

Research Paper

Gender difference in Vocational Interest and Intelligence among High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Vocational interest is characterized by individual's preference for certain career choices, activities or behaviours. By the time children reach high school they tend to develop preferences for certain careers or work which guides their choice of subject and the kind of career they make. Intelligence has been seen as an overall capacity to be able to think logically and act according to situational demands to adjust effectively. The growth of male and females doesn't take place with the same pace and therefore it is likely to observe differences between males and females' psychology. The present study aimed to investigate gender differences in vocational interest and intelligence between male and female high school students. To materialize this aim, a total of 60 high school students (30 males, 30 females) were selected in the sample and divided in two groups as per their gender. Their vocational interest was measured by Interest Inventory developed by Bureau of Psychology and Intelligence was measured by Verbal intelligence test (Bureau of psychology test no 14) and Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices. The findings of the study indicated that males and female high school students differed in vocational interest on some dimensions. Male students had shown more interest in Computational and Scientific areas whereas female students shown more interest in Outdoor, Artistic and Clerical areas compared to their counterparts. The two groups also differed significantly in their intelligence. Male students scored higher on verbal intelligence compared to females, but there was no significant difference in nonverbal intelligence of the two groups. The findings are discussed in light of existing literature. It is concluded that male and female high school students differ on their vocational intelligence and intelligence. Identifying individual differences especially with regard to gender, may help counsellors to provide guidance to the students as per their interest and potential.

Keywords: Vocational Interest, Intelligence, Gender difference, Career Choices, High School, Individual difference

Vocational interests reflect the degree to which individuals prefer certain career choices, activities or behaviours which may be common for various positions. Therefore, vocational interest can be understood as characteristic likes or dislikes a

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person has regarding different occupations or types of work, usually conceptualized as a small set of basic dimensions, such as Holland's six-fold taxonomy of Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional vocational interests.

Vocational interests are non-cognitive constructs defined as relatively stable individual preferences for certain types of work (Harmon et al., 1994). An early *meta*-analysis ranked interests second of 11 predictors relative to their predictive potential (Hunter & Hunter, 1984).

By the time children reach high school they tend to develop preferences for certain careers or work which guides their choice of subject and the kind of career they make. It is essential that children chose right careers as per their interest and potential. This is likely to result in higher success rate in one's career. Therefore, it is important for teachers as well as counsellors to assess vocational interest of children and provide guidance in the right direction.

There are various methods of measuring interests, such as interviews, checklists, direct observations, questionnaires and inventories. The popular methods for measuring interests continue to be questionnaires and inventories. The most commonly used interest inventories are - The Strong Vocational Interest Blank, The Kuder Preference Record, P.S.M. Inventory, Chatterjee's Non-language Preference Record Form, R.R Singh's Interest Record Card, and The Thurstone Interest Schedule.

The concept of intelligence goes back to the Latin verb '*intellegere*', meaning the acquirement, processing and storage of information. This perspective limits intelligence to a person's cognitive and mental abilities. The first comprehensive definition of intelligence was given by Wechsler who is also pioneer of development of intelligence tests. Wechsler defined intelligence as "*the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally and to deal effectively with his environment*" (Wechsler, 1944).

Initially, intelligence was believed to include 2 factors - g (general mental ability) and s (specific ability) or to be of 2 types - fluid and crystalized intelligence. Later, theorists like Thurstone, Guilford, and Gardner emphasized on existence of multiple factors of intelligence. Advancement in research and statistics with the introduction of Factor Analysis, provided evidence for the multifactor theories of intelligence.

The first attempt of measurement of intelligence was made by Sir Francis Galton who tried to measure intelligence based on physical attributes, which did not prove to be a valid measure. The more scientific method of measurement of intelligence was started by Binet who along with his colleague Simon developed the first test of intelligence for assessment of intelligence of children for screening of children who were likely to face academic problems. The Binet- Simon test was later renamed as Stanford Binet Test and currently its 5th version (Stanford Binet 5) is being used. After few years, Wechsler developed intelligence tests for adults which is known as Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) and currently its 4th edition WAIS-IV is in use.

In addition to these, there are many intelligence tests which tap only specific aspect of intelligence (verbal or performance) like - Raven' Progressive Matrices (nonverbal), Bhatia

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Battery of Performance Intelligence etc. Intelligence tests can be broadly categorized into three categories - verbal, non-verbal, and performance tests.

Verbal tests use language. It is necessary that the person undergoing the test knows the language of the test. Therefore, verbal tests cannot be administered on people who speak different language or are from different culture. Most tests of intelligence include verbal subtests.

Nonverbal tests as the name suggest doesn't use language. Therefore, even if the person doesn't know the language or have speech impairment can undergo nonverbal tests. Since language is not use, such tests are suitable for use with diverse population of different culture and thus called *culture fair test*. Example of nonverbal test include – Raven's Progressive Matrices.

