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An investigation of burn-out levels of teachers working in elementary and secondary educational institutions and their attitudes to classroom management

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In the present study, the burn-out levels of teachers working in elementary and secondary educational institutions and their attitudes and beliefs regarding classroom management are investigated with respect to gender, job seniority, class size and the types of schools they have been working in. This is a survey method research and quantitative methodology is adopted for the study. The sampling group consists of 420 teachers. The Maslach Burn-out Inventory (MBI) and Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control Inventory (ABCC) are used in the study. Independent Samples t test, ANOVA and Benforroni correction tests have been used in the analysis of data. According to the results of the study, the level of depersonalization is higher among male teachers compared to female teachers. Moreover, it is observed that the levels of "emotional exhaustion" and "depersonalization" are high among elementary school teachers compared to secondary school teachers. When the results of the research are analyzed, it is obvious that secondary school teachers show more "interventionist" attitudes than elementary school teachers. There are no significant differences between the groups with regard to the other variables used in the study.

Key words: Burn-out levels of teachers, classroom management.

INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, children aged 6 - 14 years old attend elementary schools; elementary education lasts for 8 years and is compulsory. The teachers working in these schools start their teaching careers after completing four years of training in the Faculties of Education. Of the students who complete their elementary school education, the ones who want to continue their education attend secondary schools, which last for four years. According to the data obtained from the Ministry of Education, approximately 84% of the students who graduate from elementary schools attend secondary schools. In Turkey, 98% of the schools are state schools. The remaining 2% are private schools (MEB, 2007).

In recent years in Turkey, according to statements made by the Ministry of National Education, the education unions and the news in the press, cases of violence have increased in schools and teachers have been experiencing difficulties in managing their classrooms (Gozutok et al., 2006; Avci and Burcum, 2006; Akbaba et al., 2006). Also, efforts made in this regard and educa-

tional reforms do not seem to be effective. It is, therefore, necessary to reduce the negative attitudes of students in the classroom and protect the time allocated for teaching, in order to provide an effective classroom environment and a positive learning environment. Since students' negative behavior blocks the learning environment atmosphere, managing the behavior of students has commonly been a primary goal of teachers (Horn, 2003; Walbergand 2000).

Although classroom management and discipline are terms which are frequently used interchangeably, they do not have the same meaning. Discipline can be defined as the rules the students have to obey and the effort made to ensure that students obey these rules (Charles, 1992; Wolfgang, 1995). However, classroom management can be defined as teachers' efforts made in order to perform various activities in the classroom, including student attitudes, students' awareness of needs and their own characteristics, social interaction, learning and evaluation (Martin et al., 1997; Gordon, 2001; Emer, 2001; Reed,

Interventionist	Interactionalist	Non-Interventionist
Teacher has primary responsibility for control	Student and teacher share responsibility for control	Student has primary responsibility for control
Teacher develops the rules	Teacher develops the rules with some student input	Students develop the rules with teacher guidance
Primary focus on behavior	Initial focus on behavior, followed by thoughts and feelings	Primary focus on thoughts and feelings
Minor emphasis on individual differences in students	Moderate emphasis on individual differences in students	Major emphasis on individual differences in students
Teacher moves quickly to control behavior	Teacher allows some time for students to control behavior, but teacher protects the right of the group	Teacher allows time for students to control behavior
Types of interventions are rewards, punishments, token economy	Types of interventions are consequences and class meetings	Types of interventions are non-verbal cues and individual conferences

(Quoted from Ritter, 2003).

1991; Wragg, 1995). Another definition for classroom management is that it includes all the activities related to the conscious and systematic application of principles, concepts, theories, models and techniques concerning the planning, organization, application and evaluation functions for the implementation of determined educational goals and objectives (Erdogan, 2001).

In certain cases, managing negative student behavior may require more time than academic learning. Effective classroom management makes the students focus on learning, reduce their negative behavior and also makes use of the teacher's learning process (Wang et al., 2003).

According to the results of the study conducted by Turner (1993), teachers state that firstly, effective class-room management depends on restoring order in the classroom and controlling student behavior. Secondly, it depends on focusing on academic issues. According to Campell et al. (1991) teachers who have adopted the role of creating and maintaining an effective learning environment in classroom management become more successful compared to the teachers who want to have power and emphasize discipline in the classroom.

