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## Preventive Activities the Teacher to Prevent Adolescent Aggression

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### Abstract

The problem of aggressiveness of adolescents is one of the central socio-pedagogical problems that affects society at large, causes deep concern among teachers, parents, and causes an acute scientific and practical interest of foreign and native researchers. In connection with the spread of aggression in the adolescent environment, there is a need to consider its prevention and correction in school. Diagnostic research and prevention of adolescent aggression at school is an integral component of the activity of classroom teacher. The article deals with the essence of aggressiveness, especially aggressive behavior of teenagers at school, discusses the factors that influence the expression of aggression, specifically the destruction of the traditional models of education. It also points to the need to apply effective methods and techniques for preventing and correcting the aggressive behavior of adolescents in school by means of classroom teacher's activities. The material may be useful for classroom teachers, specialists of psychological services accompanying educational institutions.

Key words: aggression, aggressive behavior, antisocial behavior, pupil, principal, diagnosis, prevention

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## Introduction

The dynamics in the development of social relations, in the present century, created the conditions for the development of the creative potential of humanity in different directions. Particular attention was paid to the potential of education, considered in terms of its continuity and polycultural orientation.

This fact helped to establish it as a fundamental principle of the development and realization of the educational policy in the world through a decisive transition from the paradigm „education for life" to the paradigm „education through life" (“lifelong learning”)

Nevertheless, these dynamic processes have created conditions for the emergence of phenomena with a pronounced negative nature. One of them, with an extremely wide spectrum of manifestation, is aggression.

The word "aggression" has a Latin origin and means literally "assault", "attack" (Fakirska, 2016, p. 9). Its meaningful clarification is associated with the manifestations of negative emotions (anger), negative motives (striving to inflict harm or damage), carrying out destructive (destructive) actions. Aggression is a behavior that goes against the "norms and rules of life of people, of society and inflicts harm on the object to which it is directed (animate or inanimate) (ibid). Of course, such an understanding and determination of aggression does not exhaust its content, as it has a wide spectrum of manifestation. This circumstance creates a prerequisite for the justification of different opinions in terms of its identification and definition. One of these opinions is of the famous Bulgarian scientist Ivan Ivanov, who argues that the definition of the phenomenon of aggression (aggressive behaviour) should be determined first of all its boundaries of manifestation. In this regard, the author identifies as the most popular classifications of the S. Fischbach, which includes: expressive (impulsive) aggression, hostile and instrumental and the A. bas, which is relatively more comprehensive and includes: verbal aggression, physical aggression, Age aggression, indirect aggression, situational aggression, oppositional behavior (negativity), aggressive irritability (anger), aggressive distrust (suspiciousness), jealousy and hatred, feelings of guilt after aggression (Ivanov, 2013, p. 38).

Apart from the diversity of definitions and classifications of aggression, there are also a multitude of theories that are "overflowing into one another and are more of a stage in a more general paradigm" (Ivanov, 2013, p. 35). This opinion is a visualization of the meaningful clarification of the concepts of "aggression" and "violence", which are often used interchangeably.

Aggression is most often identified as deliberate behavior that "ends with physical or mental harm to a person, an animal, or damage (destruction) of property," and "violence is always accepted and interpreted as intentional action, there are no other alternative actions " (ibid).

The multi-faceted nature of aggression is due to a set of factors that influence its deepening and spreading.

Although each case of aggressive behavior is individual, the reasons for its manifestation, in summary form, can be represented in the following way: emotional neglect; authoritarian and aggressive behavior of parents; unmet need for love and security; fear of a different nature; anxiety; lack of attention, respect; lack of social experience, putting into an outsider position, etc.

The complexity of manifestation of aggression warrants it to be considered and defined as a process that flows in time and space, and ultimately leads to the formation of quality aggressiveness, which determines the tendency of the individual to such a kind behaviour (Tsvetkova, 2012, p. 170). Apart from the serious theoretical clarification of the problem and the measures for its restriction, attention should be paid to the fact that no reduction in the scale and frequency of its manifestation is observed. On the

contrary, we are witnessing a deepening and enduring tendency of aggression in all spheres of public life, including among school-age children.

