

Security Challenges And Administration Of Public Senior Secondary Education In South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper discussed the security challenges and administration of public senior secondary education in south-east, Nigeria. This paper is discussed under the following subheadings: security challenges in secondary schools; need for security in secondary schools and how school administrators can improved school security to ensure the safety of students and teachers. The paper observed that different dimensions of insecurity in this region appears to be the major threat to secondary education since the most of the attacks were targeted at secondary schools, the paper concluded among others that any form of insecurity arising from physical attacks on school administrators, teachers and students without administration measures to prevent it would affect goals and objectives of secondary education. The paper therefore, suggested among others that school administrators should ensure they provide effective security measures in school environments to protect students from harassment and intimidation from others.

Keywords: Security, Security challenges, Insecurity, Administration, Secondary education

Introduction

Education is an vital tool for national development, social change and a channel for developing skills, competencies and imparting knowledge, it is believed that without education, various socio-economic activities in the society will remain

stagnant and the society will continue to suffer in ignorance. That is why Nigerian philosophy of education is based in set of beliefs that education maximizes the creative potential and skills of the citizens for self-fulfillment and the general development of society and that it should be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society and the world in general among others (National Policy on Education, 2014). However, country or region will ever achieve a sustainable development in the face of widespread insecurity of lives and properties. The global challenge of insecurity that develops from organized high profile crimes perpetrated through transnational syndication and racketeering has endlessly perceived as threats to survival of countries. Nigeria's political history has been cheered by various forms of violent insecurity challenges ranging from the civil war, election related mayhem, agitators, riots and protests, militancy, bandit, insurgency and herdsmen/farmer clashes.

However, the rise of IPOB agitators and unknown gunmen have created a new dimension to South East, Nigeria's insecurity problems. The operations and activities of IPOB against education came to limelight following the sit at-home order in demanding the release of their leader and this has drawn back for South-East school kids, how protest against the arrest and trial of their leader, is affecting businesses, especially the education of the regions school children. On the 9th of July, 2021 the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) made a declaration that residents of the South-East would observe what it called "Sit – at –home" order, to protest against the trial of its re-arrested leader, MaziNnamdiKanu by the federal government(Metro Newspaper Sept: 25, 2021). According to the group shutting down of shops, schools, public and private sectors every Monday will force the federal government to drop all charges against the IPOB leader.

Also, apart from threatening and maiming residents, the education of primary schools, secondary school students and undergraduates is presently affected, as they are forced to skip schools on Mondays as a result of officials avoiding to make it to school fear of being harassed or maimed. As it is, every Monday, while pupils and students and teachers in different parts of the country attend schools, their counterparts in the South-East avoid going to school in order not to fall victims to the overzealous adherents, thereby drawing back the education of the people from the region. All forms of school insecurity such as kidnappings, violent attacks and cultism. Kidnapping is now the order of the day in Nigeria where Males, females, children, teachers and students are abducted almost on a daily basis in the country now and ransom are being demanded. Several news have been reported where the kidnappers of the victims always demand for ransom in millions of Naira and if the ransom are not quickly met, the victim might be killed in their custody.

The worrisome deterioration of security in Nigeria has heightened unprecedented victimization of vulnerable people in communities and population centers. Nowhere is this more evident than the growing targeting of schools for mass abduction of school children and students. Secondary schools have been targeted by terrorists, bandits and kidnappers seeking to seize their victims until ransom is paid by victims, their relatives, third parties or authorities. "Familiarity with Nigeria's internal security arrangement clearly indicates that almost all schools are vulnerable to criminal attacks, especially those in rural communities.

