HIMPAUDI as a Bridging Organization in Deep Learning Mentoring for PAUD Teachers: A Literature Review

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The implementation of Deep learning in early childhood education faces significant challenges, particularly the gap between the technical complexity of Deep learning and the diverse competencies of PAUD teachers. This gap has the potential to hinder the optimal use of Deep learning as a tool for learning development and assessment. The Association of Indonesian Early Childhood Educators and Education Personnel (HIMPAUDI) as a professional organization has an extensive network and understands the local context, but its role in facilitating teacher competency in the implementation of Deep learning has not been widely explored. This literature review aims to analyze the role of HIMPAUDI in the Deep learning mentoring program for PAUD teachers, using Bridging the Gap. This is to explain how this organization can bridge the gap between the intended implementation of Deep Learning and the actual realization that occurs in the field. The literature review method with a qualitative approach was chosen in this study. Primary data sources were obtained from scientific journal articles, books, as well as relevant policy documents and official publications of HIMPAUDI. Data analysis was carried out by grouping findings into key dimensions of Bridging the Gap. The study results show that HIMPAUDI acts as a strategic bridge through four main functions: facilitator for teacher capacity development, mediator between teachers and stakeholders, platform for strengthening learning communities, and partner for advocacy and quality control. These roles enable holistic mentoring to improve the competency of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers in adopting a contextual and sustainable Deep Learning approach.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) constitutes a fundamental foundation for the development of a nation's human resources, as it takes place during the golden age of child development when cognitive, social-emotional, moral, and character capacities grow rapidly (Kasmiati, 2024; Qoirika et al., 2024). At this stage, children require appropriate and continuous stimulation through educational experiences that are intentionally designed and developmentally responsive. Numerous studies confirm that high-quality early childhood education has a significant and long-term impact on academic achievement, social competence, and lifelong learning abilities (Heckman, 2011; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). In this context, PAUD teachers play a central role as the main actors who translate educational goals into meaningful learning practices. Consequently, the competence and professional capacity of PAUD teachers must be continuously strengthened so that learning activities are not only enjoyable but also meaningful and capable of fostering children's holistic development.

Along with the rapid development of educational science and pedagogical innovation, the concept of deep learning has emerged as a key approach to improving learning quality (Akmal et al., 2024; Haditsa et al., 2024; Nurul et al., 2024). In teacher professional development, deep learning does not refer to artificial intelligence or digital technology, but rather to a pedagogical orientation that emphasizes meaningful understanding, reflective practice, critical inquiry, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities (Fullan et al., 2018). Within the context of PAUD, deep learning encourages teachers to design learning experiences that go beyond routine activities and instead stimulate children's thinking processes in ways that are appropriate to their developmental stage. However, empirical evidence in Indonesia indicates that the implementation of deep learning-oriented practices in PAUD remains constrained by various structural and contextual challenges, including limited access to quality training, inadequate learning facilities and materials, and the heavy administrative burden placed on teachers, which often reduces their capacity for pedagogical reflection and innovation (Jf & Latif, 2020; Mauliyah, 2023). These conditions create a gap between curriculum expectations and the actual capacity of PAUD teachers in practice.

The literature on educational change and teacher professional development emphasizes the importance of intermediary or bridging mechanisms that can connect educational theory, policy, and innovation with classroom practice. Coburn and Stein (2010) conceptualize bridging organizations as entities that mediate between knowledge producers and practitioners by translating abstract concepts into practical strategies and providing sustained, context-sensitive support. In the field of teacher development, such organizations are considered effective in facilitating mentoring, peer learning, and professional communities that respond to local needs and constraints. International research also highlights that sustainable teacher learning is more likely to occur when professional development is embedded within networks and collaborative structures rather than delivered through isolated training sessions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Within the Indonesian PAUD landscape, professional organizations play a strategic role in teacher empowerment and capacity building. HIMPAUDI (Indonesian Childhood Education Association), with its extensive organizational network reaching down to the village level, occupies a unique position as an institution that understands both national policy directions and the local realities faced by PAUD teachers. Several national studies suggest that teacher organizations contribute to improving professional competence through training programs, forums for experience sharing, and advocacy for teachers' professional recognition and welfare (Harfianto & Solekah, 2021; Nadar et al., 2021; Rochyadi, 2014). Nevertheless, these studies tend to focus on organizational roles in general terms and have not explicitly examined how HIMPAUDI can function as a structured mentoring agent that bridges deep learning concepts, curriculum demands, and everyday teaching practices in PAUD settings.

