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AN ANALYSIS ON IMPACT OF ABSENTEEISM ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS



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ABSTRACT:

India is one among the countries that have offered free education at primary and middle levels under the Right to Education act 2009. This called for need to conduct a study on relationship between student school absenteeism attendance and academic performance in secondary schools students . This study was set to look into student's school attendance and academic performance. The study used descriptive survey design targeting secondary schools. The target

population for study consisted of 69 male and 89 female teachers. In addition, there were 459 boys and 330 girl , from 8 public secondary schools were included . Simple random sampling was used to select 56 teachers . Data was collected using one questionnaire for teachers and document analysis sheet. A checklist was used to collect 363 student percentage scores in attendance and academic performance, used in this study. A correlation carried out, established that there is strong negative correlation between absenteeism and academic performance.

KEYWORDS

students, school attendance, academic performance,

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INTRODUCTION :

Reducing the rates of student truancy and chronic absenteeism have been and continues to be a goal of many schools and school systems. Beyond the fact that poor attendance predicts dropping out of school, chronic absenteeism can result in other negative consequences for students and schools. Students who are not in class have fewer opportunities to learn the material that enables them to succeed later in school. Research on truancy and absenteeism suggests that students with better attendance score higher on achievement tests than their more frequently absent peers.

Attendance not only affects individual students but also can affect the learning environment of an entire school. School funding is often at least partially dependent on the number of students who regularly attend.

School characteristics and practices can influence rates of absenteeism and truancy among students. Large schools, for example, are more likely to have problems with student attendance than small ones (Finn & Voelkl, 1993). In addition, students are more likely to skip school or cut class if they believe that the classroom environment is chaotic or boring, that teachers do not listen to them, or that there are no academic consequences for skipping class.

The premise is simple: Students need to attend school daily to succeed. But the experience of modern American education demonstrates a reliance on basic assumptions regarding attendance that aren't true, leading to a failure to tabulate and use simple data that could raise the educational performance of our students.

We assume in education that students—barring illness or unusual events—are in the classroom every weekday. Based on that assumption, we measure a school's average daily attendance and its truancy. But we don't stop to look at how many of our students are missing so many days that they are academically at risk, regardless of whether their absences are excused. Research shows that missing 10% of the school year—or 18 days in most districts—correlates with academic trouble. We call this figure "chronic absence."

We've found that a school can have a 95% average daily attendance rate and still have 25% of its students chronically absent. That level of absenteeism not only affects the students who miss class, but also creates a kind of classroom churn that makes it harder for teachers to teach and other students to learn.

Nationwide, 5–7.5 million students are chronically absent each year, a problem that contributes to higher dropout rates and wider achievement gaps. We know that more than a million teenagers drop out of high school each year in the United States, and millions more fail to develop the language and learning skills needed to sustain themselves as adults, let alone live to their full potential.

Like bacteria in a hospital, chronic absenteeism can wreak havoc long before it's discovered. It's not the only factor at play, but students need to attend school daily to succeed.

School and other institute of education has no worth without students. Students are the most essential assets of any educational institution. A school is set up for the main purpose of bringing students from different families together under one roof called classroom. Effect of teaching –learning take place when students and teachers coming together. Students attendance register /records is to check students commitment to receive instructions from Teachers. Students attendance register//records is utilized by teachers and monitored by the school Principals .The attendance register is the most concern with class attendance .Dedicated teachers take students attendance before teaching their subjects to ascertain

the number of students who received their lessons. Therefore students attendance record is an important administrative record used by the school authority to monitor , mentored, controlled and supervised students activities in the schools. A students who is not a regular to school face learning problems, resulting in poor academic achievement and shows to cope with the peer groups.

Both school and home play important role in student’s absenteeism . The social status and education level of parents, influences school attendance monitoring activities by class teachers. Parents, poor teaching methods, lack of facilities may affect the students absenteeism .Students having negative attitude towards school also affect the students attendance in school . The School Principal and teachers should have accurate information of all activities in the school for effective and easy decision making to improve the satisfaction level of requirement and continuous assessment . Researchers has revealed that there is a significant relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement .More the times students spend in studying is the potential indicator for the success of students .Hence present study was undertaken to find relationship between students absenteeism and academic achievement.