Performance tests on the other hand require the person to perform certain tasks designed to measure intelligence. Though the nature of tasks is not verbal but the instruction requires use of language. Therefore, performance tests can be conducted on people who know the language of the test.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies on vocational interest have found vocational interest to be a significant predictor of job success and performance. For example, Van Iddekinge et al. (2011a) conducted an updated *meta-analysis* across 74 studies and found mean validities of 0.14 against job performance, 0.26 for training performance, -0.19 for turnover intentions, and -0.15 for actual turnover. Furthermore, in a primary study, Van Iddekinge et al. (2011b) found that vocational interests show incremental validity over cognitive ability and personality for predicting job performance factors.

Studies related to gender difference in Vocational interest

Hoff and his co-authors (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of 49 longitudinal studies on vocational interests to explore when gender disparities emerge and how they change across different developmental periods from early adolescence to middle adulthood. The study utilized the typology developed by psychologist John Holland that classifies the working world into six vocational-interest categories. In examining patterns in vocational interests, they found significant gender disparities when youths were in middle school; however, males' and females' interest in occupations stereotypically associated with the opposite sex began to increase by late adolescence and continued through the participants' early 40s. They concluded that while males' and females' occupational interests diverge sharply during early adolescence, they converge as people age.

Andrei, Christopher, & Iliescu (2017) investigated the age and gender differences in the variability of Holland's six vocational dimensions with a sample including 1,519 participants, divided into four age groups: early adolescence (12–15 years old), adolescence (16–20 years old), young adulthood (21–30 years old), and adulthood (31–59 years old). The results showed nontrivial differences in the variability of vocational interests across gender and age groups alike. Although significant differences in variability were observed for all vocational interest dimensions except investigative, the most pronounced differences in variability across age and gender were observed for realistic and conventional dimensions.

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Su, Rounds, & Armstrong (2009) investigated the magnitude and variability of sex differences in vocational interest in a meta-analysis for Holland's (1959, 1997) categories (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional), Prediger's (1982) Things-People and Data-Ideas dimensions, and the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) interest areas. Results showed that men prefer working with things and women prefer working with people. Men showed stronger Realistic and Investigative interests, and women showed stronger Artistic, Social, and Conventional interests. Sex differences favouring men were also found for more specific measures of engineering, science, and mathematics interests.

However, there are a few studies which have found no gender difference in vocational interest of boys and girls.

For example - Mustata Andreea- Elena (2014) studied the role of gender in the formation of vocational interests and career orientation during adolescence. The study was based on Holland's theory of vocational interests and Schein's theory of career anchors. The sample comprised of eighty-four pupils in the 12th grade, forty boys and forty-four girls. The results indicated that there were no gender differences regarding vocational interests or career orientation, neither at global level nor on either of the dimensions described by the authors of the theories which form the base of the study.

We can see that there are mixed findings related to gender difference in vocational interest.

Studies related to gender difference in Intelligence

Sex differences in human intelligence have been a topic of long debate among researchers and professionals. Most psychologists now believe that there are no significant sex differences in general intelligence (Hunt & Earl 2010; Halpern & Diane, 2001) although ability in particular types of intelligence does appear to vary slightly on average (Mackintosh, 2011).

The consensus view is that there is no sex difference in general intelligence. To test this view Richard Lynn (1994) examined the literature and found the consensus view to be wrong. The author reported that- among adults, males have slightly higher verbal and reasoning abilities than females and a more pronounced superiority on spatial abilities. If the three abilities are combined to form general intelligence, the mean for males is 4 IQ points higher than the mean for females. Among children up to the age of around 14 year the sex differences are smaller because girls mature earlier than boys. The author concluded that evolutionary selection pressures are responsible for greater intelligence in males.

In their study Hyde & Shibley (2006) found that females have been performing slightly better in verbal fluency, specifically in vocabulary and reading comprehension and significantly higher in speech production and essay writing. On the other hand, males have been specifically found to perform better in spatial visualization, spatial perception, and mental rotation. However, none of these findings suggest an advantage for either sex in general intelligence.

While comparing self-estimated intelligence (SEI) between males and females it has also been noted by some researchers that males tend to provide systematically higher estimates of their intelligence than females (Reilly, Neumann & Andrews, 2022).

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In a study comparing the verbal and nonverbal abilities of children Toivainen et al., (2017) found Small sex differences in non-verbal and verbal abilities across development. - female advantage in both non-verbal and verbal abilities at ages 2, 3 and 4 while male advantage in verbal abilities at ages 10 and 12.

Another study conducted by Barel & Tzischinsky (2018) on three hundred and twenty six children and adults exploring the developmental patterns of sex differences in verbal and visuospatial abilities found sex differences in verbal fluency, with girls and women outperforming boys and men in this task.

From the above studies it can be inferred that females tend to perform better on verbal tasks while males tend to outperform in visuospatial tasks.