The problem remains particularly relevant for the teaching community, which is closest to the children and daily encounters various negative behavioural manifestations. This circumstance necessitates the search for the most correct pathways for their overcoming and prevention. Particularly close, in its content and complexity, this task lies with the class teacher, who are professional, functional and personal responsible for solving them. In modern school, the class teacher is the main entity that is in close contact with the students. He has direct observations on the development of each child and has the most accurate idea of possible behavioural abnormalities or changes in his emotional state. He has direct responsibility for every alumnus during the educational process. The class teacher is obliged to help the students in the most adequate way to overcome the emerging difficulties, looking for the reasons that cause them. Its main functions and roles also apply to the main coordinator in the realization of the socio-pedagogical interaction in school. The field of its activity, in this direction is multifaceted, because it is entrusted with consultative, diagnostic, preventive, and also with purely corrective and organizational functions. The professionalism of the class teacher is reflected in his initiatives and activities related to the prevention of risk behaviour in adolescents and taking concrete measures to meet their basic needs, the development of their personal qualities and the formation of values.

All this determines the need to update and reconsider the joint activities of the teacher-class supervisor as the main coordinator of the implementation of the socio-pedagogical interaction at school in order to build dynamic and effective relations with the school management and especially with the pedagogical counselor or school psychologist.

As an entity representing the school institution, the class supervisor is obliged to build a similar interaction with the social worker, who supports the school's professional activity in the implementation of a personal-oriented approach and targeted professional socio-pedagogical support (Kuzmanova-Kartalova, 2004, p. 8). The close relationship and interaction of the class leader with family and extracurricular institutions (consultative centres, public support centres, resource centres, etc.) is also important in the process of identifying and resolving emerging behavioural problems (Popova, 2010). Mastering and realizing all these functions highlights the problem of the good awareness of the class leader regarding the opportunities and resources for socio-pedagogical support that the various public institutions provide. Last but not least, it should be stressed that the effectiveness of its preventive work is directly dependent on the ability of partners to adhere to the basic rules governing activities in the assisting professions and especially The observance and respect of the fundamental rights of children who ensure their protection within the meaning of the international and existing legal acts (Order on the Protection of Children, 2000; Convention defending children's rights, 1989).

It was these reflections and conclusions that motivated me to realize a local empirical study among students from lower secondary stage (fifth grade), so that I could highlight more clearly the parameters of my preventive activity, as a class leader (class teacher) and to help other for quicker guidance in the process of resolving the problem.

### **Methodology of the research**

OBJECTIVES of the research:

- to highlight the parameters for assessing the levels of aggressive tendencies in the behavior

of lower secondary students (fifth grade)

- to reveal students' inclinations towards a certain kind of aggressive behavior
- identify the focal points of the preventive activity of the class manager for their prevention

(universal interventions)

PROBLEMS of the research:

- to research and analyze the literacy of the problem
- to conduct a test study to uncover the inclinations of students to a certain type of aggressive behaviour
- to summarize the results obtained and to make recommendations regarding the preventive activity of the class manager to prevent the occurrence of aggression

OBJECT of the research is the behavior of the students at the lower secondary level in terms of their tendency towards aggression.

SCOPE of the research:

Fifth grade students: 23 people, including 12 boys and 11 girls.

Age characteristics: 11-12 years

The SUBJECT of the research includes highlighting the parameters of assessing the levels of aggression of the aggressive tendencies in the behavior of high school students and their inclinations towards a certain type of aggressive behavior.

METHODS of the research

- a theoretical analysis of literary sources on the problem
- determination the parameters of the expression of the aggressive tendencies in the behavior of the students (by K. Kunchev)
- test diagnostics of aggressive behavior (by PA Kovalov)
- analysis and summary of test results
- conclusions and recommendations

### **Results of the analysis of the tests carried out**

#### **3.1. Highlighting the parameters for assessing the levels of aggressive tendencies in student behavior**

Outlining the parameters of assessing the levels of aggressive behavior in students' behavior was done through a test of 11 parameters: (1) spontaneous aggression; (2) inability to withstand aggression (irritability); (3) the inability to reverse aggression towards some physical activity or objects; (4) anonymous aggression; (5) provocation of aggression in others; (6) tendency to deflect aggression; (7) auto aggression; (8) ritualization of aggression; (9) a tendency to be infected by the aggression of others (the crowd); (10) the pleasure of aggression; (11) revenge.

