

Informal Reading Inventory of the Grade 2 Pupils in Talisay Elementary School

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Abstract

This study determined the reading abilities of Grade 2 pupils of Talisay Elementary School using the Informal Reading Inventory. It was anchored on Reading Development Theory, Constructivist Learning Theory, and Sociocultural Theory, which supported the assessment of pupils' reading development, meaning making, and need for guided support. The study used a descriptive research design and total population sampling involving 24 Grade 2 pupils. A 35-word oral reading passage was used to assess gender profile, reading speed and rate, word recognition and reading accuracy, and reading comprehension based on PHIL-IRI scores. Results showed that 14 respondents were female and 10 were male. Female pupils had a higher average reading rate of 93.5 words per minute compared with 80.6 words per minute among male pupils. In word recognition and reading accuracy, 6 pupils were at the independent level, 3 were at the instructional level, and 15 were at the frustration level. Female pupils also recorded higher average word recognition and accuracy scores than male pupils, although both groups were classified at the frustration level. In reading comprehension, 10 pupils were independent, 9 were instructional, and 5 were at the frustration level. The study concluded that pupils had varied reading abilities, with stronger comprehension performance but weaker word recognition and accuracy. It recommended differentiated reading instruction, regular Informal Reading Inventory administration, guided oral reading, repeated reading, phonics drills, sight-word practice, comprehension activities, parental support, and contextualized literacy interventions. The study supports SDG 4 on Quality Education and SDG 5 on Gender Equality by promoting early literacy assessment and equitable learner support. Its sustainability impact lies in strengthening educational, institutional, community, and socio-economic sustainability through data-based reading intervention and improved foundational literacy.

Keywords: Comprehension, Informal Reading Inventory, PHIL-IRI, Reading Accuracy, Reading Intervention, Reading Rate, Reading Speed, Word Recognition

1. Introduction

Reading is a foundational skill in early education because it supports learning across subject areas, academic progression, and lifelong literacy. This study focuses on the reading abilities of Grade 2 pupils at Talisay Elementary School using the Informal Reading Inventory to determine their reading speed, accuracy, and comprehension levels. By identifying pupils' reading profiles, the study aims to provide evidence for targeted reading interventions that respond to learners' actual strengths and difficulties.

Reading is one of the most essential skills children develop in the early grades, especially in Grade 2, when learners begin shifting from learning to read toward reading to learn. It involves word recognition, perception, comprehension, application, and integration of ideas, and functions as a major means of communication and information sharing (Estremera & Estremera, 2017)¹. Reading is therefore central to school success and broader learning development Ditona, G. D., & Rico, F. M. (2021)². Children do not acquire reading and writing skills at the same pace. Some develop these skills through regular exposure and practice, while others experience learning barriers that slow their progress (Sandberg & Norling, 2020)³. Reading proficiency may be affected by prior experiences, instructional methods, and individual learning differences (Cabalo & Cabalo, 2019)⁴. Among Grade 2 pupils, reading comprehension remains a concern, as some learners can recognize words without fully understanding their meanings Guilaran (2019)⁵. These difficulties are linked to non-mastery of basic reading elements, the presence of at-risk learners, and the absence of a strong reading culture in schools (Tomas, Villaros, & Galman, 2021)⁶.

Related literature consistently identifies reading proficiency as a foundation for academic success across subjects and educational levels (Laličić & Dubravac, 2021)¹. Strong reading skills support learning in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies because reading underpins conceptual understanding and knowledge acquisition (Snow, 2019)². Reading is not limited to mechanical word recognition; it also requires constructing meaning, analyzing text structures, interpreting ideas, and evaluating information critically (Rayner et al., 2018)³. Frequent reading contributes to vocabulary growth, grammatical accuracy, spelling, and writing development (Afflerbach, 2017)⁴. It also strengthens inference