Administration of secondary schools are confronting a lot of security challenges, especially in rural areas where some secondary schools have no security personnel;

the few that they have, are often not more than two for a secondary school, of which both run shifts. The quality and quantity of security personnel given to schools, and their motivation would influence these personnel to work with the highest level of commitment in any learning environment (Alabi, 2012). Security personnel's are as crucial as the teachers and others staff in schools hence, there is need to employ trained people for such task, and in adequate number. The time has come when the government, educational administrators, schools and communities will no longer see the work of security as jobs that do not require adequate trained initiative to train security personnel in order to avert security challenges in secondary schools. There is a need to address some of these security challenges with instrument of administration by the school managers since efficient and effective learning are fundamental to Nigerian child. It is therefore on this foundation that this paper seeks to explore the security challenges and administration of public Secondary Schools in South- East, Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Security Education

The role of education to nation building cannot be under estimated. Climes all over the world have recognized the place of education in their existence. It is the transmission of values, beliefs, customs and attitudes from one operation to another. Education is a channel for transformation, it is a weapon for mass development, the actions behaviors and activities of students can only be influenced positively with education. Peter in Adele (2010) define education as a process of socialization, enculturation and transmission of what is worth-while to those who are committed to it. Fafunwa in Adiele (2010) also defined education as the aggregate of all processes through which a child develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are positive to society. Other school of thought sees education as a process of skills acquisition and providing individual with the needed skills and morals so as to function effectively in the society as productive citizens.

The essence of educating both parents and students about security in the school environment is to make them useful in the society and also allow a smooth flow of the curriculum. Atanda (2013) reiterated that the aspiration of society through education to achieve political, social and economic development is achieved via the implementation of various curricula at school or institutional level. This places much responsibility on schools. The roles of the first two levels of education (i.e. primary and secondary) are crucial in determining the achievement of overall objectives of education because they build the foundation and are mostly accessed by the public unlike the tertiary education. The effectiveness of primary and secondary schools, therefore, is very important because the subsequent level (higher education) depends on the products from these levels.

Williams (2000), emphasized that education can be linked to security in two major ways. Education can be studied to understand its potential influence to “redress global security threats”, or, alternatively, to understand the impact of the new security threats to education”. It is commonly said that peace is a necessity for development. An education system that is characterized by chaos, constant terrorism, vandalism, cultism, students’ unrest, willful destruction by hooligans, kidnapping and social vices can never be a fertile ground to achieve educational goals. Humans cannot survive in

an environment where their lives and property are not safe. The whole essence of human existence is anchored on a peaceful co-existence. Security is the act or art of being free from either internal or external attack. Security is also a condition or feeling of safety from harm or damage, dependence, production and preservation of one values and the absence of threats to acquired values. It is clear from the above definition that peace cannot be guaranteed without security.

Recognizing the important of security as the precondition for the survival of the Nigerian people and nation, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provided in section 14 (1) (b) that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. The duty conferred on the government by this provision has not been substantially and substantively discharged as the prevailing high level of human insecurity in the country demonstrates. The inability of a government, community or a school to ensure security could result to anarchy which might bring about disagreement. If there is disagreement in the school, either students and teachers or teachers and parents or community then there will be low performance in the school system because the products which are the students will not be properly taught.

Security Challenges

Security is an essential requirement for the development of human beings and society and it is considered the most basic need of human beings and societies. Security embodies the mechanism put in place to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflicts, and threats that originate from other states, non-state actors, or structural sociopolitical and economic conditions. However, the seemingly challenge faced by our school system is the challenge of insecurity that had affected the smooth running of the school, drop in students attendance, unnecessary fear among teachers, school administrators and students alike. This no doubt may be responsible for teachers low performance and very bad academic performance of the students.

Insecurity is viewed as a state of fear or anxiety coming from alleged lack of protection or safety (Beland, 2005). This implies that security or the absence of it, i.e., insecurity, is a common and shared value in society that affects all members of society in degrees. It is in this sense that the prevalent state of insecurity in the South-East and other parts of the country should not be treated with kid gloves as its consequences on the teachers, students and the education system is becoming alarming and if remain unchecked will destroy the education system in its entirety. Oke and Ebuk (2019) indicated that insecurity have objective and subjective dimensions. The objective dimension is the extent of insecurity of individuals, families, communities, classes, societies, nations and humanity while subjective dimension of insecurity pertains to feeling of not secure by individuals, groups and nations. Also Ibrahim in Oke and Ebuk (2019) further categorized insecurity into several dimensions. The most significant dimensions are:

1. Physical insecurity – violence, personal and property crimes,
2. Public insecurity – violent conflicts, insurgency and terrorism
3. Economic insecurity – hunger, poverty, unemployment,
4. Social insecurity – illiteracy, ignorance, diseases or illnesses, malnutrition, water borne diseases, Covid19, discrimination and exclusion,
5. Human rights violations – denial of fundamental rights by states and non-state actors in different states, sexual abuse