Figure 1: Factors affecting absenteeism and academic achievement

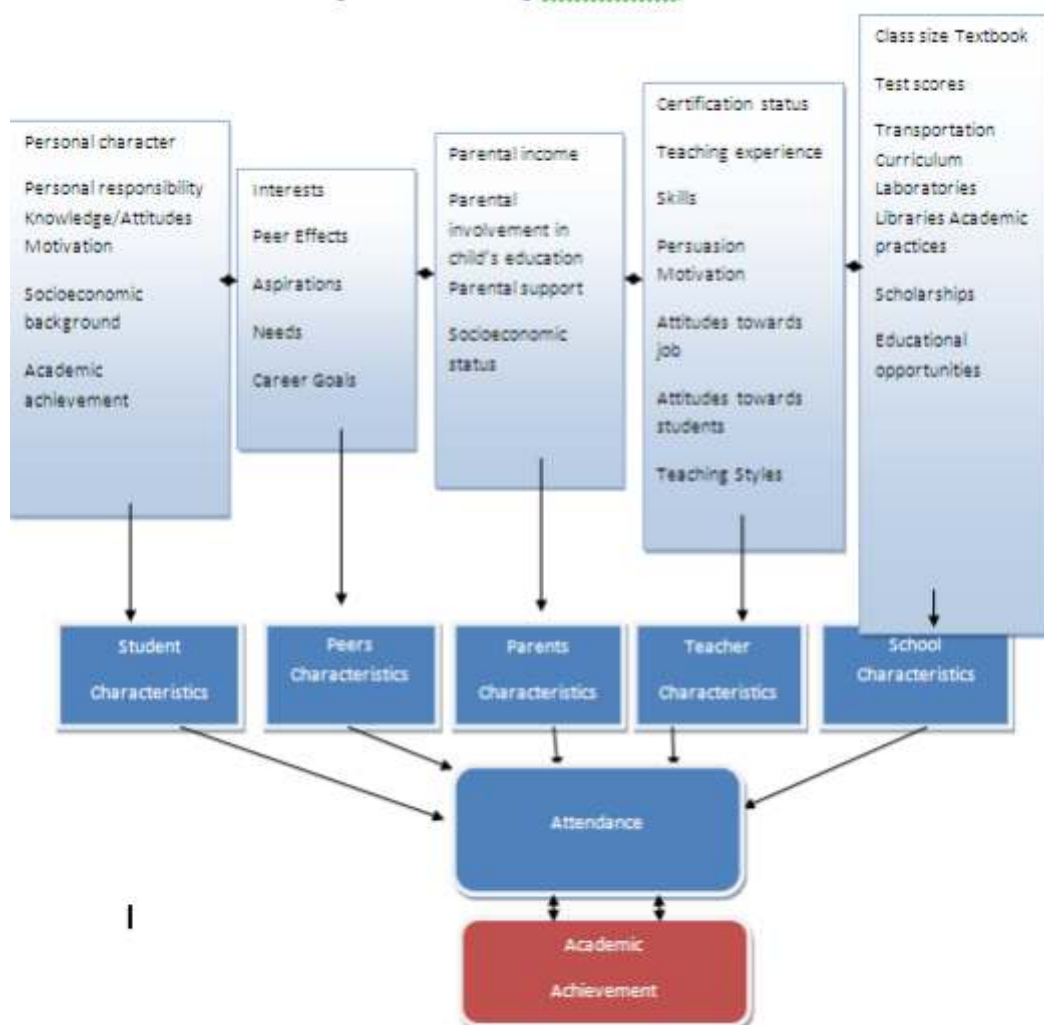


Figure 2: Factors affecting students absenteeism

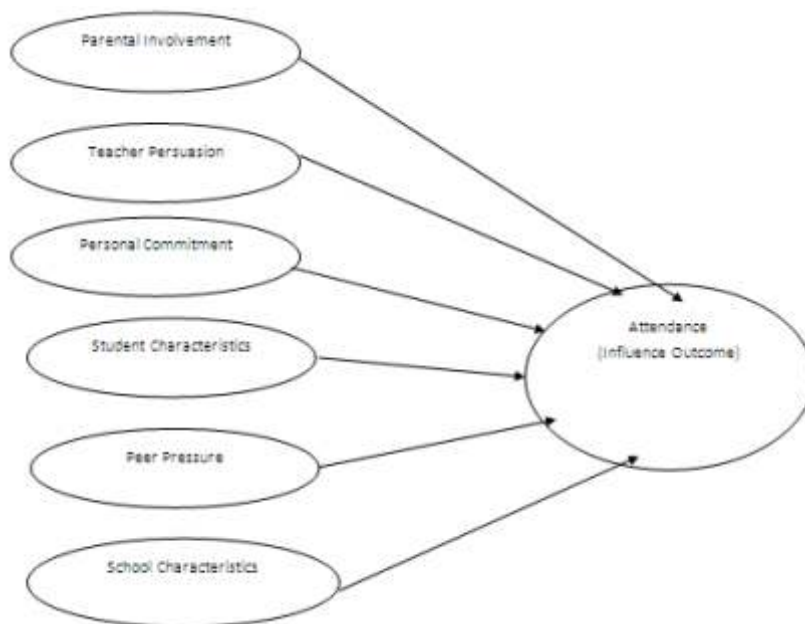
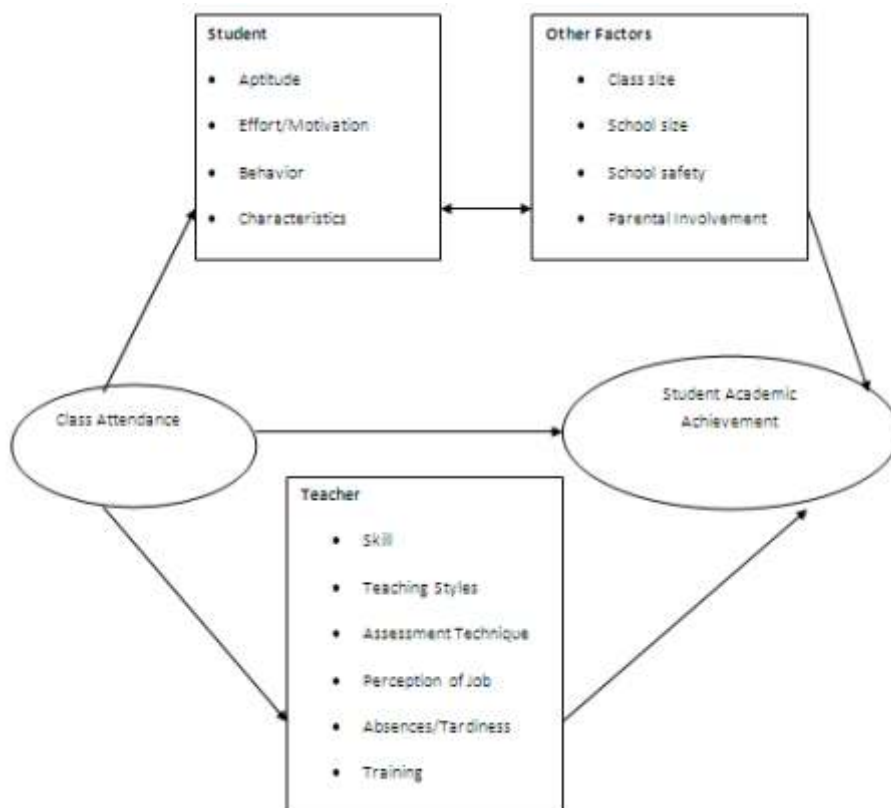


Fig 3: Visual Representation among Constructs.



Statement of the Problem

The researcher has investigated series of administrative problems affecting students' academic performance. Some identified factors include poor instructional quality, students' negative attitude to school, overcrowded classrooms, poor facilities in schools. From the experience of the researcher, student attendance is low in rural and higy populated urban schools. Teachers are in school, while most learners, students are at home. During examination period, there is 100% attendance in school. Examination oriented attendance student, by nature depends on the knowledge of the regular attendance students or enter examination hall with prepared materials which are types of examination malpractice. In recent times, rural, riverine students perform high in external certificate examinations in which continuous assessment is part of the overall grade. This unscientific performance calls to mind certain questions. Does attendance in school and at lesson has no influence on students' academic performance? What is the correlation between attendance and academic performance of students in secondary schools .

