a random sampling of 12 final year technical education

students in Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt. The reliability coefficient achieved was .76 for Kuder Richardson 20 and .81 for Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient. The researchers administered the questionnaires to the respondents. Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test Statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at .05

level of significance.

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

What are the computer and its facilities available for Technical Education Research at Colleges of Education in Rivers State?

**Table 1:** Mean Scores on Computer and its Facilities Available for Technical Education Research in Colleges of Education in Rivers state

S. No	Computer Facilities	Lecturers (n=42)		Students (n=68)	
		Available	Not Available	Available	Not Available
1	Desktop	24 (57%)	18 (43%)	35 (51%)	33 (49%)
2	Laptop	21 (50%)	21 (50%)	24 (35%)	44 (65%)
3	Palm top	15 (36%)	27 (64%)	18 (26%)	50 (74%)
4	Printer	24 (57%)	18 (43%)	32 (47%)	36 (53%)
5	Scanner	24 (57%)	18 (43%)	27 (36%)	41 (60%)
6	Internet	21 (50%)	21 (50%)	33 (49%)	35 (51%)
7	Projector	21 (50%)	21 (50%)	40 (59%)	28 (41%)
8	Photocopier	21 (50%)	21 (50%)	42 (62%)	26 (38%)
9	Computer laboratory	21 (50%)	21 (50%)	37 (54%)	31 (46%)
10	Modem	18 (43%)	24 (57%)	27 (40%)	41 (60%)
11	Floppy disk	15 (36%)	27 (64%)	24 (35%)	44 (65%)
12	Flash drive	15 (36%)	27 (64%)	33 (49%)	35 (51%)
13	Printing paper	15 (36%)	27 (64%)	40 (59%)	28 (41%)
14	Software application	12 (29%)	30 (71%)	32 (47%)	36 (53%)
15	Automated lathe machines	6 (14%)	36 (86%)	26 (38%)	42 (62%)
16	Computerized drilling machine	6 (14%)	36 (86%)	26 (38%)	42 (62%)
17	Computerized electronic gadgets	6 (14%)	36 (86%)	21 (31%)	47 (69%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result in Table 1 for lecturers shows that desktop, laptop, printer, scanner, internet, projector, photocopier, and computer laboratory are some of the computer facilities available for Technical education research while palm top, modem, floppy disk, flash drive, printing paper, software application, automated lathe machines, computerized drilling machine and computerized electronic gadgets are not available for Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State. On the other hand, students' response shows that desktop, projector, photocopier, computer laboratory and printing papers are some of the computer facilities available for Technical education research while laptop, palmtop, printer, scanner, internet, modem, floppy disk, flash drive, software application, automated lathe machines, computerized drilling machine and computerized electronic gadgets are not available for

Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State. The result shows that both groups unanimously agreed that laptop, palmtop, modem, floppy disk, flash drive, software application, automated lathe machines, computerised drilling machine and computerised electronic gadgets are available but insignificant for Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State. This result indicates that some of the computer and its facilities are not available for Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State.

**Research Question 2**

What is the extent of computer and its facilities utilization in Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State?

**Table 2:** Mean Scores on Utilization of Computer and its Facilities in Technical Education Research at Colleges of Education in Rivers State

