



A Correlational Study of Motivation and Language Anxiety For Learning Chinese as A Foreign Language with Chinese Academic Achievement of Thai Grade 6 Students

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Abstract

Abstract: The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to determine whether there was a significant relationship among Motivation and Language Anxiety with academic achievement for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language of 164 Grade 6 students from a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand. The Motivation and Language Anxiety for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language Questionnaire was used to collect data. The survey questionnaire was adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and multiple correlational analysis were used to analyze the data. The study findings indicated a significant relationship among the target variables - motivation and language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement. Specifically, the research findings indicated that Grade 6 students displayed a slightly low level of motivation and a slightly low level of language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language. The research found that there was very weak relationship between Grade 6 students' motivation and their language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement.

Keywords: Academic achievement, Chinese as a foreign language, motivation, language anxiety, Thai government school, Trang, Thailand.

JEL Classification Code: C12, I20

1. Introduction

Chinese, especially Mandarin, is the most widely spoken language in the world (Myers, 2018). The increase in China's trade has also led to a continuous increase in the amount of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) learners around the world (Baverstock, 2019). Students' motivation in language learning involves their motivational intensity in the classroom or the lesson, the students' desire to learning the language, and their attitude toward learning the language (Gardner, 2005). Studies about foreign language learning anxiety have become trendy in Asian countries like Japan, Thailand, China, and Korea (Partridge & Eamoraphan, 2015). Moreover, a high level of anxiety in learning a language will negatively affect students' success in foreign language acquisition (Partridge & Eamoraphan, 2015).

This study focused on Grade 10 students at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand and it investigated whether there is a significant relationship between the students' motivation and language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with their Chinese academic achievement.

The target school has five native Chinese as a foreign language teacher and teaches Chinese as a foreign language from nursery to grade 12 students once a week. Most of the students are Thai and they need to take the Chinese proficiency test (HSK- Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) examination from Grade 3. The Thai students have different levels of motivation and most of them feel nervous to speak Chinese as a foreign language in front of the people in daily life.

In the class 80% of the students, they do not have the confidence to speak Chinese as a foreign language either inside the classroom or when they meet native Chinese people outside of the class. If the content learned in class can be used in the actual situation outside of class, this will stimulate students' enthusiasm for Chinese as a foreign language learning. Otherwise, it may weaken the positive attitude towards Chinese as a foreign language learning.

For the reasons above, this researcher has decided to investigate the relationship between Grade 6 students' motivation and their language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand.



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1.1. Research Objectives

Accordingly, the following research objectives was developed for this study.

1. To identify the level of motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grade 6 students at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand.

2. To identify the level of language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grade 6 students at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand.

2.1. To identify the level of Chinese academic achievement for learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grade 6 students at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand.

3. To identify whether there is a significant relationship between Grade 6 students' motivation and their language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement at a Thai government school in Trang.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

In this research study, the researcher implemented Gardner's (2010) socio-educational model of second language acquisition to measure and interpret the study variables.

1.2.1. Socio-Educational Model of Second Language Acquisition

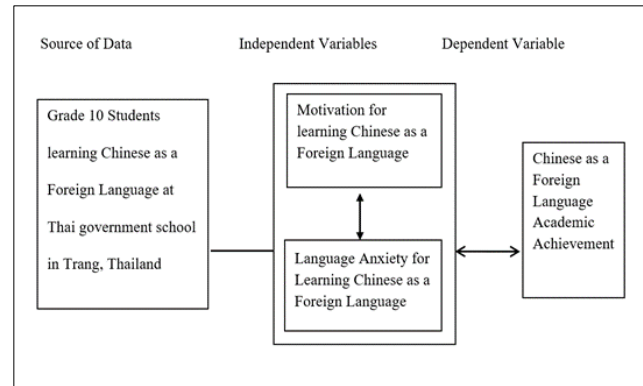
In the socio-educational model, Gardner (1985) posted that motivation is a combination of effort, positive attitude, and desire to attain a goal whilst having the feeling of satisfaction during the process of learning the second/foreign language. The motivated person should display effort, desire, and affect together (Gardner, 2010). The score for measuring motivation would be the aggregate of three measures: motivational intensity, desire to learn a language, and attitudes toward learning the language (Gardner, 2010).