Aims:

The researcher intended to establish the relationship between student school absenteeism and academic performance .

Objectives Of The Study

Objectives that guided the study:

- i.To assess student school attendance pattern.
- ii. To find out the effect of student school non-attendance on academic performance.

Research Design

The study used descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey designs are used in preliminary and exploratory studies together information, summarize, present and interpret for purpose of clarification. On the other hand, Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) gave the purpose of descriptive research as determining and reporting the way things are. According Borg and Gall (1989) descriptive survey is intended to produce statistical information about aspects of education that interest policy makers and educators.

Students School Attendance

The first objective was to establish student attendance pattern. The Likert scale with four points rating was used to describe students' school attendance patterns in secondary schools. Latterly, the same scale was also used to determine the effects of absenteeism in the school based on how the respondents were describing performance.

Results

Table 1: Students' School Attendance Patterns

Variables	N	%
Early in term	87	60.0
Middle in term	21	14.0
Late in term	37	26.0
Total	145	100

Information on table 1 shows that majority of 87 (60%) respondents observed that there is high student absenteeism early in the term. On the other hand, during the middle and the late of the term, 37 (26%) respondents. Eshiwani (1986) noted that most schools loose many teaching/ learning hours at the beginning of the term, this wastage leads to less work being covered and syllabi not being completed on time hence leads to poor performance . This shows that there was high students absenteeism in the beginning of the term a cross secondary schools. Generally the findings are in agreement with studies by Eshiwani (ibid).

Table2: Class mostly affected by Absenteeism

Variables	N	%
Form 1	14	09.65
For 2	84	57.93
Form 3	29	20.00
Form 4	18	12.42
Total	145	100

Information from Table 2 shows that the most affected class is the form two, with 84 respondents, who are 58 percent, followed by form three with 29 respondents, who are 20 percent. On contrary, form one class reported the least students absenteeism cases compared to the rest of the classes, with only 14 (9.65%) respondents. This shows that majority of students who attend school irregularly are from form two classes. Therefore, if possible there is need to establish the cause of absenteeism especially in form two classes.

Table 3: Descriptive Table on School Attendance

Variables	N	Mean	SD
classes mostly affected	40	2.1	0.67
classes mostly affected	40	1.3	0.66

In the table 3 above, poor students' school attendance affects mostly form two and three classes in secondary schools. The mean of school attendance in across the classes is 2.1 with a standard deviation of 0.67. This indicates that there is relatively high inconsistency of student's school attendance across the

classes.

Table 4: Average Students School Absenteeism

Total school days	N	Mean	SD
50.00	8.43	220	4.32
Total	8.43	220	4.32

The findings from the Table 4 through documentary analysis show that secondary schools students miss classroom on an average of 8 days per term, with an average of 28 days per year, this suggests that absenteeism rate in secondary schools is approximately 15.6 percent. In comparison, absenteeism some cities in USA is 30% (Fox & Levin, 1999) which is twice in study area. Therefore, if measures are not taken to reduce this problem, absenteeism will resemble that of USA. Thus, this suggests that there is high number of absenteeism in secondary schools.

Correlation Between Student's School Attendance And Academic Performance

There is clear evidence that students school attendance regularly are linked to better academic performance, this is according 86.6% of the respondents. Only 13.3% reported that student's school absenteeism had no impact on academic performance.