Computer facilities	Lecturers (n=42)					Students (n=68)					
	$\bar{x}_1$	SD	% of U	Rank	Decision	$\bar{x}_2$	SD	% of U	Rank	Decision	GM
Desktop	2.26	1.08	45.3	7 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.37	1.18	44.1	4 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.32
Laptop	2.29	1.17	42.8	3 <sup>rd</sup>	U	1.93	1.08	25.0	13 <sup>th</sup>	PU	2.11
Palm top	2.07	1.11	35.7	10 <sup>th</sup>	U	1.66	.89	16.2	17 <sup>th</sup>	PU	1.87
Printer	2.29	1.17	42.8	3 <sup>rd</sup>	U	2.41	1.22	41.2	3 <sup>rd</sup>	U	2.35
Scanner	2.21	1.09	42.9	8 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.16	1.20	36.8	8 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.19
Internet	2.29	1.17	42.8	3 <sup>rd</sup>	U	2.18	1.18	32.3	7 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.24
Projector	2.07	1.18	42.9	10 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.22	1.10	38.2	6 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.15
Photocopier	2.36	1.12	57.2	1 <sup>st</sup>	U	2.49	1.23	48.5	1 <sup>st</sup>	U	2.43
Computer laboratory	2.14	1.14	42.9	9 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.46	1.18	45.5	2 <sup>nd</sup>	U	2.30
Modem	2.00	1.15	35.7	12 <sup>th</sup>	PU	2.07	1.15	30.9	9 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.04
Floppy disk	2.00	1.27	35.7	12 <sup>th</sup>	PU	1.93	1.06	29.4	13 <sup>th</sup>	PU	1.97
Flash drive	2.36	1.25	42.9	1 <sup>st</sup>	U	1.97	1.08	29.4	12 <sup>th</sup>	PU	2.17
Printing paper	2.29	1.17	42.8	3 <sup>rd</sup>	U	2.28	1.17	38.2	5 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.29
Software application	2.00	1.21	42.9	12 <sup>th</sup>	PU	2.06	1.17	32.3	10 <sup>th</sup>	U	2.03
Automated lathe machines	1.86	1.14	28.6	17 <sup>th</sup>	PU	2.00	1.09	26.5	11 <sup>th</sup>	U	1.48
Computerized drilling machine	1.93	1.05	35.7	15 <sup>th</sup>	PU	1.90	1.01	25.0	15 <sup>th</sup>	PU	1.92
Computerized electronic gadgets	1.93	1.05	35.7	15 <sup>th</sup>	PU	1.90	1.04	22.0	15 <sup>th</sup>	PU	1.92
	<b>2.14</b>	<b>1.15</b>				<b>2.12</b>	<b>1.12</b>				

Result in Table 2 for lecturers shows that desktop, laptop, palmtop, printer, scanner, internet, projector, photocopier, computer laboratory, flash drive and printing paper are moderately utilized in Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State while modem, floppy disk, software application, automated lathe machine, computerise drilling machines and computerised electronic gadgets are poorly utilized in Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State. On the other hand, the responses of students shows that desktop, printer, scanner, internet, projector, photocopier, computer laboratory, modem, printing paper, software application and

automated lathe machines are moderately utilized in Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State while laptop, palmtop, floppy disk, flash drive, computerised drilling machines and computerised electronic gadgets are poorly utilized in Technical education research at colleges of education in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and final year degree Technical students on the extent of utilizing computer and its facilities for Technical education research.

**Table 3:** z-Test Analysis on the Extent of Utilizing Computer and its Facilities for Technical Education Research

Category	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	DF	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Lecturers	42	2.14	1.15				
				108	.09	1.96	Not Significant
Students	68	2.12	1.12				

The result in Table 3 shows that lecturers mean and standard deviation were 2.14 and 1.15, respectively, while students mean and standard deviation were 2.12 and 1.12 respectively. The computation of these data gave a z-cal value of .09 which is less than z-crit value of 1.96, with DF of 108 at .05 level of significance using two tail test. This result indicates that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and final year degree Technical education students on the extent of utilizing computer and its facilities for Technical education research.

**Qualitative Phase**

The quantitative findings of this study showed that most of the computer and its facilities are moderately or poorly utilized apart from few facilities that were highly utilized. Meanwhile, the quantitative findings of the study did not present the reasons for moderate and poor utilization of computer and its facilities. Therefore, this creates a knowledge gap as to why students moderately utilize computer and its facilities for Technical education research at Colleges of Education in Rivers State. More data were needed to provide solutions to this question. In cases where experimental inquiry does not provide enough description of a phenomenon, researchers can use qualitative follow-up procedures to aid understanding (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). It is against this backdrop that this research sought to ascertain the factors and possible solutions to moderate utilization of computer and its facilities for Technical education research

in College of Education in Rivers State.