A review of previous research reveals several gaps that justify the need for further investigation. First, much of the international literature on deep learning concentrates on primary and secondary education, with relatively limited attention given to early childhood education and its distinctive pedagogical characteristics. Second, studies on PAUD teacher professional development in Indonesia

predominantly address issues of certification, competency standards, or training effectiveness, without explicitly employing the bridging organization framework to analyze how professional organizations mediate between policy and practice. Third, research specifically examining HIMPAUDI has not sufficiently explored its potential role in mentoring teachers toward deep learning-oriented pedagogical transformation. As a result, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of how HIMPAUDI can function as a bridging organization that helps close the gap between theoretical expectations of deep learning and the actual conditions faced by PAUD teachers in the field.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to analyze HIMPAUDI's potential role as a bridging organization in deep learning mentoring for PAUD teachers through a literature review approach. The study aims to synthesize existing research on deep learning and teacher professional development, examine the challenges encountered by PAUD teachers in implementing deep learning-oriented practices, and conceptualize how HIMPAUDI can effectively bridge the gap between educational theory, policy expectations, and classroom realities. By doing so, this study is expected to contribute to the development of more contextually relevant and sustainable mentoring models for PAUD teachers in Indonesia, as well as to enrich the academic discourse on the role of professional organizations in educational transformation.

2.   METHODS

This study employed a qualitative literature review approach to examine the role of the HIMPAUDI organization in deep learning mentoring programs for Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teachers through the lens of the *bridging the gap* framework. The qualitative literature review method was selected because it enables an in-depth, interpretive analysis of theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and policy-related discussions across diverse sources, thereby allowing the researchers to synthesize knowledge and identify conceptual patterns relevant to organizational roles in educational change. As emphasized by Snyder (2019) and Xiao & Watson (2019), a literature review is a systematic process of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing existing scholarly works to develop a comprehensive understanding of a research topic and to reveal conceptual gaps in prior studies.

The literature search was conducted through several electronic databases to ensure broad coverage and transparency. The primary databases included Google Scholar, ERIC, and DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), which were selected due to their extensive indexing of education-related research at both national and international levels. The search process was carried out between January and March 2025 using a combination of keywords and Boolean operators, such as *"deep learning" AND "early childhood education"*, *"teacher professional development" AND "bridging organization"*, *"PAUD teachers"*, and *"HIMPAUDI"*. Keyword variations were applied in both English and Indonesian to capture relevant national and international publications.

The inclusion criteria for literature selection were clearly defined to ensure relevance and quality. First, only peer-reviewed articles published in accredited national journals (SINTA-indexed) and reputable international journals were included. Second, the publication period was limited to studies published between 2018 and 2024 to capture recent theoretical developments and empirical evidence related to deep learning and teacher mentoring. Third, the selected literature had to explicitly address at least one of the following aspects: deep learning in education, teacher professional development, the role of professional or intermediary organizations, or policy-practice gaps in education. In addition to journal articles, policy documents, government regulations, and official publications from the HIMPAUDI organization were included to strengthen contextual relevance and provide insights into institutional roles and national policy frameworks. Exclusion criteria included non-peer-reviewed opinion pieces, conference abstracts without full papers, and articles that focused solely on technological deep learning (artificial intelligence) without pedagogical relevance.

To enhance methodological rigor, the quality of the selected literature was assessed using several criteria adapted from established qualitative review guidelines. These criteria included the clarity of research objectives, methodological transparency, theoretical grounding, relevance to the research

focus, and the credibility of the publication source. Articles that met these criteria were retained for further analysis, while those with insufficient methodological detail or weak relevance were excluded.