Table 5: Relationship between students school Attendance and academic Performance

		Absent days	Grade
Absent days	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.448
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	220	
Grade	Pearson Correlation	-0.448	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	220	

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Pearson 2 tailed correlation were carried out for eight schools in Central India. The mean grades for previous exams and attendance pattern from the register in the same period. The results in table illustrate that the relationship between student's absenteeism and academic performance was strong and negative (though significant at the 10% level). This implies that absenteeism was likely to influence student's academic performance negatively, in unison to that Studies by Nicholas (2003), which established strong negative correlation among language, math and reading scores and yearly average absence, Thus from the table, standardized test scores vary inversely with average yearly absence.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION :

This study attempted to establish the relationship between student school attendance and academic performance. The findings revealed that there is relative low student's school attendance. Nevertheless, the study also found that there is strong negative correlation between student school attendance and academic performance. As evidenced in table 10 in chapter four, students ought to make an effort to attend school regularly in order for them to achieve high academic performance as measured by class tests and examinations. Nicholas (2002) established a linkage between class attendance patterns and learner academic performance corroborates this observation. Majority of secondary schools in Central India have relied on punishment as mean of eradicating absenteeism, but this have yielded less, according to Sauers, McVay and Deppa (2005), they emphasized that positive reinforcement of school attendance is better, since it enhance good environment for learning, further he elaborate that class attendance alone does not guarantee that learning will take place.

Having found a high negative significant relationship between absenteeism and academic performance, as educators, we feel challenged to identify measures that will encourage class attendance. School administration should establish proper ways of overcoming this problem of absenteeism; students should be informed of the realistic relationship between class attendance and academic performance.

The relationship between attendance and academic performance of students in secondary schools is fairly and positively correlated that is attendance influences academic performances. Twenty-two percentage academic performances is influence by attendance. There is a difference in the relationship between attendance and

academic performance among urban, semi-urban and rural schools. An increase in attendance score will also increase academic performance as shown from the results of this study. School administrators should supervise adequately the keeping and utilization of attendance registers for effective control of student for higher academic performance. This is possible because, attendance records will help parent, ministry of education

officials and researchers identify other factors affecting students' academic performance and discipline in schools.

The following approaches have been shown to improve attendance rates, but utilized less rigorous evaluation methodologies:

- Mediation and problem solving. Working with families and school representatives to identify the causes of attendance problems and reaching mutually agreeable resolutions with the assistance of a trained mediator has some evidence for its effectiveness in decreasing truancy.
- Family involvement. Conducting family workshops focused on improving school attendance and connecting parents with school contact persons. Home visits and incentives were found to be related to reductions in chronic truancy.
- Multifaceted approach. Integrating school and community resources such as case management and Truancy Reduction Program officers to improve student attendance rates.
- Staged approach (works best with chronic truants). A series of intervention approaches that intensify with each successive stage of a student's truancy leading to court intervention as the last resort.
- Cognitive-based therapy. Teaching students relaxation techniques, introducing psychoeducation, and

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gradually reintroducing them to school settings. Teaching parents contingency management and how to establishing routines in addition to creating incentive structures to reward positive behaviors.

- Relationship-based interventions (works best for students at-risk of dropping out of school). Engaging students through weekly relationship building sessions between students and monitors.

Individualized treatments. Assigning treatment approaches on an individual basis in order to best address the students' needs and reasons for missing school.

- **School-wide, ongoing interventions.** Establishing ongoing truancy intervention programs for schools that target all students.

- **Attendance groups.** Teacher activities such as setting a good attendance example, creating a pleasant classroom environment, classroom attendance reward system, and individualizing student work. In addition, improving group members' attitudes towards school attendance to encourage genuine engagement in classes, thus increasing attendance rates

The study suggests that schools are more likely to improve student attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism with three broad strategies: (a) taking a comprehensive approach to attendance with activities that involve students, families, and the community; (b) using more positive involvement activities than negative or punishing activities; and (c) sustaining a focus on improving attendance over time. We explore these strategies for their implications for improving practice.

a. Attendance improves when schools take comprehensive approaches to family and community involvement. This means conducting a variety of activities that involve students, parents, and community partners in support of good attendance. Two effective activities used by schools in this study focused students' attention on their own attendance: (a) giving them awards for improving their attendance and (b) referring them to counselors to discuss attendance problems. Four activities focused on parents' roles in helping students attend school every day and on time: (a) communicating effectively about attendance with diverse families, (b) providing a school contact person for parents to call, (c) conducting workshops, and (d) conducting home visits. One activity involved links with the community: using counselor to work with problem students and their families

b. Attendance improves when schools implement positive activities that support good attendance and effective home-school connections. Most of the effective involvement activities were designed to improve school-to-home and home-to-school communications, and to recognize positive attendance results. Communicating effectively about attendance with all parents, providing a school contact person for parents to call, and rewarding students for improved attendance are three activities that were consistently associated with increasing average daily attendance and reducing chronic absence.