making, synthesis, critical evaluation, and problem solving (Kendeou & O'Brien, 2019)⁵. Beyond academic development, reading supports empathy, imagination, self-awareness, and identity formation through exposure to varied perspectives and cultural experiences (Gadušová, Pavlíková, & Havettová, 2021)⁶. Reading fluency, which includes speed, accuracy, and expression, is strongly related to comprehension because fluent readers can devote more cognitive effort to meaning rather than decoding (Hudson, Torgesen, Lane, & Turner, 2020)⁷. Early mastery of reading skills is essential because learners encounter increasingly complex texts as they progress through school (National Early Literacy Panel, 2021)⁸. This makes early assessment important, especially tools that measure word recognition, comprehension, and meaning-making skills (Guthrie & Humenick, 2018)⁹. Informal Reading Inventories are widely recognized as effective tools for assessing individual reading abilities. They evaluate word recognition, fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension through one-on-one assessment (Cooter & Reutzel, 2017)¹⁰. They also help distinguish developmental reading delays from persistent reading difficulties (Leach & Scarborough, 2019)¹¹ and provide reading profiles that guide targeted intervention (Syifa, Hidayat, & Novarita, 2021)¹². In multilingual classrooms, IRIs help distinguish language-learning challenges from genuine reading difficulties (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2018)¹³ and identify strengths and weaknesses in decoding and comprehension that may be overlooked by standardized tests (Gomez et al., 2018)¹⁴. Early identification through IRIs has been linked to improved later outcomes (Morris & Smith, 2020)¹⁵, especially when teachers are trained to interpret reading profiles and design individualized instruction (Johnson & Lee, 2019)¹⁶. Their adaptability across linguistic and cultural contexts supports their value in early reading assessment (Alexander & Fox, 2019)¹⁷. Research on interventions shows that struggling readers benefit from multicomponent programs combining decoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension instruction (Donegan & Wanzek, 2021)¹⁸. Repeated reading improves fluency and accuracy through guided rereading (Lee & Yoon, 2017)¹⁹, while nonrepetitive reading strengthens comprehension and adaptability through varied passages and feedback (Zimmerman, Reed, & Aloe, 2019)²⁰.

In the Philippine context, reading difficulties remain a major concern. Bernardo et al. (2021)²¹ noted that Filipino learners commonly struggle in reading, writing, and mathematics. Reading ability is closely linked to academic performance (Balan et al., 2019)²², while low mastery of phonemic awareness and phonics contributes to weak reading comprehension De la Cruz (2017)²³. Gender disparities in literacy achievement also point to the need for equitable learning support (Reysio-Cruz, 2019)²⁴. Structured reading interventions improve vocabulary and text interpretation Torres and Delos Reyes (2018)²⁵. Reading proficiency involves phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension (Gunobgunob-Mirasol, 2019)²⁶. Comprehension requires connecting prior knowledge with new information (Granda & Ramírez-Avila, 2020)²⁷, while vocabulary knowledge strongly influences text understanding (Manlapig, 2020)²⁸. Limited access to reading materials may hinder vocabulary and comprehension Alfonso et al. (2019)²⁹, while mother-tongue-based multilingual education supports word recognition and fluency Velasco and Panopio (2020)³⁰. IRIs are useful in the Philippines for assessing reading proficiency, identifying specific difficulties, and guiding instruction (Abril, Acerbo, & Abocejo, 2021)³¹; (Misanes & Pascual, 2021)³². However, teacher competence in administering and interpreting IRIs varies across schools Gonzales (2018)³³. Local studies also show that IRIs help identify comprehension difficulties and support targeted interventions (Inding, 2020)³⁴; (Jolejole-Caube et al., 2019)³⁵; (Saraspe & Abocejo, 2020)³⁶. Reading fluency can be measured through words per minute Turna and Gudenoglu (2019)³⁷, allowing teachers to monitor reading speed and progress (Pujiani & Harsiwi, 2021)³⁸. Peer-assisted learning and differentiated instruction further support struggling readers (Martinez & Santos, 2019)³⁹; (Reyes & Marquez, 2020)⁴⁰, while informal reading inventories help teachers adjust instruction to learners' needs Llego (2018)⁴¹.