Following a PRISMA-style screening process, a total of 126 articles were initially identified across all databases. After removing duplicates, 98 articles remained for title and abstract screening. At this stage, 57 articles were excluded due to limited relevance to PAUD, deep learning, or organizational roles. The remaining 41 articles underwent full-text review, resulting in 24 articles that met all inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis. In addition, six policy documents and organizational reports were incorporated to complement the academic literature.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic synthesis approach. The themes and analytical dimensions were derived inductively and deductively based on the *bridging the gap* framework proposed by Coburn and Stein (2010). Deductively, the analysis focused on three core dimensions of bridging the gap: (1) bridging theory and practice, (2) bridging policy expectations and teacher capacity, and (3) bridging innovation and classroom implementation. Inductively, additional themes emerged from the literature, such as mentoring models, peer learning communities, contextual adaptation, and organizational sustainability. These themes were then organized to conceptualize HIMPAUDI's potential role as a bridging organization in supporting deep learning mentoring for PAUD teachers.

Through this systematic and transparent methodological process, the literature review provides a robust analytical foundation for understanding how professional organizations such as HIMPAUDI can function as effective intermediaries in educational transformation, particularly in promoting deep learning-oriented practices in early childhood education.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Identifying the Gap Between Expectations for Deep Learning Implementation and the Competency Level of Early Childhood Education Teachers in the Field

Based on data and findings reported by Ichaa Melinda Putri (2024), a number of fundamental problems persist within the Indonesian education system, particularly concerning teacher quality. Nationally, only around 25–33% of teachers are considered competent based on the results of the Teacher Competency Test (Uji Kompetensi Guru/UKG), meaning that approximately 67–75% of teachers have not yet met the minimum competency standards. The UKG evaluates two core dimensions—pedagogical competence, which includes learning management and instructional strategies, and professional competence, which refers to mastery of subject matter. The persistently low scores in both dimensions indicate that the challenge faced by Indonesian education is not merely related to teacher quantity, but more critically to teacher quality. From a *bridging the gap* perspective, this condition reflects a significant capacity–expectation gap, where national policies and curriculum frameworks demand high-quality, student-centered teaching practices, yet teachers' actual competencies remain insufficient to meet these expectations in classroom settings.

This capacity gap is further reinforced by disparities in academic qualifications, particularly at the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) level. Data from the Directorate of PAUD and PNF Teachers, Ministry of Elementary and Secondary Education (2024), shows that approximately 47% of PAUD teachers, equivalent to 299,640 individuals, do not yet hold a bachelor's degree (S1). While academic qualifications alone do not automatically guarantee teaching competence, the absence of a foundational higher education background poses structural challenges in understanding educational theory, child development principles, and pedagogical innovation. In terms of *bridging the gap* theory, this issue illustrates a policy–practice gap, as regulatory frameworks and professional standards emphasize qualified and professional educators, yet institutional and systemic constraints hinder the realization of these standards at the grassroots level, especially in early childhood education.

In addition to competency and qualification issues, research by Waruwu and Setiawati (2024) highlights significant obstacles in the implementation of Deep Learning approaches in schools. These obstacles include limited infrastructure, such as inadequate learning facilities to support project-based and experiential learning, which are central to the Deep Learning paradigm. Moreover, a dense and

time-oriented curriculum often conflicts with the principles of Deep Learning, which require extended time for exploration, reflection, and meaningful understanding. Cultural resistance to change further complicates implementation, as both teachers and students may be unfamiliar with student-centered learning approaches and therefore require sustained mentoring and adaptation (Atikah et al., 2023; Qadafi, 2023). From a bridging perspective, these challenges represent an implementation gap, where innovative pedagogical concepts promoted at the policy and conceptual levels fail to be effectively adopted in practice due to contextual constraints related to resources, curriculum rigidity, and school culture.

Importantly, these issues do not stand alone but are deeply interconnected, forming a cyclical pattern of systemic challenges. Low teacher competence and uneven academic qualifications hinder the adoption of Deep Learning, while at the same time, inadequate infrastructure, rigid curricula, and cultural resistance limit opportunities for teachers to develop competence through authentic and contextual practice. This interaction underscores a broader systemic gap, where teacher capacity, institutional support, and policy aspirations are misaligned. Without intermediary mechanisms that can translate policy goals into practical, context-sensitive support, efforts to improve teacher quality and learning outcomes risk remaining fragmented and ineffective.