To achieve this, the researcher purposefully sampled 4 lecturers and 2 students who served as participants (P) for further study into the factors responsible for moderate utilization of computer facilities and possible solutions to the factors in Colleges of Education in Rivers State. The participants were each engaged by the researchers. This process was recorded in order to have a play back of the interview for coding and data analysis. The data analysis adopted for the qualitative study was typological analysis. Typological analysis is essentially a classificatory process wherein data are put into groups, subsets or categories on the basis of some clear criterion (such as acts, behaviour, meanings, nature of participation, relationships, settings, activities) (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). A pre-determined set of coding schemes was used to sort the statements into categories as presented in table 4 below.

**Summary of Participant and Identifier**

S. No	Real Participant Identification	Study Participant Identifier
1	First lecturer	L1
2	Second lecturer	L2
3	Third lecturer	L3
4	Fourth lecturer	L4
5	First student	S1
6	Second student	S2

**Organization of Interview Responses**

**Table 4:** Responses on Factors Responsible for Poor Utilization of Computer and its Facilities for Technical Education research

Participant	Questions/Responses	Theme	Sub-Theme
Researcher	<b>What are the factors responsible for poor utilization of computer and its facilities for Technical education research in College?</b>		
L1	Poor electricity supply, vandalism and teachers incompetence.	The factors could be categorized into governmental, community-based, administrative and student-related factors	<b>Governmental Factors</b> The governmental factors include epileptic power supply and inadequate computer facilities in schools, lack of commitment and limited funding of Technical education programme.  <b>Community-Based Factors</b> It include stealing of computer facilities by hoodlums and destroying of facilities.
L2	Inadequate computer facilities, time allocation factors, lack of students access to computer facilities and lecturers incompetence.		
L3	Lack of computer laboratory in school, insufficient computer, epileptic power supply, students' incompetence in computer usage, access to computer and inability to put useful		

L4	contents together. Limited access to computer facilities, inadequate digital literacy, limited exposure to research methodologies and insufficient training and guidance of students.		<p><b>Administrative Factors</b> Administrative factors include time allocation factors, lack of students' access to computer facilities, lecturers' incompetence, limited exposure to research methodologies and insufficient training and guidance of students and limited integration of computer skills into the curriculum.</p> <p><b>Students-Related Factors</b> They include students incompetence in computer usage, inability to put useful contents together, inadequate digital literacy and limited exposure to research methodologies</p>
S1	Epileptic power supply, inadequate computers, lack of commitment, vandalism and limited funding of Technical education programme		
S2	Inadequate access to computers or internet, lack of training on research tools/software, outdated technology and limited integration of computer skills into the curriculum.		

Table 4 shows responses on factors responsible for poor utilization of computer facilities for Technical education research in Colleges of Education in Rivers State. The responses elicited from the interview exercise shows that the factors responsible for poor utilization of computer and its facilities for Technical education research in College of Education are categorised into governmental, community-based, administrative and student related factors. The governmental factors include epileptic power supply and inadequate computer and its facilities in schools, lack of commitment and limited funding of Technical education

programme. The community based factors include stealing of computer facilities by hoodlums. Also, administrative factors include time allocation factors, lack of students' access to computer and its facilities, lecturers' incompetence, limited exposure to research methodologies and insufficient training and guidance of students and limited integration of computer skills into the curriculum. More so, students related factors include students' incompetence in computer usage, inability to put useful contents together, inadequate digital literacy and limited exposure to research methodologies.