Teachers show different attitudes with respect to their personal characteristics while managing their class-rooms. Glickman and Tamashiro (1980) and Martin et al. (1997) categorize the attitudes displayed by teachers in classroom management into three types: interventionist; interactionalist and non-interventionist (Table 1).

Negative student behavior in the classroom has a positive correlation with the burn-out levels of teachers (Friedman, 1995; Byrne, 1991). Burn-out can be defined as a psychological syndrome which emerges as emo-

tional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment, which may occur among individuals who work together (Maslach and Zimbardo, 1982). Emotional exhaustion is characterized by a lack of energy and a feeling that one's emotional resources are used up. Depersonalization is the development of negative and cynical attitudes and feelings towards others (Maslach, 1993). The feeling of reduced personal accomplishment can be described as an individual's evaluation of self as incapable and unsuccessful in relation to his or her job (Izgar, 2003).

Cam (1992) in the study called as "The search of validity and reliability of the burn-out inventory" describes in particular the behavioral, psychological and physical indications of burn-out based on the literature and the studies conducted on burn-out. Cam considered that the behavioral indications of burn-out listed below can affect teachers' attitudes about classroom management. These are:

- i. Irritability.
- ii. Doubt and anxiety over a number of issues.
- iii. Touchiness, feeling unappreciated.
- iv. Job dissatisfaction, being late for work.
- v. A decrease in self-respect and self-confidence.
- vi Submission and guiltiness.
- vii. Discouragement, despair, crying easily, difficulty in concentrating.,
- viii. Incompetence in organization and planning.
- ix. Role conflict, confusion about duties and rules.
- x. Loss of interest in the institution.
- xi. Sense of failure.

xii. Being cynical and accusatory.

The results of the research show that, generally, teachers who exhibit symptoms of burn-out inform their students to a lesser degree, praise them less, do not approve their ideas and communicate with them less, compared to other teachers (Beer and Beer, 1992). Bibou-Nakou et al. (1999) reported that there is a difference among the attitudes of teachers about negative behavior in their classrooms, their methods of coping with this kind of behavior and their burn-out levels. According to Evers, Tomic and Kiosseoglou (2004), there is a difference between teachers' competence in coping with students' negative attitudes and all three dimensions of their burn-out levels.

Considering the meaningful, existing relationships between teachers' attitudes about classroom management and their burn-out levels, the aim of the present study is to investigate the burn-out levels of teachers working in Turkey and their attitudes and beliefs about classroom management with respect to gender, job seniority, class size and the type of school in which they work.

METHOD

Participants

The study has been conducted in general survey model. A total of 636,950 teachers, of whom 301,486 (47.34%) are female and 335,634 (52.66%) are male, work in Turkish elementary and secondary educational institutions (EACEA, 2008). The study sample consists of 420 randomly selected, elementary and second-dary school teachers, of whom 231 are female (55%) and 189 are male (45%), who were employed in Turkey in the 2006 - 2007 academic year. Although there is no national statistical data considering the date of retirement, it is thought that the average job seniority for teachers is 15 years. It has been found out that the average job seniority of the sample is 15.3 years. According to national statistics, the number of students per classroom is 35 (MEB, 2006). The average class size of the sample is 35.8 students.

In order to ensure that the scales used in the study safely reached the researcher, they were sent to every teacher by mail with an enclosed return envelope. The process of sending the scales and the arrival of the replies was carried out between September 2006 and November 2006. The scales were sent to 440 teachers working in elementary and secondary schools in the 2006 - 2007 academic year. Of the scales sent, 20 scales did not return. Thus, the return rate of the scales was nearly 95%.

Instruments

Maslach burn-out inventory (MBI)

MBI was developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) with the name of the "Human Services Survey" in order to assess the burn-out levels of individuals working in different areas. The scale, which consists of a total of 22 items, is composed of three subscales: "emotional exhaustion", "depersonalization" and "personal accomplishment". The "Emotional Exhaustion" (EE) subscale consists of nine items, the "Depersonalization" (DP) subscale consist of five

items and the "Personal Accomplishment" (PA) subscale consist of eight items. Examples of items are; "I feel burned out from my work" (EE); "I've become more callous towards people since I took this job" (DP); "I feel exhilarated after working closely with my recipients" (PA).