Related studies confirm that IRIs provide useful data on word recognition, oral reading fluency, and comprehension (Boatright, 2016)⁴². They help teachers identify reading difficulties early (Volchko, 2020)⁴³, and fluency interventions can improve comprehension even when comprehension is not the direct focus (Schmitz, 2021)⁴⁴. Teaching strategies that actively engage learners improve comprehension (Sari, 2017)⁴⁵, while careful observation supports accurate identification of reading levels (Wingate, 2016)⁴⁶. Reliable assessments help teachers design interventions for specific learning gaps (Barnes, 2021)⁴⁷. Local studies further show that reading comprehension develops gradually as learners improve word recognition and meaning-making (Mabanag, 2018)⁴⁸. Mabanag and Boller (2021)⁴⁹ found difficulties in word recognition, comprehension, and reading rate. Modular instruction supports reading comprehension Abaca (2021)⁵⁰, while metacognitive strategies help learners plan, monitor, and evaluate their reading Sanchez (2019)⁵¹. Reading difficulties can affect academic performance, confidence, and classroom participation (Deza, 2021)⁵², while culturally relevant texts and literature circles can improve comprehension by helping learners connect meaningfully with texts (Tan, 2019)⁵³.

Globally, early-grade reading difficulty remains a challenge, especially in developing countries where many learners fail to reach basic reading proficiency (Graham & Kelly, 2019)⁹. The Informal Reading Inventory is used to assess reading abilities from kindergarten through high school (Dewey, 2021)¹⁰ and supports classroom instruction by measuring vocabulary, word recognition, pronunciation, reading proficiency, sentence construction, and comprehension through individualized assessment (Christ, Chiu, Rider, Kitson, Hanser, McConnell, & Mayernik, 2018)¹¹. Nationally, the Department of Education emphasizes that reading assessment is necessary because reading is the foundation of academic learning Department of Education (2020)¹². Pupils who fail to master basic reading skills early may struggle in other subjects and have reduced chances of becoming literate and productive individuals. Improving reading performance also

contributes to school achievement and competitiveness (Luciano, San Pedro, & Roguel, 2020)¹³. Locally, the study is situated in Masbate, an island province in the Philippines composed of three major islands and politically part of the Bicol Region (Wikipedia contributors, 2021)¹⁴. Balud, Masbate became an independent municipality through Executive Order No. 242 and developed through fishing, farming, and settlement growth (Municipality of Balud., (n.d.))¹⁵. Its population was recorded at 40,155 in the 2020 census (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020)¹⁶, and it is politically subdivided into 32 barangays, including Talisay (Wikipedia contributors, 2021)¹⁷. The manuscript situates the study geographically through maps of Masbate and Balud (Paintmaps, n.d.)¹⁸; (Google, n.d.)¹⁹. Talisay Elementary School is located in Barangay Talisay, about eight kilometers from the Balud North District Office in the Division of Masbate. The school was established in 1962, became a complete elementary school in 1994, and currently serves learners from Kindergarten to Grade 6. Despite limited facilities, it continues to provide basic education to the community. This local context strengthens the need for a school-specific reading profile of Grade 2 pupils.

The study is anchored on Reading Development Theory, Constructivist Learning Theory, and Sociocultural Theory. Reading Development Theory explains reading as a progressive and cumulative skill that develops from recognizing letters and words to comprehending complex texts (Chall, 1983)⁵⁴. This supports the use of the IRI to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in phonics, word recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension. Constructivist Learning Theory views learners as active constructors of knowledge who connect new information with prior experience (Piaget, 1970)⁵⁵. In reading, this means comprehension is not merely decoding but active meaning-making. Sociocultural Theory emphasizes that learning occurs through interaction with teachers, peers, and parents, particularly through guidance within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978)⁵⁶. This supports using IRI results to identify where pupils need scaffolding and individualized assistance. The study also uses an input-process-output logic. The inputs are the Grade 2 pupils, their gender profile, reading materials, and the IRI tool. The process is the administration and analysis of the IRI in terms of reading speed, reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension. The output is a profile of pupils' reading levels that can guide targeted reading interventions. Key operational concepts also support the study. Communication refers to the effective exchange of ideas, thoughts, and information (Adler & Proctor, 2017)²⁰. Comprehension is the ability to understand, interpret, and derive meaning from text (Snow, 2002)²¹. The Informal Reading Inventory assesses word recognition, oral reading, fluency, and comprehension through graded passages (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011)²². Reading accuracy refers to correct word recognition and pronunciation with minimal errors (Samuels & Farstrup, 2011)²³. Reading speed refers to the rate of reading, commonly measured in words per minute (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006)²⁴.