In synthesis, the evidence suggests that improving learning quality in Indonesia—particularly in PAUD—requires an integrated and systemic approach that goes beyond isolated training initiatives. Addressing the identified gaps necessitates strategies that simultaneously accelerate the improvement of teacher academic qualifications, revitalize continuous professional development systems, provide curricular flexibility, strengthen infrastructure and learning resources, and cultivate a school culture that supports innovation and in-depth learning. Within the *bridging the gap* framework, this points to the urgent need for intermediary actors or organizations capable of connecting policy expectations, teacher capacity, and classroom realities in a coherent and sustainable manner, thereby ensuring that educational reforms can be meaningfully enacted at the level of practice.

From the perspective of *Bridging the Gap* theory, the low level of teacher competence and uneven academic qualifications in Indonesia reflect a fundamental capacity–expectation gap between national education policies and teachers' actual readiness to implement them in practice. Coburn and Stein (2010) argue that educational reform often fails not because of weak policy design, but because the knowledge, skills, and professional capacity required to enact such policies are unevenly distributed among practitioners. In the Indonesian PAUD context, the expectation that teachers implement student-centered, deep, and meaningful learning contrasts sharply with empirical evidence showing that a majority of teachers lack sufficient pedagogical and professional competence (Ewo et al., 2023; Fitria & Lestari, 2024; Kamil & Munastiwi, 2023). This gap is particularly critical at the early childhood level, where teachers are expected to master developmental psychology, play-based pedagogy, and reflective instructional design, yet many do not possess the academic or professional foundation needed to meet these demands. As a result, policy aspirations related to deep learning remain largely symbolic rather than operational.

In addition to capacity issues, the challenges related to infrastructure, curriculum rigidity, and school culture can be understood as manifestations of a policy–practice gap. Spillane et al. (2002) emphasize that policies are not implemented directly, but are interpreted and enacted by actors within specific organizational and cultural contexts. When learning facilities are inadequate, time allocations are inflexible, and school cultures remain teacher-centered, innovative pedagogical approaches such as Deep Learning are difficult to realize, regardless of their conceptual strength. These structural and cultural constraints limit teachers' opportunities to experiment, reflect, and learn from practice, thereby reinforcing traditional instructional routines. In this sense, the failure to implement Deep Learning is not solely a matter of teacher resistance, but rather a systemic misalignment between reform design and the conditions under which teachers work (Fatimatuzzahrah et al., 2023; Titah Kinasih, 2023).

The interaction between low teacher competence and weak implementation conditions points to the absence of effective bridging mechanisms within the education system. According to Honig (2006)

and Coburn (2016), bridging actors or organizations play a crucial role in mediating between policy, research, and practice by translating abstract reforms into contextually relevant strategies and sustained professional support. Without such intermediaries, reforms tend to rely on one-off training programs that are insufficient to produce meaningful change. In the case of PAUD in Indonesia, the lack of continuous mentoring, peer learning communities, and localized professional support exacerbates the cycle in which limited teacher capacity hinders innovation, and weak implementation contexts further suppress capacity development (A. A. P. Putri et al., 2024; Setyarini et al., 2024; Syoleha & Yuliantina, 2024). Theoretically, this underscores the importance of positioning professional organizations as bridging entities that can align expectations, build capacity, and adapt reforms to local realities, thereby enabling deep learning to move from policy discourse to classroom practice (Lase, 2023; Munawwir et al., 2024; Saleh et al., 2024).

3.2. Analyzing the Role of HIMPAUDI in the Mentoring Program that Supports Early Childhood Education Teacher Competence in the Implementation of Deep Learning

According to (Tauhid & Putri, 2024), there are four roles or functions of educational/teaching professional organizations, as well as the HIMPAUDI organization, which is involved in the world of education and consists of educators and PAUD education personnel. The following is the analysis of these roles:

1) As a Facilitator and Capacity Developer (Empowering Members)

HIMPAUDI plays an active role in designing and implementing systematic mentoring programs to introduce, deepen, and practice the Deep Learning approach. This support can be realized through the following programs:

a. Information and Training Provision: Conducting training, workshops, or seminars that explore in detail the "what" and "how" of Deep Learning, including its child-centered principles (joyful, meaningful, and mindful).

b) Practical Mentoring: Providing expert mentors or facilitators who can assist teachers directly or in groups to implement Deep Learning in daily lesson planning and practice.

c) Teaching Materials Development: Assisting teachers in developing teaching materials and educational games (APE) that support in-depth, critical, collaborative, and contextual learning according to the characteristics of early childhood.