The adaptation of the scale into Turkish was carried out by Ergin (1992). The original form of the scale consisted of a seven-point rating scale and the Turkish form of the scale was composed as a five-point rating scale, with "never, rarely, sometimes, usually and always". High scores for the EE and DP subscales and a low score for the PA subscale are indicators of burn-out. The Cronbach's Alfa coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.83 of the EE subscale, 0.65 of the DP subscale and 0.72 of the PA subscale. Furthermore, test-retest reliability of the scale, carried out between 2 and 4 weeks, was calculated as 0.83 for the EE subscale, 0.72 for the DP subscale and 0.67 for the PA subscale.

Attitudes and beliefs on classroom control inventory (ABCC)

ABCC Inventory is a tool with a four-point scale which was developed in order to measure teachers' perceptions of their classroom management beliefs and practices (Martin, Yin and Baldwin, 1997). The scale was graded as follows: "describes me very well" (4 points); "describes me usually" (3 points); "describes me somewhat" (2 points) and "describes me not at all" (1 point).

The scale had 48 items at the beginning of the study. However, after initial principal component analysis and subsequently unweighted least square extraction with orthogonal (varimax) rotating, items with less than 0.35 factor loadings and those that were crossloaded were omitted. It was found out that the scale had three dimensions: Instructional Management (14 items); People Management (8 items) and behavior management (4 items).

The instructional management dimension includes aspects such as using materials in the classroom, monitoring seat-work and structuring daily routines of students (that is, I believe the teacher should direct the students' transition from one learning activity to another). The people management dimension pertains to what teachers believe about students as people and what teachers do to develop the teacher-student relationship (that is, I believe teachers should nurture and encourage student independence and self-expression). The behavior management dimension includes providing feedback to students, giving instructions and commenting on the students' behavior (that is, If students agree that a classroom rule is unfair, I will explain the reason for the rule).

Each sub-dimension of the scale enables us to evaluate the interventionist, interactionalist and non-interactionalist management attitudes and beliefs, which reflect the degree of teachers' power over the students (Martin, Yin and Baldwin, 1998).

The ABCC was adapted into Turkish by Savran and Cakiroglu (2003). The adaptation process of the ABCC Inventory to Turkish included translation, validity and reliability studies. Analysis of data was carried out using SPSS. As the result of the initial principal component analysis with varimax rotation, it came out that the scale has two sub-dimensions and 22 items. Three items (items 6, 7 and 24) were omitted using a factor loading of 0.30 as the cut-off point and one item (item 17) was loaded on the wrong factor, so it was also omitted. After deleting these four items, subsequent factor analysis for the refinement of the two-factor structure retained items weighted highly on their own scale. Three remaining items (items 23, 25 and 26) from the behavioral management scale were retained on the people management scale with high loadings. Furthermore, as a result of the factor analysis it came out that items 23, 25 and 26, belonging to the "behavior management" subscale in the original scale, were included in the "people management" subscale in the adapted scale. The instructional management subscale included 12 items and the factor loads of the items varied between 0.32 and 0.64. The people management subscale includ-

Burn-out and classroom	Female Tea	cher (N = 231)	Male Teac	her (N = 189)			
management dimensions	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev	.t	р	
Emotional exhaustion	12.18	6.268	12.83	6.196	0.765	0.445	
Depersonalization	3.42	3.186	4.39	3.661	2.093*	0.038	
Personal accomplishment	8.76	3.754	9.61	4.155	1.580	0.116	
Instructional management	34.08	4.468	34.40	3.759	0.569	0.570	
People management	19.74	4.262	19.81	3.264	0.128	0.898	

Table 2. Differences between females and males regarding burn-out dimensions and classroom management.

 $P^* < 0.05$.

ed 10 items and the factor loads of the items varied between 0.45 and 0.58.

A high score obtained from the subscales represents the teacher's "interventionist management" belief about classroom management and a low score obtained from the subscales represents the "non-interventionist management" belief of the teacher.