The test includes 55 statements pertaining to certain life situations and allows the aggression

index to be determined in the 11 parameters. Each parameter is evaluated at a range of 0 to 5 points. For a matching answer, 1 point is accrued. It is assumed that the larger the sum of points, the more pronounced the aggressiveness indicator. In interpreting the results obtained, the following methodological requirements are met:

- Determining a very low level of aggression (0 to 8 points)
- Determining the low level of aggressiveness (9 to 20 points)
- Determining the average level of aggressiveness (from 21 to 30 points)
- Determine the elevated level (from 31 to 40 points)
- Determine the high level (41 points and more)

The analysis of the test results does not take into account a very low level of aggressiveness, which according to the applied methodology gives us the basis to claim that the students included in the empirical study have shown sincerity and striving to present themselves in an objective light and role (socially expected and acceptable behavior).

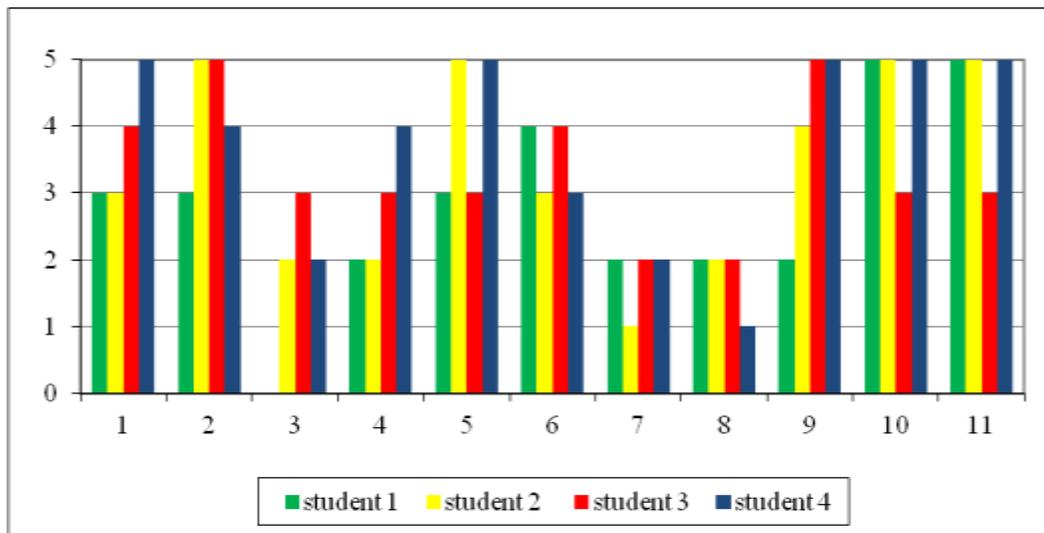
By the next indicator, a low level of aggression, which is defined as normal for most people, is found in approximately 50% of the students (eleven teachers).

According to the methodology for conducting the test to determine the parameters of assessing the levels of the aggressive tendencies in student behavior, the sum of points is most often determined by the occurrence of spontaneous aggression and the inability to redirect these anger states to some physical activity or to inanimate objects. The average level of aggression (21 to 30 points) is usually expressed in spontaneity, inability to withhold the urge (impulse). It was reported in eight students. Elevated level (31 to 40 points) – includes indicators from the previous level with behavioral actions added to them, such as reluctance and provocative responses. This level refers to the responses of three students. At a high level (41 points or more) the results of only one student are reported to be enjoying aggressive events; accepts aggressively the crowd (irrational); is inclined to behave in a way that provokes aggression in others.

From the results obtained it can be concluded that it is necessary to focus the attention and to direct the observation on the behavior of four of the students who tend to aggressive behavior, ie within the range of 31 to 40 and more points. The students themselves, in fact, have a strong emotional, impulsivity and inability to self-control, requiring an in-depth analysis of their responses across all 11 parameters in order to more objectively assess the levels of expression of an aggressive tendency in behavior (*Graph1*)

The graph shows that the levels of expression are the most elevated with the following parameters: (1) spontaneous aggression; (2) inability to withstand aggression (agitation); (9) a tendency to be infected by the aggression of others (the crowd); (10) pleasure of aggression; (11) paid for aggression (vindictiveness).