In 2010, Gardner had proposed in his study that language anxiety refers to a situation in the language learning classroom and the anxiety that the students feel while they are using the language in their daily lives. Gardner (2010) also stated that when the students first enter the language learning classroom, their general anxiety might be stimulated. Language anxiety is negatively related to language achievement and the students' motivation for learning that language.

1.3. Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of Grade 6 students' motivation and language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with academic achievement at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand and to determine whether there is a relationship between them. The detail of the conceptual framework for this study was shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of This Study



2. Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted to find the level and relationship of the motivation in language learning, language anxiety in language learning and their academic achievement. On the other hand, there is little study has focused on the relationship between motivation and language anxiety in CFL with Chinese academic achievement.

2.1. Previous Studies Related to Between Motivation and Academic Achievement

Gardner (2010) had acknowledged that motivation in learning second/foreign language is not a simple construct, and it can only measure by the combination of many affective elements. Motivated students display desire to learn the language, became happier in the language classroom and put more efforts in their lessons (Gardner, 2005).

Siphora and Lynch (2019) also conducted a study focusing on students' motivation for learning English as a foreign language according to their preferences for indirect learning strategies of 215 students at Nelson English Language Center in Yangon, Myanmar. The finding of this study revealed that the students were highly motivated to learn English as a foreign language.



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Li and Lynch (2016) conducted a relational study between motivation for learning and academic achievement among basic and advanced level students studying Chinese as a foreign language. The population of the study was 139 students from years 3 to 6 who are studying Chinese as a foreign language at Ascot International School in Bangkok, Thailand. The finding revealed that the students from the advance class had positive relationship between intrinsic, extrinsic motivation and academic achievement of the students.

Thant and González (2019) conducted a comparative-correlational study on the attitude/ toward and motivation for learning English as a foreign language of Grade 9 students from three different ethnic groups from No. 2 Basic Education High School, Eastern Shan State, Myanmar. The population of the study was 199 students from No. 2 Basic Education High School, Eastern Shan State, Myanmar. The finding revealed that the students had high motivation for learning English as a foreign language.

Nant and Eamoraphan (2020) conducted a study focusing on the relationship between motivation and perceived parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language with English achievement of grades 6 to 8 students at St. John's private school, Patheingyi, Myanmar. The participants were 157 Grades 6-8 students from St. John's Private School during the academic year of 2018-2019. The finding revealed that the students had a very high motivation for learning English as a foreign language.

2.2. Previous Studies Related to Language Anxiety and Academic Achievement

According to Gardner (2010), language anxiety can be employed in two types, language classroom anxiety and language use anxiety. If the students' anxiety in a language increases the academic achievement of the students can decrease and if the academic achievement of the students improves as a result the students' anxiety in the language is also reduced (Gardner, 2005).

Rerkjaraskul and Lynch (2020) conducted a comparative study of English communication anxiety and English oral skills self-efficacy. The participants were 66 grades 7 to 9 students who are attending English program at the demonstration school of Ramkhamhaeng University. The finding revealed that the students from each grade level had moderately level of English communication anxiety which means students have anxiety to communicate with others in the classroom and outside of the classroom.

Partridge and Eamoraphan (2015) conducted a comparative study on students' foreign language classroom anxiety through cooperative learning. The participants were 173 Thai program students from St. Joseph Bangna School, Thailand. The finding revealed that the students had mid-level foreign language classroom anxiety across the population of Grade 6.

Feng and Eamoraphan (2020) conducted a comparative study of Thai adult learners' attitudes toward learning Chinese culture in Chinese as a foreign language class among three levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. The participants were 100 students from the beginner level, 60 students from the intermediate level, and 50 students from the advanced level from a Chinese learning center in Bangkok, Thailand. The finding revealed that the students from all the level have the positive attitude toward Chinese language learning.

In 1994, MacIntyre and Gardner conducted a study to examine the type of language learning situation that can be affected by language anxiety. This study was extended from MacIntyre and Gardner's study from 1991 which used Tobias' (1986) model and investigated the effect of anxiety on input and output in both native and second languages in second/foreign language acquisition. There were a total of 185 participants from elementary and high school levels in Sarajevo, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. The investigation reported that combine the effect of language anxiety in all three stages, the anxious student with less experience has more difficulty in demonstrating the knowledge than the relaxed students.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1. Methodology/Procedure

The population of this study was 164 Grade 6 students from a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand in the academic year of 2021- 2022. All of the Grade 6 students are Thais and all three classes are taught by the same native Chinese speaking teacher. The study was employed a population sample of all 164 Grade 6 students who are studying Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand in the academic year of 2021 – 2022. Table 1 shows the number of this study's population sample by grade level section. In this section, details on the study's population, sample and research instruments are provided.