Although previous studies have examined reading difficulties, reading interventions, and IRI use, there is limited research specifically profiling the reading abilities of Grade 2 pupils at Talisay Elementary School. Existing studies often focus broadly on early-grade literacy, comprehension challenges, or at-risk learners, but fewer studies combine reading speed, reading rate, accuracy, comprehension, and individualized reading profiles within this local school context. This study addresses that gap by using the Informal Reading Inventory to assess all twenty-four Grade 2 pupils of Talisay Elementary School. It focuses on gender profile, reading speed and rate in words per minute, reading accuracy, and reading comprehension based on PHIL-IRI scores. The findings are intended to provide actionable information for teachers, school heads, parents, and the Department of Education in designing reading interventions suited to the pupils' actual needs.

This study aligns most directly with SDG 4 – Quality Education because it focuses on early literacy, reading assessment, and evidence-based support for Grade 2 learners. By identifying pupils' reading levels and learning gaps, the study supports inclusive and effective basic education. The study also relates to SDG 5 – Gender Equality because it includes gender as part of the learner profile and recognizes that literacy support should respond equitably to learner differences, especially where gender-related disparities in literacy achievement have been noted (Reysio-Cruz, 2019)²⁴. It indirectly supports SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth by strengthening foundational literacy, which contributes to learners' long-term academic development and future productivity. It also supports SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals because reading improvement requires coordinated participation among teachers, parents, school heads, supervisors, the Department of Education, researchers, and the community.

The study contributes to educational sustainability by generating school-level evidence that can guide continuous reading assessment, differentiated instruction, and targeted intervention. It supports institutional sustainability by helping teachers, principals, supervisors, and the Department of Education use data to improve reading instruction and learner support. The study also contributes to community sustainability because improved literacy enables learners to participate more meaningfully in school and community life. Its relevance extends to socio-economic sustainability because functional literacy supports future academic success, employability, and productive citizenship. It also has cultural sustainability value because reading development may be strengthened through culturally responsive practices, meaningful texts, and home-school support (Tan, 2019)⁵³. Overall, the study positions early reading assessment as a multidisciplinary concern involving pedagogy, learner development, family participation, school governance, community engagement, and long-term human development.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design. This design was appropriate because the study examined the present reading condition of the Grade 2 pupils and aimed to describe existing facts based on actual assessment results. According to Calmorin and Calmorin (1996)¹, descriptive research is suitable when a study focuses on current conditions and seeks to uncover present truths. In this study, the design allowed the researcher to determine the pupils' reading levels, strengths, and weaknesses as measured through the Informal Reading Inventory.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Talisay Elementary School in Barangay Talisay, Municipality of Balud, Province of Masbate. Masbate is an island province in the Philippines composed of three major islands: Masbate, Ticao, and Burias. It is politically part of the Bicol Region and is composed of 20 municipalities and one component city (Wikipedia contributors, 2021)¹⁴. Balud became an independent municipality through Executive Order No. 242 and developed historically through settlement, farming, and fishing activities (Municipality of Balud., (n.d.))¹⁵. According to the 2020 census, Balud has a population of 40,155 people (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020)¹⁶ and is subdivided into 32 barangays, including Talisay (Wikipedia contributors, 2021)¹⁷. The study location is geographically situated through maps of Masbate and Balud (Paintmaps, n.d.)¹⁸; (Google, n.d.)¹⁹. Talisay Elementary School is located approximately eight kilometers from the Balud North District Office in the Division of Masbate. It was established in 1962 as a primary school and became a complete elementary school in 1994. The school occupies about 9,000 square meters of donated land and serves learners from Kindergarten to Grade 6. At the time of the study, it had 121 learners, composed of 58 males and 63 females, guided by seven nationally funded female teachers under the supervision of the school head.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were the twenty-four Grade 2 pupils enrolled at Talisay Elementary School during the conduct of the study. They served as the participants for the assessment of reading speed, reading rate in words per minute, reading accuracy, and reading comprehension through the Informal Reading Inventory.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used total population sampling, a non-probability sampling procedure in which all members of the identified population are included as respondents (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016)². This approach was appropriate because the Grade 2 population was small and manageable. Including all twenty-four pupils allowed the researcher to obtain a complete profile of the reading abilities of the entire Grade 2 cohort.