**Table 5:** Responses on the Possible Solutions to Factors Responsible for Poor Utilization of Computer and its Facilities for Technical Education research

Participant	Questions/Responses	Theme	Sub-Theme
Researcher	<b>What are the possible solutions to factors responsible for poor utilization of computer and its facilities for Technical education research</b>		
L1	Providing proper security and proper training of lecturers.	The possible solutions are categorized into governmental, administrative, community-related and student-related solutions	<p><b>Governmental Solutions</b> They include provision of computer facilities, more funding of tertiary institutions to enable training of lecturers, incorporating digital literacy into Technical education curriculum and regular power supply.</p> <p><b>Administrative Solutions</b> They include providing proper security, proper training of lecturers and students in computer usage, allocating more time for computer classes, enhancing access to computer facilities and reliable internet connectivity, introducing workshops on effective research methodologies, updating of computer facilities, integrating of computer skills into the curriculum and providing guidance on accessing and utilizing digital research resources.</p> <p><b>Community-Related Solutions</b> The community related solution involve creating awareness in the community on how to secure computer facilities for Technical education programme.</p> <p><b>Student-Related Solutions</b> They include ability to put useful contents together and students commitment in research</p>
L2	Allocating more time for computer classes, providing more computer facilities for schools and training of lecturers in computer.		
L3	Provision of computer laboratory in school, purchase of computer, regular power supply, training of students in computer usage, access to computer and ability to put useful contents together.		
L4	Enhancing access to computer facilities and reliable internet connectivity, incorporating digital literacy into the curriculum, introducing workshops on effective research methodologies, and providing guidance on accessing and utilizing digital research resources.		
S1	Regular power supply, provision of computers facilities and creating awareness in the community on how to secure computer facilities for Technical education programme		
S2	Training of lecturers, updating of computer facilities, students commitment in research and integration of computer skills into the curriculum		

Table 5 shows responses on possible solutions to factors responsible for poor utilization of computer and its facilities for Technical education research. The responses elicited from the interview exercise shows that the possible solutions to factors responsible for poor utilization of computer and its facilities for Technical education research are categorised into governmental, administrative, community related, and student related. The governmental solutions are provision of computer facilities, more funding of tertiary institutions to enable training of lecturers, incorporating digital literacy into Technical education curriculum and regular power supply. The administrative solutions are providing proper security, proper training of lecturers and students in computer usage, allocating more time for computer classes, enhancing access to computer facilities and reliable internet connectivity, introducing workshops on effective research methodologies, updating of computer facilities, integrating of computer skills into the curriculum and providing guidance on accessing and utilizing digital research resources. The community related solutions are creating awareness in the community on how to secure computer and its facilities for Technical education programme. Finally, the ability to put useful contents together and students' commitment in research are the student related solutions to factors responsible for poor utilization of computer facilities for Technical education research.

### Conclusions

From the findings of this study, the researchers deduced that some of the computer facilities for Technical education research are available but are not highly utilized. The poor utilization of computer and its facilities for Technical education research is as a result of so many factors categorized in governmental, administrative, community based and student related like epileptic power supply, inadequate computer facilities in schools, lack of commitment and limited funding of Technical education programme, stealing of computer facilities by hoodlums, lack of students' access to computer facilities, lecturers' incompetence, limited exposure to research methodologies, insufficient training and guidance of students and limited integration of computer skills into the curriculum and students' incompetence, among others. Also, the study deduced that the possible solutions to the factors responsible for poor utilization of computer facilities for Technical education research include provision of computer facilities, more funding of tertiary institutions to enable training of lecturers, incorporating digital literacy into Technical education curriculum and regular power supply, providing proper security, proper training of lecturers and students in computer usage, allocating more time for computer classes, enhancing access to computer facilities and reliable internet connectivity, introducing workshops on effective research methodologies, updating of computer facilities, integrating of computer skills into the curriculum, creating awareness in the community on how to secure computer and its facilities for Technical education programme and students' commitment to research, among others.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. Government should equip Technical education department libraries with computer and its facilities that students can use when conducting research. With this,

Technical education students will be encouraged to use computer facilities for research.

2. Technical education schools should regularly organize training for students on how to utilize computer and its facilities for research. Basically, students will be acquainted with requisite skills for the use of computer facilities for Technical education research.
3. Computer skills should be integrated into Technical education curriculum for Technical education students to learn the use of computer and its facilities in research.

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