The analysis of the results obtained confirms the conclusion of the need for a systematic and in-depth study of the students' inclination towards a certain type of aggressive behavior and to take measures to overcome this tendency before it becomes a trend. The effectiveness of preventative action requires a differentiation of propensity to a particular type of aggression.



*Graph 1 Levels of pronounced aggressive tendencies in student behavior*

### 3.2. Student tendency towards a certain kind of aggressive behavior

The propensity for a certain type of aggressive behavior is examined and taken into account in the methodology for diagnosing the aggressive behavior of P.A. Kovaljov on three scales:

- inclination to verbal aggression (VA) - direct and indirect
- a tendency to physical aggression (FA) - direct and indirect
- level of inertia (I)

The methodology for measuring aggressive behavior includes a questionnaire of 40 statements pertaining to certain life situations that each student can accept or reject, ie to answer "Yes" or "No". Each answer corresponding to the key is charged 1 point.

The summarized results of the test are presented graphically (*Graph 2* and *Graph 3*).

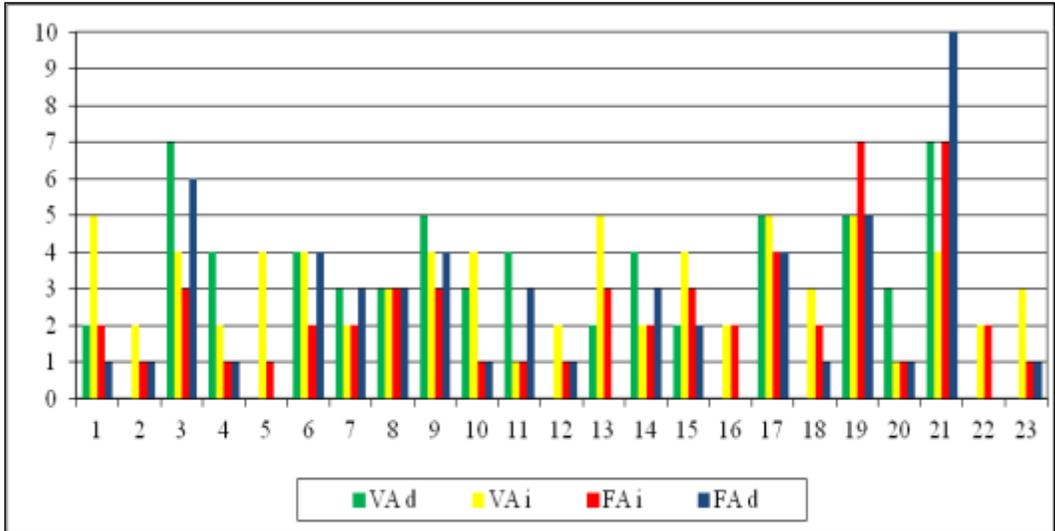
Taking into account the propensity for direct verbal aggression, it is found that for seven students there is no such one; for five students this value is increased and for the other eleven moves to normal.

Regarding the occurrence of indirect verbal aggression, the results show that for four students this indicator is with higher values, and for others it moves to normal.

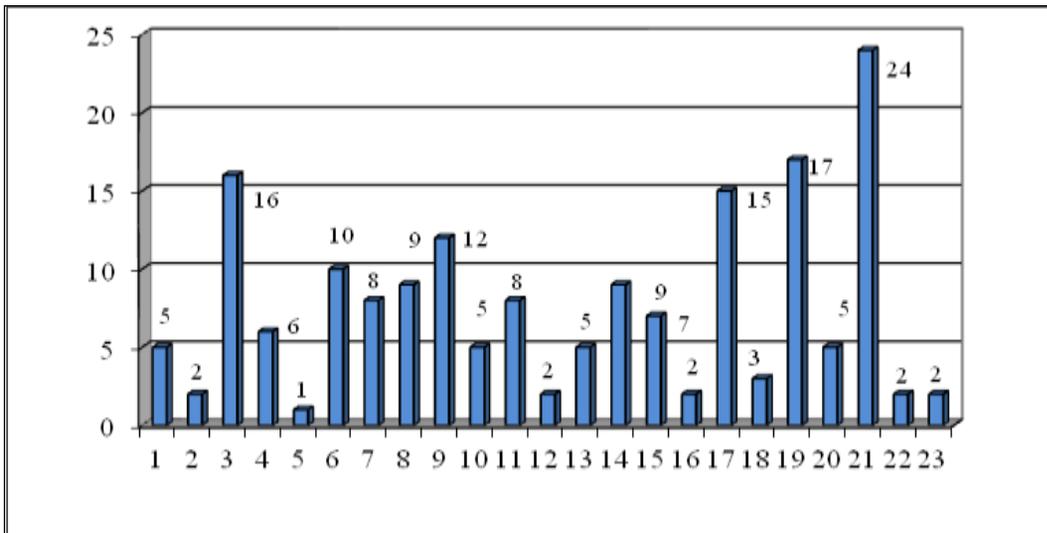
Taking into account the tendency to indirect physical aggression, it is found that for two students this value is increased and for the other twenty one it moves to normal.