2) As a Mediator and Bridge (Acting as a Liaison and Supervisor)

HIMPAUDI functions as an effective communication channel between PAUD teachers in the field and other stakeholders, including the government, academics, and education experts. This support can be realized through the following programs:

a) Presenting Resource Persons: Bridging teachers with experts or academics with expertise in the field of Deep Learning and early childhood education to gain more theoretical and practical insights and guidance.

b) Conveying Aspirations and Challenges: Assisting teachers in conveying needs, obstacles, and input from the field to the government (e.g., the Education Office) regarding the implementation of new approaches such as Deep Learning, including the need for policy support, facilities, and infrastructure.

c) Building Collaborative Networks: Facilitating networks among PAUD teachers to share experiences (sharing best practices) and peer learning in the implementation of Deep

3) As a Forum for Strengthening Solidarity and Learning Communities (Strengthening Professional Solidarity)

HIMPAUDI plays a role in uniting teachers and early childhood education personnel to support each other in facing the challenges of changing learning paradigms. This support can be realized through the following programs:

a. Creating a Community of Practice: Forming learning communities at the branch or regional level that focus on discussing and implementing Deep Learning.
b. Providing Moral and Psychosocial Support: Providing a place for teachers to share challenges, successes, and gain motivation from fellow members of the professional organization in implementing this relatively new approach.
c. Strengthening Professional Identity: Through mentoring programs, HIMPAUDI affirms the role of early childhood education teachers not merely as "caregivers" but as professional educators capable of designing deep learning.

4) As an Advocacy Partner and Quality Control (Providing Considerations & Criticism)

HIMPAUDI not only provides mentoring but also ensures that the implementation of Deep Learning aligns with the goals of improving the quality of early childhood education and the professional interests of teachers. This support can be realized through the following programs:

a. Providing input based on field experience from its mentoring program to the government in developing policies or curricula that support the implementation of the Deep Learning approach in Early Childhood Education (PAUD).
b. Through mentoring mechanisms, HIMPAUDI can monitor and evaluate the extent to which the Deep Learning approach has been adopted and its impact on the learning process. The organization can also critique policies or conditions that hinder its effective implementation.

By carrying out these roles comprehensively, HIMPAUDI can help address the challenges of the "newness" of the Deep Learning approach and effectively encourage the transformation of PAUD learning toward a more in-depth, critical, meaningful, and enjoyable process in line with the demands of 21st-century skills.

Based on the research findings referring to Tauhid and Putri (2024), it can be analyzed that HIMPAUDI occupies a strategic position as a key actor in strengthening the professional capacity of PAUD teachers, particularly in supporting the implementation of the Deep Learning approach. HIMPAUDI's role as a facilitator and capacity developer indicates that professional organizations function not merely as administrative associations, but also as learning agents for their members. Through the provision of training, practical mentoring, and the development of contextual teaching materials, HIMPAUDI directly contributes to bridging the gap between new pedagogical demands and teachers' actual competencies in the field. This role is especially relevant for PAUD teachers, who require continuous guidance to understand and apply child-centered, meaningful, and in-depth learning principles. Consequently, HIMPAUDI's empowerment function can be understood as a systematic effort to enhance teachers' pedagogical and professional competence in a contextual and sustainable manner.