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3.2. Research Instruments

The Motivation and Language Anxiety for Learning Chinese Questionnaire (see Appendix) was used to assess the students' level of motivation and the students' level of language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language. The Chinese midterm test scores was collected to measure Chinese academic achievement.

Motivation and Learning Anxiety for Learning Chinese Questionnaire

The researcher used the Motivation and Language Anxiety for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language Questionnaire to collect the data. The questionnaire contains two parts. The first part asked for the students' demographic information about the students' name, grade level and gender.

The second part asked the students' level of motivation for learning CFL and the students' level of language anxiety for learning CFL. The questionnaire items was adapted from five subscales of Gardner's (2004) international version of Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 2010). The five subscales of questionnaire items that was adapted from AMTB are attitudes toward learning CFL, desire to learn CFL, motivational intensity for learning CFL which was used to assess the students' level of motivation for learning CFL, and language class anxiety for learning CFL, language use anxiety for learning CFL which measured the students' level of language anxiety for learning CFL.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Findings

From the analysis of the collected data, the following findings were obtained.

4.1.1. Findings From Research Objective 1

The Grade 6 students displayed slightly low motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language. The overall mean score was 3.83 and according to the interpretation the mean score indicates a slightly low level of motivation since the score was between 3.01- 4.00.

Table 1

The Grades 6 Students' Overall Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and the Interpretation of the Motivation for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language

Variable	Grade 6		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language	3.83	1.65	Slightly low
Motivational intensity	3.90	1.64	Slightly low
Desire to learn Chinese as a foreign language	4.12	1.61	Slightly high
Attitudes toward learning Chinese as a foreign language	3.46	1.71	Slightly low

4.1.2. Findings From Research Objective 2

The Grade 6 students' language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language. As presented in Table 2, the Grade 6 students displayed slightly low language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language. The overall mean score was 3.86 and according to the interpretation, the mean score indicated a slightly low level of language anxiety since the score was between 3.01- 4.00.

Table 2

The Grades 6 Students' Overall Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and the Interpretation of the Language Anxiety for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language

Variable	Grade 6		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Learning Anxiety for Learning CFL	3.86	1.64	Slightly low
Language class anxiety for learning CFL	3.69	1.64	Slightly low
Language use anxiety for learning CFL	4.02	1.64	Slightly high

4.1.3. Findings From Research Objective 3

The third research objective of this study was to identify the level of Chinese academic achievement for learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grade 6 student at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand. Data were obtained from students' Chinese mid-term assessment test scores in August 2021 in the 1st semester of the academic year 2021-2022 were used. the mean score of Grade 6



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students' Chinese as a foreign language academic achievement was 18.17.

Table 4

The Grades 6 Students' Overall Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and the Interpretation of Chinese Academic Achievement Score

Grade level	N	M	SD	Interpretation
Grade 6	164	18.17	1.01	Excellent

4.1.4. Findings From Research Objective 4

Table 5 shows the result of a multiple linear regression. This is to analyze the percent of variance and a significant predictive relationship between the students' motivation and language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese as a foreign language academic achievement.

Table 5

Multiple Correlation Coefficient of Students' Motivation and Language Anxiety for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language with Chinese as a Foreign Language Academic Achievement

Independent Variables	R	R ²	df	F	p
Students' motivation and language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement	.152	.023	2,161	1.89	.15

Table 5 indicated that there is a very weak correlation among the students' motivation and language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese as a foreign language academic achievement ($R = 0.15, p < .15$). In the Table 5 also presented that students' motivation and language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language explained 2.3% of the variances with Chinese as a foreign language academic achievement [$R^2 = .023, F(2,161)$]. The rest 97.7% of the variance of Chinese academic achievement is explained by other factors such as students' attitude toward the language, parental encouragement, students' attitude toward their teachers or the lessons that are created by the teachers, learning environments, students' self-belief for learning language.

4.2. Discussion

This section discusses the findings obtained from this research and discusses links to previous studies. The researcher organized the section based on the variables. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the students' motivation and their language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement at a Thai government school in Trang.