2.5 Research Instrument

The main research instrument was the Informal Reading Inventory. It included a 35-word oral reading passage used to assess the pupils' reading profile in terms of gender, reading speed and rate, reading accuracy, and reading comprehension based on PHIL-IRI scores. The pupils' performance was classified into Independent, Instructional, and Frustration levels. The Independent level indicated that a pupil could read and comprehend the text without assistance; the Instructional level indicated that the pupil could read with guidance; and the Frustration level indicated difficulty in reading and comprehension even with assistance, requiring remedial or targeted intervention.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first reviewed related literature to establish the foundation for the research problem, questions, and hypotheses. After the title proposal was prepared and approved, the Informal Reading Inventory was developed and administered individually to the Grade 2 pupils. Each pupil read the 35-word passage orally, and the researcher recorded performance in reading speed, accuracy, and comprehension. The gathered data were tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted to determine each pupil's reading level and to provide a basis for conclusions and recommendations.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data from the Informal Reading Inventory were analyzed using arithmetic mean, percentage, and comprehension score. The arithmetic mean was used to determine the average reading performance of the pupils in speed, accuracy, and comprehension. Percentage was used to describe the distribution of pupils according to categories such as gender and reading level. The comprehension score was used to quantify pupils' reading comprehension based on the PHIL-IRI scoring system.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical procedures by securing formal permission from the school principal before administering the assessment. The purpose and process of the reading assessment were explained to the pupils to ensure voluntary

participation. These procedures helped ensure that the data collected reflected the pupils' actual reading abilities and were gathered in an appropriate school-based research context.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Informal Reading Inventory Results

3.1.1 Gender Profile of the Respondents

The respondents consisted of 24 Grade 2 pupils. Female pupils formed the majority, with 14 respondents or 58 percent, while male pupils accounted for 10 respondents or 42 percent. This shows that the respondent group was slightly female-dominated. This gender distribution suggests that classroom reading interventions should remain equitable while also being sensitive to possible differences in learner needs. Although female pupils were more represented, both male and female pupils require appropriate reading support. National assessments have reported disparities in educational outcomes, noting that Filipino learners may experience differing academic challenges depending on context (Reysio-Cruz, 2019). Torres and Delos Reyes (2018) also found that pupils with limited exposure to structured reading interventions tend to perform lower in vocabulary development and text interpretation, supporting the need for comprehensive and needs-based reading assessment.

3.1.2 Reading Speed and Reading Rate

The reading speed and reading rate results were based on the pupils' oral reading of a 35-word passage. Male pupils recorded an average reading speed of 0.54 minute and an average reading rate of 80.6 words per minute. Female pupils performed higher, with an average reading speed of 0.45 minute and an average reading rate of 93.5 words per minute. The highest individual reading rate was 131 words per minute, achieved by a female pupil. Several pupils, however, recorded very low reading rates, showing variation in reading fluency across the group. These results indicate that while some pupils demonstrated strong fluency, others showed noticeable difficulty in reading speed. The findings support the need for differentiated instruction, particularly repeated reading, guided oral reading, and peer-assisted learning. Words-per-minute remains a practical measure for monitoring reading fluency and tracking learners' progress over time (Pujiani & Harsiwi, 2021). Mabanag and Boller (2021) similarly found through Informal Reading Inventories that pupils may struggle in word recognition, comprehension, and reading speed, reinforcing the importance of targeted reading interventions.