c. These supportive activities give a human quality to corrective action. For example, when parents have clear information about school attendance policies and the importance of attendance for student report card grades and classroom learning, more parents may convey messages to their children about the importance of school and good attendance. When families feel that the school cares enough to provide them with the telephone number of a responsive contact person (whether they ever call that person or

not), fewer parents may keep students home from school for family reasons. Such activities are more likely to have positive consequences for attendance than punitive approaches such as assigning truant students to group homes or threatening parents with fines or jail terms if their children are chronically absent (Henderson, 1999; Simmons & Farabaugh, 1999).

Awards to students. Several school practices that targeted students directly were effective in reducing chronic absenteeism and increasing daily attendance rates. Schools that rewarded students for improved attendance (e.g., parties, gift certificates, or recognition at assemblies) reported positive changes in attendance from year to year. After schools' prior levels of attendance were controlled, targeted awards were associated with higher rates of daily attendance and lower rates of chronic absenteeism. It may be that official recognition of improved attendance motivates some students to attend school more regularly. The four activities focused on parents role in helping students to attend the school every day

1. Communications with families. The degree to which schools overcame the challenge of communicating effectively with diverse groups of families was related to gains in student attendance and declines in chronic absenteeism. This finding at the elementary school level confirms research that found that high schools' communications with families about attendance increased student attendance and reduced chronic absenteeism (Roderick et al., 1997). Epstein (1995) argued that communicating with families is a basic obligation of all schools. In this study, we found that elementary schools that effectively fulfill this obligation with all families (e.g., families who do not speak English at home and families whose students have serious attendance problems) make significant gains in attendance.

2. School contacts for families. Another consistently effective practice was providing families with a school contact person with whom to discuss attendance or other issues. Giving parents the name and telephone number of at least one person who is officially designated to discuss attendance issues may help parents guide students to more regular attendance. Establishing a two-way channel of communication between families and schools appears to be an important partnership activity related to student attendance

3. Workshops for parents. Workshops on attendance and related matters were associated with increases in average daily attendance and decreases in chronic absenteeism. The finding is interesting because survey respondents perceived that workshops for parents were less effective than other practices for improving student attendance. The attendance data, however, suggest that schools may consider workshops that are specifically about attendance policies, procedures, and consequences as one way among others to help increase daily attendance rates. Because only a few schools conducted targeted workshops, this strategy needs more attention in studies with larger samples of schools.

4. Activities That Affect Rates of Chronic Absenteeism Only Home visits. When schools reached out to families and educators made home visits, they reported decreases in the percentage of students who were chronically absent. Although apparently effective for dealing with chronic absenteeism, the use of home visits did not appear to affect daily attendance rates. It is possible that educators visit only the homes of students who have severe attendance problems. In sum, comparisons of the effects of involvement activities on daily attendance and chronic absenteeism suggest that some practices may be more effective than others for specific attendance outcomes. Four activities affected both attendance outcomes: giving

student's awards, communicating well with all families, assigning parents a contact person at school, and offering after-school programs were predictive of improvements in both attendance measures. Other activities affected one, but not the other, attendance outcome. The use of truant officers, referrals to counselors, and parent workshops were significantly associated with the improvement of daily attendance rates, but not with chronic absence. Home visits decreased rates of chronic absenteeism, but did not affect rates of daily attendance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Learning and an enjoyable experience, provided if the school is successful in creating such atmosphere, where the students are attracted towards it. Here the role of the teachers is very important. Teachers should be role models and should act as a friend, philosopher and guide.
2. Some students do not come to the school due to the arrogant nature of the teachers'. Encouragement and motivation is very important from teachers.
3. Absenteeism greatly depends upon the lack of interest in studies. Teachers may play a major role in creating interest in studies.
4. Parents and teachers must motivate at each and every levels in students life.
5. A Positive attitude may develop interest in the learning process

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