4.2.1. Motivation for learning Chinese as a Foreign Language and Academic Achievement

The finding of the first research objective indicated that the Grade 6 students displayed slightly low motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign language at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand. In addition, the results also found that Grade 6 students' motivation in learning Chinese as a foreign language was found to be very weakly correlated with their Chinese academic achievement. The result was expected based on previous studies that used same variable with current research (Li & Lynch, 2016; Siphora & Lynch, 2019; Thant & González, 2019).

Motivation plays a significant role in successful second/foreign language learning classrooms. Students with high motivation are achieve higher. On the other hand, students with lower motivation obtain lesser achievement (Gardner, 2010). The students from the target school are seemed to have less desire in learning Chinese as a foreign language and did not enjoy the language class language greatly. The quality of the curriculum, teachers, instructional strategies, lesson plans in the education setting is also the reason why the students show less interest in their language learning classroom since those are a great influence on the level of students' motivation in the language learning classrooms (Gardner, 2010). The students displayed slightly low motivation since the target students are from Thailand most of the students are Thais and in Thailand, Chinese as a foreign language is not widely use. In addition, according to the researcher discussion with the teacher from the target classroom, the other reason for the students to have slightly low motivation is that the students learn Chinese as a foreign language in the classroom, but the students do not have opportunities to use that language in their daily life.

Motivation for learning English as a foreign language should be examined in different point of view,



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socio-economic factors, educational or institutional factors which involve learning environment, teachers, teaching materials and teaching strategies and perhaps the political factors, to be able to understand the core of motivation and its significant relationship on students' achievement (Gardner, 2010). According to Ushioda and Dörnyei (2011), motivation is a tool which support and lead students to achieve their goals. Motivation is generally accepted as a students' desire or essential which can energize processing things in order to convince them (Gardner, 2005). If the students are motivated in second/foreign language learning, they will try harder and push their selves toward a goal.

4.2.2. Language Anxiety for Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language and Academic Achievement

The finding of the first research objective was identified that the Grade 6 students displayed slightly low language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language. In addition, the results also found out that Grade 6 students' language anxiety in learning Chinese as a foreign language was found very weak and negatively correlated with their academic achievement for learning CFL. The result was expected based on previous studies that used similar variables with current research (Feng & Eamoraphan, 2020; MacIntyre & Gardner 1994; Partridge & Eamoraphan, 2015; Rerkjaraskul & Lynch, 2020).

Language anxiety has a negative correlation with language academic achievement (Gardner, 2010). Similarly, in this current study, the results indicated that language anxiety in learning Chinese as a foreign language are negatively correlated with Chinese academic achievement. The teachers, parents, and classmates can also influence the students' anxiety level (Gardner, 2010). According to the researcher's discussion with the Chinese teacher from the target class, the researcher found out that the students from target class sometime feel anxiety in learning language because they do not want to disappoint their people from their surroundings, or they just want those people to be proud of what the students can do. Similarly, the researcher also found out that the more the parents put pressure on the students to get better results in their academic achievement, the more the students feel anxiety in learning language. The way the teachers teach and instructions that the teachers use also can influence the level of anxiety that the students feel (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2011).

According to Gardner (2010), students' language anxiety and academic achievement are correlated negatively. If the students feel anxiety in their language

learning situation, the academic achievement of the students can decrease and similarly the academic achievement of the students improves as a result the students' anxiety in the language is also reduced (Gardner, 2005). Similarly, the finding of the current research indicated that the language anxiety in learning Chinese as a foreign language is negatively correlated with their Chinese academic achievement. When the students have higher level of anxiety in using Chinese language, they will also feel anxiety to go Chinese class and the less they use Chinese language in public or in their daily life.

4.3. Recommendations

The researcher provides some recommendations to the teachers, students, school administrator, parents and future researchers.

4.3.1. Teachers

The teachers should be aware of the different factors which contribute to the student's learning motivation and at the same time which factors can influence their academic achievement. The teachers also should become more aware of how students' language anxiety will affect students' learning motivation, which in turn affects students' academic performance. Therefore, with regards to knowing students' motivation can have effect to the improvement or development of their learning Chinese as a foreign language.

Therefore, the researcher recommends that the teachers should use different teaching methods to help students to reduce their pressure and lead students to be more confident in using Chinese as a foreign language. If teachers have the right attitude towards their students by providing a positive learning environment, they can also help to lower student learning anxiety and so improve the students' academic achievement. This will enhance motivation to learn better and provides students with greater opportunities for success.