In order to determine the internal consistency of the scale, Cronbach's Alfa co-efficiency test was implemented and calculated as 0.71 for the instructional subscale and as 0.73 for the people management subscale.

Analysis of data

In the study, t test and analysis of variance test (F test) were used for the analysis of the data. A t test was used to determine whether there were significant differences between both the burn-out levels and the classroom management attitudes and beliefs of male and female teachers. Furthermore, the data was analyzed using the t test to find out whether there were significant differences among the variables of job seniority (0 - 5 years; 6 - 10 years; 11 - 15 years; 16 - 20 years; 21 years and over), class size (20 - 30 students; 31 - 40 students; 41 - 50 students; 51+ students) and the type of school in which teachers work (elementary school and secondary school) and the teachers' burn-out levels and classroom management attitudes and beliefs.

RESULTS

Gender, burn-out and classroom management

The data was analyzed by means of the t test to find out whether there were any significant differences between the genders of the teachers in terms of their burn-out levels and their attitudes and beliefs about classroom management. The results are reported in Table 2.

There are no significant differences between the gender of the teachers and their emotional exhaustion (t = 0.765, p = 0.445) and personal accomplishment levels (t = 1.580, p = 0.116). However, there is a significant difference in the depersonalization sub-dimension (t = 2.093, p < 0.05). When the mean values are analyzed it can be seen that the burn-out levels of males are higher

than those of females in the depersonalization subdimension.

A t test was implemented to determine whether there were any significant differences between the genders in the teachers' sub-dimension of attitudes about classroom management. When the results are analyzed it is observed that the teachers' attitudes about classroom management do not differ in terms of gender in "instructional management" (t = 0.569, p = 0.570) and "people management" (t = 0.128, p = 0.898) sub-dimensions.

Job seniority, burn-out and classroom management

The data was analyzed to see whether there were any significant differences among the teachers' job seniority, their burn-out levels and their attitudes and beliefs about classroom management by means of the F test. The results are reported in Table 3.

According to the table, "Emotional exhaustion" F (4, 215) = 1.651, p = 0.16, "depersonalization" F (4, 215) = 0.736, p= 0.56 and "personal accomplishment" (F = 0.669, p = 0.61) levels of the teachers do not differ in terms of job seniority. Similarly, their "instructional management" F (4, 215) = 0.611, p = 0.65 and attitudes about "people management" F (4, 215) = 0.154, p = 0.96) do not differ in terms of job seniority.

Class size, burn-out and classroom management

The data was analyzed to find out whether there were any significant differences among teachers' class size and their burn-out levels and their attitudes about classroom management by means of the F test. The results are reported in Table 4.

The class size variable of the teachers does not cause a difference in their "emotional exhaustion" F (3.216)= 2.217, p = 0.087 and "personal accomplishment" F, (3.216) = 0.529, p = 0.663 levels. However, there is a difference in the "depersonalization" sub-dimension F

Table 3. Differences in job seniority on burn-out dimensions and classroom

Burn-out and classroom	0 - 5 years (N = 62)		6 - 10 years (N = 78)		11 - 15 years (N = 91)		16 - 20 years (N = 88)		21 years – among (N = 101)			
management dimensions	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	F	Р
Emotional exhaustion	11.27	6.07	11.61	6.54	12.61	6.52	14.31	5.73	11.77	6.08	1.651	0.16
Depersonalization	3.41	3.56	3.39	2.75	3.59	3.87	4.48	3.47	3.89	3.28	0.736	0.56
Personal accomplishment	8.86	3.04	8.53	4.35	9.78	3.74	9.23	4.03	8.87	4.05	0.669	0.61
Instructional management	33.95	3.70	34.95	5.24	34.08	3.29	34.52	4.96	33.70	3.63	0.611	0.65
People management	19.86	3.84	19.76	3.73	20.02	3.15	19.42	4.84	19.80	3.79	0.154	0.96

Table 4. Differences in Class Size on Burn-out Dimensions and Classroom Management

Burn-out and classroom	20 - 30 student (N = 66)		31 - 40 student (N = 103)		41 - 50 student (N = 148)		51 and + (N = 103)			
management dimensions	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	F	Р
Emotional exhaustion	11.50	6.583	11.94	5.722	11.84	5.975	14.34	6.847	2.217	.087
Depersonalization	3.44	3.483	3.36	3.181	3.48	3.153	5.00	3.868	2.902*	.036
Personal accomplishment	8.63	4.241	8.81	3.305	9.47	4.175	8.85	4.012	0.529	.663
Instructional management	35.13	3.181	34.42	4,580	33.90	4.517	34.30	3.389	0.483	.694
People management	18.38	4.515	20.58	3.371	19.87	3.760	19.19	4.265	1.908	.129

 $P^* < 0.05$, P > 0.0083.