6. Political insecurity – denial of good and social democratic governance, corruption, imbalance development.

Security Challenges in Secondary Schools

Security lapses and challenges certainly do unveil on a daily basis in secondary schools in Nigeria. While students have falling victims to some of the dangers of security lapses, very few have actually escaped death or injury during such attacks. In the prevailing circumstances, the safety and security of school administrators, teachers and students and entire community where the schools are located are no longer guaranteed. These security challenges ranges from:

1. **Kidnapping:** The education sector in Nigeria has been confronted with many challenges, including labour strikes, poor funding, decay in infrastructure, and the recent kidnapping cases. Thus, it is fast becoming extremely difficult for students in Nigeria to attain their educational dreams. This may not be unconnected with the long decay in the education system which has deprived many the opportunities to acquire formal education. One of the growing threats in the Nigerian education system is the attacks on schools, and the abduction of students by kidnappers. This is coming at a time when the world education systems are trying to recover from Corona virus related disruptions which has kept millions of students out of school. Many schools in Nigeria are now faced with the menace of kidnapping.

Recent events have shown that schools are now major targets of kidnappers who are fond of abducting students and teachers for ransoms. The growing rate of attacks targeted at schools and the number of kidnapping cases in schools have become a source of concern to many stakeholders in the Nigerian education sector. While many kidnapped students are still missing from the Chibok and Dapchi abductions, recent events show that there is a surge in kidnapping cases in schools in Nigeria.

Kidnapping is one security challenge that threatens our educational system in Nigeria today. Children cannot go to school in all the states of the federation. The current security situation has not changed; there don't seem to be any solution to this security challenge in Nigeria today. All efforts have proven abortive. Kidnappers do not know the implication of this security challenge to Nigerian education system. It has always been said that no nation can rise above its educational system. So, kidnappers in this country are saying that Nigeria should not develop. The rising cases of kidnapping incidents at schools in Nigeria show how vulnerable our schools have become for attackers and kidnappers. It means that kidnappers, bandits, terrorist or whatever name they are called have declared war on the education industry in Nigeria and in extension on the future of our students and country (Edeh, 2021).

The attacks on schools often have adverse effects not only on students, educators, parents and educational institutions, but also on the government and the society at large. When students are kidnapped, they risk being traumatized for life, even after their rescue. It affects their interests in education and academic performances and destroys their life dreams. If the current trends of kidnappings are allowed to continue, it would cause more severe damages to the country and the future of our young people, and the entire country could be in jeopardy.

2. **Cult- Related Activities:** For years now, cultism is no longer restricted to tertiary institutions, as the menace has spread to both primary and secondary schools. In 2013, 18 children in Abeokuta, Ogun State were arrested for being cult members. In the same year, 11 other students were arrested. The following year, Ondo

State Police Command nabbed four secondary school pupils for cultism, while in 2016; police in Delta State apprehended 28 primary and secondary pupils aged between 13 and 16, for cultism.(Reported in the Guardian Newspapers on 8th July,2021 by Adelowo)

Similarly, in May 2017, seven pupils from four public secondary schools in Lagos were arrested and arraigned before an Ebute Meta magistrate court. Later in September of the same year, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), Ikeja, arraigned 12 pupils of another public Junior Secondary School in Lagos before an Ikeja chief magistrate court, for the scourge. Within days, the police and Lagos Neighborhoods Safety Corps (LNSC) arrested 17 pupils for cult-related activities. In that year, the Ministry of Education in Bayelsa State expelled seven pupils, found to be cult members, from a community school. Worried by the evolving trend of cultism in these schools, in 2018, the police in Lagos appealed to the state government to declare a state of emergency on cultism in its primary and secondary schools. In May 2019, 12 elementary and secondary school pupils of a public school in Lagos were caught being initiated into the AWAWA confraternity group. The menace, over the years, has eaten deep into the system, as more schoolchildren are daily initiated into different cult groups. These groups, including girls, terrorize their neighborhoods and unleash mayhem in schools, as they engage in supremacy battle, disrupting the fragile peace in the land.