3.1.3 Word Recognition and Reading Accuracy

The results for word recognition and reading accuracy showed that 6 pupils, composed of 2 males and 4 females, reached the independent level. Three pupils were at the instructional level, while the remaining 15 pupils were at the frustration level. Female pupils obtained a higher average word recognition score of 29.36 and a higher average reading accuracy of 83.88 percent, compared with male pupils, who had an average word recognition score of 24.70 and an average reading accuracy of 70.57 percent. Both male and female group averages were classified at the frustration level. These findings show that many pupils still need support in foundational decoding and word recognition skills. The high number of pupils at the frustration level suggests the need for intensified phonics instruction, sight-word reinforcement, structured literacy activities, remedial reading programs, and continuous formative monitoring. Informal Reading Inventories are useful for this purpose because they assess word recognition, fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension through individualized assessment (Cooter & Reutzel, 2017). However, Gonzales (2018) noted that differences in teachers' competence in administering and interpreting IRIs may affect the accuracy of results and the effectiveness of follow-up interventions.

3.1.4 Reading Comprehension Level

The reading comprehension results showed that only 5 of the 24 respondents were at the frustration level. Ten pupils were at the independent level, while the remaining pupils were at the instructional level. The male pupils had an average comprehension score of 91.17, classified as instructional, while female pupils had a higher average comprehension score of 95.16, also classified as instructional. Overall, the pupils' comprehension performance was relatively good, except for two cases with comprehension scores in the 70-percent range. These results suggest that although many pupils had difficulty in decoding and word recognition, their comprehension with support remained comparatively stronger. Reading instruction should therefore combine decoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension strategies to promote balanced literacy development. The pupils with lower comprehension scores require closer monitoring and individualized reading plans. Informal Reading Inventories are valuable because they identify specific strengths and weaknesses, including differences between decoding and comprehension that standardized tests may overlook (Gomez et al., 2018). Effective support for struggling readers should also use multicomponent interventions that combine decoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension instruction (Donegan & Wanzek, 2021).

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that the Grade 2 pupils of Talisay Elementary School showed varied reading abilities based on the Informal Reading Inventory, with female pupils slightly outnumbering male pupils and generally performing better in reading fluency, word recognition, and accuracy. However, many pupils were still at the frustration level in word

recognition and reading accuracy, indicating weak foundational decoding skills. Reading comprehension was comparatively stronger, as most pupils reached instructional or independent levels, although some still required support. Overall, the findings show the need for balanced reading instruction that strengthens fluency, decoding, word recognition, and comprehension through differentiated and individualized support.

The study recommended that teachers implement literacy strategies responsive to both male and female pupils, including small-group activities, guided oral reading, repeated reading, peer-assisted reading, daily fluency practice, leveled passages, timed reading, structured literacy instruction, phonics drills, sight-word practice, multisensory activities, word walls, flashcards, and one-on-one or small-group remediation. It also recommended integrating comprehension strategies such as think-aloud activities, graphic organizers, questioning techniques, individualized reading plans, and additional comprehension exercises. Regular administration of the Informal Reading Inventory should be used to monitor progress and guide a contextualized literacy support program, while more reading materials, classroom reading corners, parental follow-up, and systematic identification of reading deficiencies should be provided to support timely intervention.

The study was limited to twenty-four Grade 2 pupils enrolled at Talisay Elementary School during the conduct of the research. It did not include pupils from other grade levels or other schools, and the findings were based only on one Informal Reading Inventory assessment administered within the study period. The study measured pupils' reading performance at a single point in time and did not track long-term reading progress or the effects of interventions beyond the assessment.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards, with formal permission secured from the school authorities before administering the Informal Reading Inventory to the Grade 2 pupils of Talisay Elementary School. Participation was voluntary, and the purpose and procedure of the assessment were explained to the pupils, with confidentiality maintained in handling all learner information and results. The author declares full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the work, acknowledges the assistance of school personnel and participants, declares no conflict of interest, and affirms that copyright ownership and authorship of the study remain with the rightful author.

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