(3.216) = 2.902, p < 0.05. When the means are analyzed it is clear that, in general, the greater the class size, the greater the "depersonalization" level of the teachers. Since there are four different class sizes, different comparisons could be made among them and this could cause a type 1 error. Therefore, to find out between which groups a difference exists. But after the Bonferroni correction has been done and the level of significance was discovered to be 0.05/6 = 0.0083, which indicates no significant differences among the groups.

Similarly, "instructional management" F (3.216) = 0.483, p = 0.694 and attitudes of the teachers about "people management" F (3.216) = 0.483, p = 0.129 do not show a significant difference with respect to class size.

Differences in school type, burn-out and classroom management

The data was analyzed to find out whether there were

any significant differences among the types of school teachers worked in and their burn-out levels and attitudes about classroom management by means of the F test. The results are reported in Table 5.

According to the table "Emotional exhaustion" (t=3.10, p< 0.05) and "depersonalization" (t=2.63, p< 0.05) levels of the teachers show a difference with regard to the school types in which teachers work. This shows that "emotional exhaustion" and "depersonalization" levels of elementary school teachers are higher than those of secondary school teachers. However, there is no significant difference in the "personal accomplishment" sub-dimension (t=0.02, p > 0.05).

When the results are analyzed it is observed that the attitudes of the teachers about classroom management do not differ in terms of school type in "instructional management" sub-dimensions (t = 1.3, p > 0.05). The types of schools in which the teachers worked cause a difference in the "people management" sub-dimension of the teachers' attitudes about classroom management (t = 2.21, p < 0.05). When the results of the research are

Burn-out and classroom management		tary school = 212)		ary school = 208)		
dimensions	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev	.t	р
Emotional exhaustion	13.70	5.81	11.14	6.41	3.10**	0.002
Depersonalization	4.40	3.68	3.20	2.99	2.63**	0.009
Personal accomplishment	9.11	3.60	9.09	4.26	.02	0.978
Instructional management	34.58	4.45	33.82	3.87	1.34	0.181
People management	19.21	3.68	20.35	4.01	2.21*	0.028

P* < 0.05 P** < 0.01.

analyzed, it is clear that secondary school teachers show more "interventionist" attitudes than elementary school teachers.

DISCUSSION

As a result of this research, it has been found that there are no significant differences between male and female teachers in the "emotional exhaustion" and "personal accomplishment" sub-dimensions of the burn-out scale. However, there are significant differences between male and female teachers in the "depersonalization" subdimension of the scale. In the literature, certain findings differ from our research results. For example, the research conducted by Kirilmaz et al. (2003) and Hipps and Malpin (1991) showed that there are no significant differences between male and female teachers in any sub-dimension of the burn-out scale. Although there are researchers who have reached different conclusions in the literature, any research results showing that the burnout levels of male teachers are lower than those of female teachers have not been found. Women show a considerable interest in the teaching profession throughout the world and in Turkey. For example, according to the data from the Ministry of National Education in Turkey, female teachers comprise half of the teachers in Turkey (MEB, 2007). Since the female teaching population is so large, the reasons why female teachers describe themselves as suffering more "burnout" than males should be determined, working conditions should be improved and affirmative action should be taken for female teachers on this matter. It is supposed that these actions will pave the way for women, who show a considerable interest in being a teacher, to enjoy more success in their jobs.

In the research, it has been found out that there are no significant differences between female and male teachers

in terms of their attitudes and beliefs about classroom management. This result is confirmed by the results of Martin, Yin and Baldwin (1997) and Shin and Sook (2007). In this case, it can be said that female and male teachers show similar characteristics in terms of their attitudes and beliefs about classroom management.