So our secondary schools have turned into battle fields where learners bring weapons of various shades, sizes and forms into school, and in most cases used same against themselves as individuals or in groups. This situation opposes serious security challenge to the school experiencing it, disruption of learning activities and students missing classes for fear of being attacked by other students. Cultism causes breakdown of law and order since members who may be students usually disregard their school rules and regulation as well as their teachers who may not be members (Onete,2020). Their activities in most cases lead to loss of lives of loved ones like father, mother, brother, sister and other relations as rival cult groups may descend on them if they cannot find the cultists they are in search of. All well-meaning members of the society are against all forms of cultism and their activities as they contradict generally acceptable values and impede on the learning of the Nigerian child.

3. Drug Abuse and Rape: Presently, one of the main catalysts of the numerous security challenges facing secondary education is the problem of hard drug abuse. A drug is defined as a chemical that alters the mood or behaviors' when smoked, injected, drunk, inhaled, or swallowed in pill forms while the word abuse is derived from the term 'abnormal use'. Drug abuse can be defined as the use of drugs or other substances not classified as drugs but have euphoric effects in inappropriate manner or which deviates from medically approved or socially acceptable patterns within the society. Also, hard drug abuse can be said to exist when one out of these three factors or all occurs. First, when the use of the hard drug is not medically necessary, secondly, when there is the excessive consumption of social drugs like alcohol and lastly, the consumption of prohibited hard drugs e.g. cannabis sativa or other unclassified substances. Three factors opposed serious danger when students or teachers lured into it which result most incidents of sexual abuse among the students and the teachers in secondary schools.

According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) 2010, 6% of female children were absent from school because of physical violence. In

a further analysis, more girls (7%) than boys (2%) were absent from school due to domestic violence in Nigeria in the year 2010 and absenteeism leads to dropping out. Umarnah (2018) opined that the rate at which the girl child drops out of primary and post primary institutions in Nigeria is alarming and ascribed violence as one of the major reasons. It was reported that the rate of dropout in secondary schools is more among females than males due to forced marriage and unwanted pregnancies as a result of rape either students-students or teachers to students activities.

4. Flooding of school premises: For some public schools in the state, it is the absence of perimeter fencing, security gates and trained security personnel, but for others it is the flooding of classrooms and leaky roofs. When floods occur, schools are submerged and many statutory records such admission register, attendance register etc and properties damaged as well as brining school attendance to a shutdown thereby affecting administration process. Amanchukwu et al, (2015), floods often force school children to relocate with their families to places that are safe from flooding. This influences their education as these new places may not have education facilities. In most secondary schools were greatly affected by the 2022 flood disasters. A situation where thousands of school children who moved with their families to such places of safety had their schooling disturbed as they no longer had access to school and absenteeism has negative impact on the academic performance of such children.

Therefore, effect of flood is so devastating that most secondary schools were closed down for almost one full term. Even when this deluge was abated, most schools could not resume because the damage done by the flooding affected the schools so negatively that the environment (school facilities, play grounds) were not conducive for teaching and learning process to take place. Some of the school, though, not directly affected by the flood, but affected families took shelter in them; thereby, pushing students and teachers away for some time. Thus, academic activities in these schools were shut down. This deplorable situation may not have only affected the facilities of the schools but also school attendance and students' performance.

5. Republics Agitation: The amalgamation of 1914 declared Nigeria an indivisible state. Today, some Nigerians are saying that the amalgamation was a mistake. They say the country should be divided. The South-East is agitating for the Biafra Republic; the South- West is agitating for the Oduduwa Republic while South-South is agitating for the resource control. One thing that these agitators fail to realize is the security threat to education of the country, where the operations and activities of IPOB against education in the name of sit at home order. For instance, on Monday, September, 13, gunmen stormed the comprehensive secondary school, Nkume in Njaba local government area of Imo state and stopped students from taking their examinations. This put WASEC candidates at risk of disruption to their papers in a situation that would cause incomplete results. The militant sabotage the economy through blowing the oil pipeline thereby affecting the funding of secondary education.