Furthermore, the findings show that HIMPAUDI also functions as a mediator, a platform for professional solidarity, and an advocacy partner in ensuring the quality of Deep Learning implementation in PAUD. Its mediating role enables effective communication between teachers, academics, and policymakers, allowing field-based experiences and challenges to inform educational policies and curricular decisions. At the same time, the creation of learning communities and the strengthening of teachers' professional identity provide psychosocial support and collective motivation in responding to shifts in learning paradigms. HIMPAUDI's advocacy and quality control roles further reinforce its position as an organization that not only promotes innovation, but also critically monitors whether such innovation aligns with the broader goals of improving early childhood education quality. Overall, these findings suggest that HIMPAUDI's comprehensive roles can serve as a driving force in transforming PAUD learning toward practices that are more in-depth, critical, meaningful, and aligned with the demands of 21st-century skills.

Despite its strategic roles, HIMPAUDI's capacity as a *bridging organization* is constrained by structural limitations that are common to professional educational organizations in Indonesia (Bakar et al., 2023; Markuri et al., 2023). First, funding constraints pose a significant challenge to the sustainability

and reach of its mentoring programs. Research on teacher professional development across Indonesia highlights that limited financial resources at the institutional level often reduce the quality and consistency of training and support activities, particularly when programs require expert facilitation, long-term mentoring, or development of instructional resources (Fitri et al., 2024; Tedjawati, 2011). These findings indicate that without stable and sufficient funding—whether from government budgets, partnerships, or institutional support—organizations like HIMPAUDI may struggle to scale mentoring programs equitably, leaving gaps between policy expectations and practice implementation.

In addition to funding challenges, regional disparities significantly limit HIMPAUDI's effectiveness in serving PAUD teachers across the archipelago. Studies on teacher professionalism in remote and disadvantaged areas (e.g., 3T regions: frontier, outermost, and underdeveloped regions) demonstrate that teachers in these areas face pronounced structural barriers, including unequal distribution of professional development opportunities, inadequate facilities, and minimal community and institutional support compared to their counterparts in urban centers (Khairuddin et al., 2024; Sutomo & Siregar, 2022). Likewise, systematic reviews of professional teacher organizations reveal that geographic isolation and lack of infrastructure impede teachers' participation in structured development programs, thereby exacerbating disparities in educational quality and access (Harfianto & Solekah, 2021). This regional capacity gap suggests that HIMPAUDI's ability to act as a true intermediary between policy and practice is uneven, as its impact may be felt intensively in resource-rich regions but be minimal in underserved contexts.

These limitations reflect broader systemic issues within the Indonesian education landscape, where professional support structures and resource allocation do not always align with the needs of educators across diverse contexts. Addressing such constraints would require not only internal strengthening of HIMPAUDI's organizational capacity but also enhanced collaboration with government agencies, philanthropic partners, and regional stakeholders to secure sustained funding and equitable professional support infrastructure nationwide.

4. CONCLUSION

First, this study concludes that the gap between the expectations of Deep Learning implementation and the actual competence of PAUD teachers is primarily driven by low academic qualifications (with 47% of teachers not holding a bachelor's degree), limited pedagogical and professional competencies (only 25–33% of teachers meeting competency standards), and structural constraints such as inadequate infrastructure, a densely packed curriculum, and an unprepared learning culture. These factors interact in a reinforcing cycle that hinders the effective adoption of Deep Learning and demonstrates that the problem cannot be addressed through isolated interventions, but instead requires a systemic and integrated approach to teacher development and educational reform.

Second, the findings highlight HIMPAUDI's strategic role in mentoring programs as a *bridging organization* capable of narrowing this gap through four interrelated functions: facilitating teacher capacity development, mediating communication between teachers and key stakeholders, strengthening professional learning communities, and acting as an advocacy partner and quality control mechanism. Through these roles, HIMPAUDI enables holistic and context-sensitive mentoring that supports PAUD teachers in adopting Deep Learning practices in a more sustainable and meaningful manner.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature on *bridging organizations* by extending the concept to the field of early childhood education and professional teacher organizations in developing contexts. It demonstrates how professional associations such as HIMPAUDI can function as institutional bridges between policy expectations and classroom realities, as well as between innovation and teacher capacity. For future research, empirical studies are recommended to examine HIMPAUDI's mentoring practices through in-depth case studies, comparative regional analyses, or program evaluations that measure their impact on teacher competence and classroom practice. Such

studies would strengthen the evidence base and refine models of professional mentoring for Deep Learning in PAUD settings.

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