With regard to direct physical aggression, the results show that four pupils are absent, with three students being elevated, and the other sixteen as normal. (*Graph 2*)

The level of indecision (H) is determined by the sum of the values obtained from the direct and indirect physical aggression in the students, as well as the direct verbal aggression (up to 20 points). (*Graph 3*). The graph shows that the score exceeds only one of the students. However, we are worried about the results above 15 points, which we report in three of the other students.



*Graph 2 Tendency to a certain type of aggressive behavior*



*Graph 3 Level of indecision*

**Conclusion**

From the analysis of the literary sources and the results of the conducted empirical research, it is clear that the problem of aggression among students is extremely topical and complex.

This conclusion particularly highlights the necessity and importance of preventive activity, in the

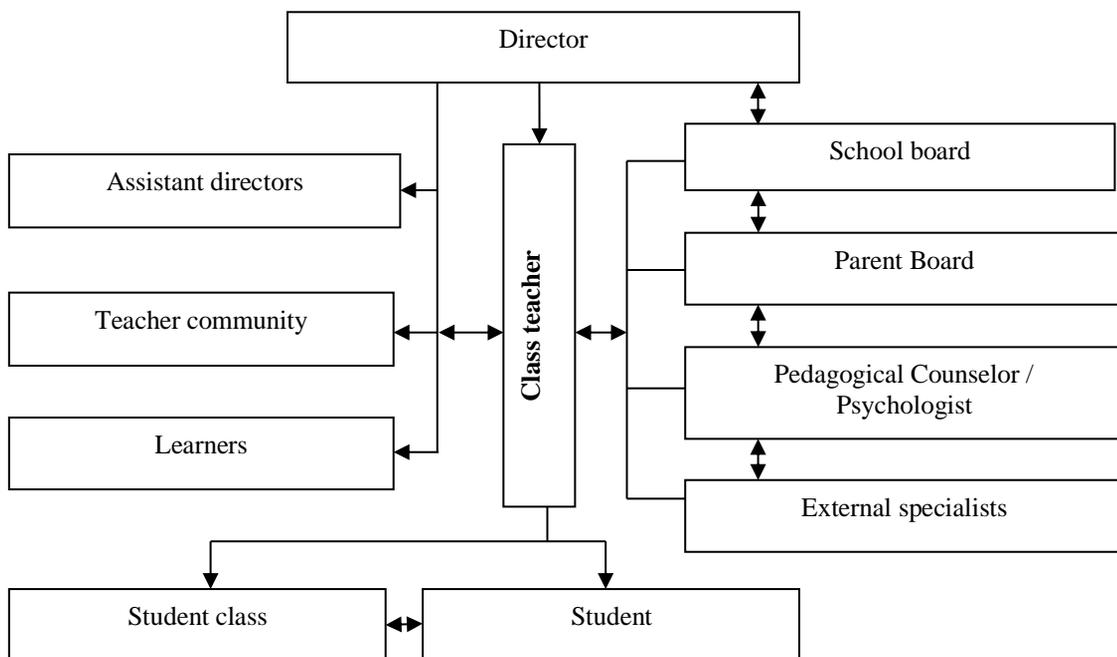
case of the class teacher, as a person and specialist who is closest to the children in their daily lives.