6. Terrorism: Apart from Boko Haram that is well known as a terrorist group in Nigeria today, there are other groups. These terrorist groups prevented many school children from attending schools in their communities. School administrators and teachers posted to some of these communities for official assignment failed to report because of the activities of the terrorist groups in fear of harassment and kidnapping. While terrorism is worldwide, terrorism in Nigeria has serious implications of security challenges. A situation where school children cannot go to school again because the

anxiety and fear these terrorist groups have created and this become great concern to our education especially secondary schools where most terrorist attacks happen. Some of the kidnappings that are experienced in the country today are carried out by these terrorist groups.

7. Communal Conflict

Communal conflict according to Miller in Oludare, et al, (2015) is a confrontation between one or more parties within or outside a community aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends. Similarly, Miall (2012) opines that communal conflict refers to contradictions arising from perception where a clear contradiction exists or is perceived to exist between the participants who view the outcome of such conflict as extremely important. Consequently, communal conflict affects education in many ways. Most tragically, it may result in the death or displacement of teachers, staff and students. Furthermore, communal conflict results in decreased access to secondary school, preventing the opening of schools, threatening student's security while going to school and attending class, and increasing teacher absenteeism.

Need for security in Secondary Schools

School is expected to be protected since it is a creation of the larger society, so the security public schools should no longer be treated as a luxury, but taken it seriously (Ademola, 2013). He further give some of the reasons why security of public schools is more luxury which include:

1. **Education as an tool for Effecting National Development:** According to National Policy on Education (2014), Education in Nigeria is an instrument “par excellence” for effecting national development, therefore, is fundamental that government and other stakeholders should ensure security of all public schools. This is important because education is pivotal to development in any sector in the country.
2. **Security of Life is a Fundamental Human Right:** The National Constitution of Nigeria (1999), Section 33 (1) contains right to life as the first fundamental human rights of every citizen. It means lives of students, teachers, counsellors and other non-academic staff found in schools have to be protected by government and agencies assigned to do so.
3. **Security is a Basic Human Need:** Abraham Maslow classified security among human lower needs with the understanding that people are incapable of paying attention to higher level needs when lower level needs remain unmet. The lower needs include food, shelter and safety. Therefore, for schools to achieve laudable educational goals, it is important for students and other people in school to feel safe and secure. Whenever students or teachers feel insecure, the teaching-learning process is impaired.
4. **Security Facilitates Effective Teaching-Learning Process:** Insecurity creates fear and fear is a big hindrance to learning. There are a lot of implications when security of lives and properties is not guaranteed. The parents will not release their wards to attend school, teachers too could stay back and those who manage to attend school are engrossed with fear which hinders effective learning.
5. **To Avoid Legal Issues and Financial Loss:** Schools are legally bound to protect students when in session as „in loco parentis“ (that is, in the place of parents). School can be held liable if anything happens to students due to security

negligence. Therefore, school security becomes important to schools and school officials not just on financial and legal levels, as well.

6. **To Avoid loss of Life:** Lives of school administrators, teachers and students will be at stake when security issue is handled with levity. If the security matter is not given necessary attention, it could lead to loss of lives. Meaning that lives that should have assets to the nation for social, political and economic development will become wastes.

How School Administrators can Improve School Security to Ensure the Safety of Students and Teachers

In the face of incessant security threats which do not exempt secondary schools, protection of the Nigerian learning environment needs to be given adequate attention. School administrators play important role in school administration. As presiding officers, their professional duties are school community relations, curriculum and instruction, staff-personnel, student/pupil-personnel, physical facilities, finance and business management and general duties. By virtue of school administrators' position in schools, they are chief security officers. In order to play their role in this capacity to reasonable extent, some of the school security measures discussed below are considered useful:

1. **Incessant Awareness on Security Issue:** Students and staff must be well-informed about security issues in the immediate community and society at large. School Administrators do brief staff and address students on the assembly ground on daily basis, the subject matter should not base on academic issue alone. It is necessary to provide them with current news on security. Such new must be authentic and not rumor. The manner of presentation should not create fear in staff and students. If staff and students are not educated about what is happening by their school administrators, another person might break the news in an unpleasant manner. This may cause pandemonium in school and its effect could be consequential.
2. **Adequate Fencing of School Premises:** Schools have to be fenced to safeguard indiscriminate entry and exit. The school administrators whose schools do not have fence can sensitize community agencies and government on the necessity of fence. A school that is without fence is prone to security threat. Hoodlums can easily penetrate into such school without the knowledge of security men.
3. **Secure Entrance and Exit and Use of Metal Detector:** It is not sufficient to have a fence that is as tall as prison yard fence but with secure entrance and exit. The gate at the entrance should be functional and strong. The security men too have be up to the task. Corrupt men should not be engaged as security men. For the fact that somebody is an ex-soldier does not qualify him for security job, his integrity and track records matter a lot. School administrator should also acquire metal detector to discover harmful object like guns, arrows, cutlasses and other metal objective.
4. **Strict Regulation of Visitors in School Premises and Effective Use of Visitor's Book:** There is need for regulation and control of visitors and the time of visit during the session. Though a few school observe visiting hours during the session, it has to be intensified. Parents should be educated on the need for such regulation. If they know that this is done in the interest of their wards (for safety and effective learning), they will comply. The use of visitors' book is essential to monitor personalities that visit the school. If it is possible, the visitors should be requested

to provide evidence of identification. This will send a signal to people that have ulterior motives to stay clear from the school premises.

5. **Installation of Closed Circuit Camera:** Closed circuit cameras can be acquired by the school management. There is no amount of money that is too much in guarantying security of lives. This camera can be used to monitor activities of students, staff, visitors and other stakeholders in the school. This will help to prevent perpetration of evil acts like planting of bombs, kidnapping, rape and the likes.
6. **Regular Inspection of School Premises:** Regular inspection of school premises to uncover strange objects is essential. Security men and assigned staff have to move round the school premises once or twice in a day to find out if crime activities or strange objects will be discovered. If strange objects or unusual signs are observed, they should be reported as soon as possible to the concerned authority.
7. **Safety Measures in School Plant Construction and Classroom Designs:** As part of safety measures, contractors who handle construction of school buildings and classrooms should be instructed to incorporate safety precautions. For instance, every classroom is expected to have entrance and exit doors. This is very important to forestall stampede in case of emergency. The chairs in the class rooms have to be spacious to facilitate easy movement. In addition, car park in the school should be constructed not too close to school buildings. If it is possible, car parks should be closed to the school gates. This will prevent driving towards the school buildings and suicide bombers" attempt to hit school buildings. In fact, barrier that can easily prevent vehicle movement towards school building could be mounted.
8. **Crisis Preparedness:** Though it is a general slogan that prevention is better than cure, in an extreme case there is need to take step to cure. If one does not have what it takes to cure in such situation, it can be disastrous. There are safety risks that extend above and beyond the school community. For this reason, school administrators need to device measure whereby himself, teachers, students and other stakeholders are knowledgeable about what should happen in an emergency. Therefore, school administrators have to liaise with departments and agencies like National Emergency Agency (NEMA), Police, Civil Defense and other security agencies that can provide training that helps school to prepare to deal with terror alert and extreme acts of violence.

Conclusion

The important of security of the school principals, teachers, students and others staff in secondary schools cannot overemphasized. Therefore, any form of insecurity arising from physical attack on school administrators, teachers and students without administration measures to avert it will affect the goals and objectives of secondary schools in education. In other words, if the level of insecurity in secondary schools today is not scaled down or appropriate measures not taken to eradicate it completely will continue to reduce teachers productivity and students' academic performance and the number of students that is out of school will increase which result other security threat to the society.

Suggestions

The following suggestions were made:

1. School administrators should ensure they provide effective security measures in school environments to protect students from harassment and intimidation from others.
2. Government through the ministry of Education should provide trained private security personnel with modern security gadgets for effective internal surveillance and policing that would guarantee teachers' and students' safety for optimal result.
3. Local Government authorities and community leaders should have a dispute resolution committee in communities that ensure disputes between communities are often resolved amicably without letting it degenerate to full blown communal crisis which may adversely affect academic activities in schools.
4. The government should position security personnel in communities where kidnapping is prevalent.
5. State government should introduce the payment of risk allowances to teachers' monthly emolument as this gesture would motivate them to be more passionate and do their job well even in the face of seeming danger.

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