As a result of the research, it has come out that the burn-out levels of the teachers do not show any differences in any sub-dimensions with respect to the teachers' job seniority. This result concurs with the research by Kirilmaz et al. (2003). However, there are also research results which do not support these findings and which especially show that as job seniority increases, the burn-out levels of the teachers decrease (Barut and Kalkan, 2002; Dolunay, 2002; Izgar, 2003). On the other hand any research results stating that the burn-out levels of teachers with lower job seniority is higher than that of other teachers have not yet been found. It is supposed that the outset of a professional working life as a teacher is important. As a result of our research, although job seniority does not cause a change in the burn-out levels of teachers, it is expected that revising the working conditions and providing professional and psychological support will be beneficial to novice teachers who have just started their careers.

According to the results of the research, it is seen that teachers' attitudes and beliefs about classroom management do not show a difference either in "personal management" or "instructional management" subdimensions in terms of job seniority. The results of Ritter (2003) and Shin and Sook (2007) also support this finding. In this case, it can be concluded that attitudes and beliefs of teachers about classroom management are similar regardless of their job seniority.

According to results of the current study, there are no significant differences among teachers in "emotional exhaustion", personal accomplishment and "depersonalization" sub-scales in terms of class size. Although the

Ministry of National Education aims to reduce the number of the students in classes under 30, the number of the students is above 50 in schools which are located in city centers which are exposed intensively to immigration (MEB, 2007).

Due to immigration into the city centers and owing to the fact that parents want their children to attend schools with greater academic success, the number of students in classrooms is large. However, the opportunities offered to students and teachers in the schools with a greater number of students are far more, compared to the ones on the outskirts of the city and the ones with smaller class sizes. Therefore, teachers want to be employed in schools which have larger class sizes in the city centers and they need to have lots of points of service for that. The fact that schools with larger class sizes have greater opportunities, as well as the fact that the classrooms are crowded, may have caused a difference in the burn-out levels of the teachers and their classroom management approaches.

Although Martin and Baldwin (1996) reported that the higher the number of students in each class, the more teachers display highly interventionist attitudes and beliefs in the classroom, such a difference has not been determined as a result of this research. The reason for this difference may be cultural and may also emanate from the fact that the class sizes are generally crowded in Turkey and accordingly, the teachers might have adopted an attitude which is appropriate to the conditions.

In the research, a significant difference has come out among teachers both in the "depersonalization" and "emotional exhaustion" sub-dimensions of the burn-out scale with regard to the variable of "school type". This result is also supported Izgar (2003). As a result of the research, no significant differences in the "personal accomplishment" sub-dimension with regard to the variable of "school type" are observed. The income levels and social rights of the teachers working in elementary and secondary schools are similar. However, high burn-out levels are mostly observed among elementary school teachers. Therefore, the reasons for burn-out experience-ed by elementary school teachers should be investigated and the necessary improvements should be made in their working conditions.

In the research, it is seen that there is a significant difference in the "people management" sub-dimension of the attitudes of teachers about classroom management with respect to school type. According to the data obtained from this research, secondary school teachers have more "interventionist" attitudes than elementary school teachers. Similarly, the research conducted by Martin and Baldwin (1996) shows that secondary school teachers are more interventionist than elementary school teachers. Baker (2005) stated that secondary school teachers are less competent than elementary school teachers in classroom management. When the data from both of the studies are compared, it can be concluded that secondary school teachers are more interventionist

but they are more unsuccessful in managing student behavior. More accurate results on this subject can be achieved by conducting comparative studies on classroom management.

Considering the results of this research with those of others in the field, it can be said that burn-out levels of and their attitudes towards teachers classroom management are important variables in the effectiveness of the education process. Thus, it is thought to be helpful that the number of students in the classroom should be reduced. In addition, the reasons why male teachers have higher levels of "depersonalization" should be studied and necessary precautions regarding these points should be taken. Lastly, it can be concluded that it is essential to solve the problem by developing strategies to deal with burn-out and studying the reasons why elementary school teachers have higher levels of "emotional exhaustion" and "depersonalization" than secondary school teachers.

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