4.3.2. Students

The findings of the research have indicated that self- The researcher recommends that the students is that students should have less anxiety in learning Chinese as a foreign language and not to be afraid to tell their teacher if they found some difficulties in their lessons. Students should know their strengths and weaknesses. If they know their strengths in learning Chinese as a foreign language, all they need to do is to focus on their weaknesses in order to get better outcomes. Students should not be afraid to ask



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questions and if they cannot understand, always ask questions.

4.3.3. School Administrators

The school should be aware that the different factors which contribute to the student's learning motivation and language anxiety, at the same time which factors can influence their academic achievement. The school administrators should working together with the people around the students and parents can help the students to improve their education since the school is responsible for the development of the students' learning and the achievement of the school. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the school administrators is that they can encourage the teachers by supporting the teachers' need and encourage the teachers to find some ways to relieve students' learning anxiety. Since the findings of this study stated the importance of language anxiety in learning Chinese as a foreign language, administrators can also set in-school in-service training to help teachers better implement teaching in the classroom. In addition, the school administrators should also provide better learning and teaching environments for the teachers and students. The administrators should also plan some events concerning with Chinese culture so that the students have more opportunity to use Chinese language.

4.3.4. Parents

Based on the findings, parents will realize that with their active guidance and effective encouragement toward the students can help the students to be highly motivated and becomes successful learners in Chinese as a foreign language. Therefore, the researcher would like to recommend to the parents of the students is that they support the students and put less pressure to the students, and care about children's difficulties that they can face in learning and psychological pressure. The parents also should make better communication with their children which will help children learn Chinese as a foreign language more actively.

4.3.5. Future Researchers

This was a quantitative study, and it was designed to investigate the relationship between Grade 6 students' motivation and their language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement at a Thai government school in Trang. Therefore, this study findings cannot be generalized to all students at a Thai government school in Trang. Based on this study, the researcher would like to recommend future researchers to

conduct research design using other motivational frameworks that can be more inclusive. The future researchers also should conduct research in other variables that can have effects on students' academic achievements in learning Chinese as a foreign language. This study findings may assist future researchers who are interested in researching this area and provide the relevant data and research inspiration to help further research.

5. Conclusions

From the research findings, the following conclusions were drawn.

5.1. Research Objective 1

The finding of this research objective 1 indicated that a slightly low motivation level in Grade 6 students at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand in learning Chinese as a foreign language. From this finding, it can be concluded that motivation for learning Chinese as a foreign was one of a problem among this academic achievement of students. In three subscales of motivation is learning CFL, Grade 6 students have slightly high level of desire to learn Chinese as a foreign language while motivation intensity, and attitude toward learning Chinese as a foreign language also have slightly low levels. From the findings, it can also conclude that students have high desire to learn but their attitude toward the language was slightly low so that their motivation in learning language is also low.

5.2. Research Objective 2

The finding of this research objective 2, to identify the level of language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grade 6 students at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand indicated that students' shows slightly low language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language and slightly high level of anxiety for using Chinese as a foreign language. From the finding, it can be concluded that the students have more anxiety to use the language than learning the language. Since the students have less confidence in their language ability, they are scared to use that language.

5.3. Research Objective 3

The finding of this research objective 3, to identify the level of Chinese academic achievement for learning Chinese as a foreign language of Grade 6 students at a Thai government school in Trang, Thailand indicated that Grade



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6 students' shows high and excellent Chinese academic achievement scores for learning Chinese as a foreign language. From the finding, it can conclude that the students trying so hard to learn the language so that their achievement scores are high and excellent.

5.4. Research Objective 4

The finding of the last research objective, to identify whether there is a significant relationship between Grade 6 students' motivation and their language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement at a Thai government school in Trang indicated that, there was very weak relationship between Grade 6 students' motivation and their language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language with Chinese academic achievement at a Thai government school in Trang. From the finding, it can conclude that the students do not have high level of motivation and also have low level of anxiety, but their achievement scores are high. The students' motivation and language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language explained 2.3% of the variances with Chinese as a foreign language academic achievement but the rest 97.7% of the variance of Chinese academic achievement is explained by other factors such as students' attitude toward the language, parental encouragement, students' attitude toward their teachers or the lessons that are created by the teachers, learning environments, students' self-belief for learning language. According, it can also be concluded that it is very import for the for the teachers, the students, school administrators and parents to understand the students' academic achievement can increase by a least 2.3% of students' motivation and language anxiety for learning Chinese as a foreign language.

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