The most common definition of prevention is "pre-emptive action to prevent something". By analogy with this definition, it can be assumed that the classroom's preventive activity includes preliminary actions to prevent aggressive behavior amongst pupils.

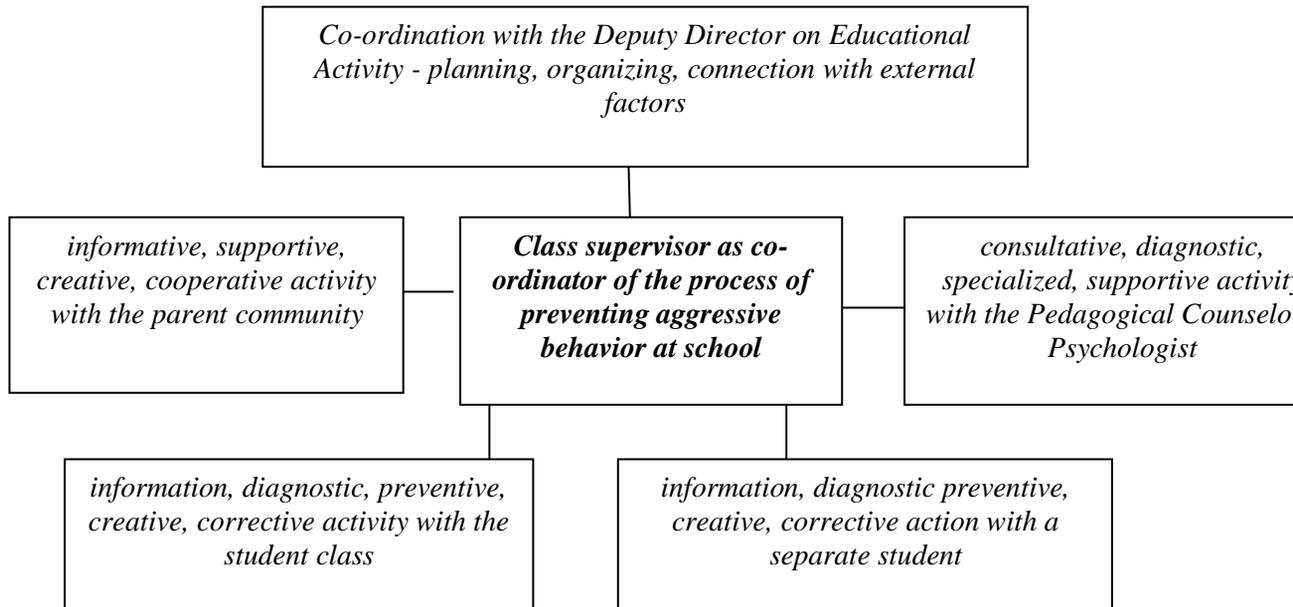
To deal with a tough responsibility - prevention of aggressive behavior of students, the class leader, first, must possess the necessary knowledge and skills for its recognition and diagnosis. This requires teacher to be enrolled in competence training courses in this area; familiarizing with good school and other public practices on prevention and overcoming aggressive behavior among students; obtaining specialized assistance and support in the implementation of various overtures. The class supervisor also needs more time to communicate with the class and each individual student both within and outside the learning process, for organizing and conducting various socially significant activities; Meetings with popular personalities from the local and national level, which, with their behavior, can be a good example of imitation; to conduct more joint events with parents; to provide opportunities for expressions of interest and abilities; to organize more games – trainings, including at the children's suggestion; to form teams, incl. and with the participation of external specialists. Regardless of its preparedness and initiative, it is inconceivable that the class supervisor would be able to cope with this task, even more so that he is also a teacher engaged in conducting a quality educational process.

This circumstance highlights the need for adequate and timely support for its work both by school leadership and by the school community as a whole, by parents, by the pedagogical counselor or by the psychologist in the study, as well as by specialists from the extra-curricular sector (*Scheme 1 u Scheme 2*).

Class supervisors should be encouraged for their initiatives that have a lasting effect on student behavior. His experience should be promoted both in the school community and beyond.



*Scheme 1 Main links of the class teacher's interaction in the process of preventive activity*



**Scheme 2** *Main activities of the class leader as coordinator of the process of prevention of aggression in the school community*

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