Need of the Study

In order to provide right guidance to children it is important to understand individual differences of the child. Many of the differences occur simply because of the gender. Studying the pattern of differences in the two genders will allow the counsellors to provide right guidance keeping the differences in mind.

In the literature, there is a mixed finding related to gender differences in vocational interest. Also, there exists a controversy on the superiority of male vs female in their intelligence. There are two body of thoughts – the first body of thought states that there is a difference between male and females in their intelligence, with male/female being superior to counterparts. The second line of thought believes in equality and posits that there is no difference in males and females.

The present study is required investigate the nature of differences in vocational interest and intelligence comparing male and female high school students.

Aim

- To study gender difference in Vocational Interest and Intelligence among High school students.

Objectives

- To study and compare vocational interest of male and female High school students.
- To study and compare Intelligence of male and female High school students.

Hypotheses

- Male and female High school students will differ in their Vocational interest
- There will be significant difference in Intelligence between male and female High school students

METHOD

Research Design – Between Group Design (Two Group Design)

Sample

The sample consisted of a total of 60 participants who were studying in high school in government intermediate college in Prayagraj. The sample was divided into two groups based on their gender. The first group comprised of 30 male high school students while the

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second group comprised of 30 female high school students. Participants were selected in the sample using simple random sampling.

Measures

Interest Inventory – This inventory was developed by Bureau of Psychology, Prayagraj. The inventory comprises of a total of 250 items divided in 5 parts with each part having 50 items. Items are designed to measure vocational interest of students in 10 areas –

1. Outdoor
2. Mechanical
3. Computational
4. Scientific
5. Persuasive
6. Artistic
7. Literary
8. Musical
9. Social Services
10. Clerical

The inventory is suitable for use with 10th and 12th grade students for identifying their vocational interest. Test-retest reliability of the interest inventory ranges between .51 to .67 for different domains. Mechanical domain has highest reliability (.67) while musical domain has lowest but acceptable level of reliability (.51). Content validity of the test has been found to be satisfactory.

Verbal Intelligence Test (Bureau of Psychology Test no 14) – This is a 100-item test of verbal intelligence. The test was developed at Bureau of Psychology and suitable for verbal intelligence of class 10th students. It takes 1 hour to complete the test. It has satisfactory reliability and validity.

Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM) – The Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM) is part of the series of Raven's Progressive Matrices that are designed to assess nonverbal intelligence of children and adults through abstract reasoning tasks. The SPM can be administered individually or in group. It is typically a 60-item test used in measuring abstract reasoning and regarded as a non-verbal estimate of fluid intelligence. Many patterns are presented in the form of a 6×6, 4×4, 3×3, or 2×2 matrix, giving the test its name. All of the questions on the Raven's progressives consist of visual geometric design with a missing piece. The test taker is given six choices to pick from before filling in the missing piece.

The SPM is appropriate for use with children and adults between ages 8-65. There are 5 sets of 12 items each (60 in total), with each item becoming progressively more difficult. These are black and white. The test is untimed but generally takes 15-45 minutes and results in a raw score which is then converted to a percentile ranking. Since it is a nonverbal test, the test can be given to hearing and speech-impaired children, as well as non-English speakers. The test-retest validity of SPM ranges between .69 to .85 which indicates good reliability of the test. The validity studies of SPM have noted Cronbach's alpha ranging between .88 to .93 which again is indicative of very good validity of the test.

Procedure

The study was conducted in two Government Intermediate Colleges (GIC) of Prayagraj. A sample of students were randomly taken in sample. Permission was obtained from principal

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and the consent was taken from parents. The participants were given instruction for the test and test was conducted in a group. After completion of the, task the answer sheets were taken back and responses were analysed and scoring was done. Once scores were available, the data was analysed statistically.

Data Analysis

First descriptive statistics (Mean & SD) was computed to describe the data. Thereafter, inferential statistics were applied. The statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS version 20. t-test was used compare the means in order to study gender difference.

RESULTS

The results of the present study are presented under following section –

- Comparison of vocational Interest between male and female high school students
- Comparison of Intelligence (Verbal and Non-verbal) between male and female high school students

1. Comparison of Vocational Interest

Table 1. Number of Male and Female students with various types of Vocational Interest

S. No.	Vocational Interest	Group 1 (Males)	Group 2 (Females)
1	Outdoor	12	15
2	Mechanical	1	1
3	Computational	3	2
4	Scientific	6	4
5	Persuasive	1	0
6	Artistic	1	2
7	Literary	1	1
8	Musical	3	3
9	Social Service	1	1
10	Clerical	0	1

Table 1 indicates that male and female high school students differed in their vocational interest especially in certain interest areas like – Outdoor, Computational, Scientific, Artistic and Clerical. Male students had shown more interest in Computational and Scientific areas in comparison to female counterparts. Whereas female students shown more interest in Outdoor, Artistic and Clerical areas compared to males.

The same is depicted through the graph below –

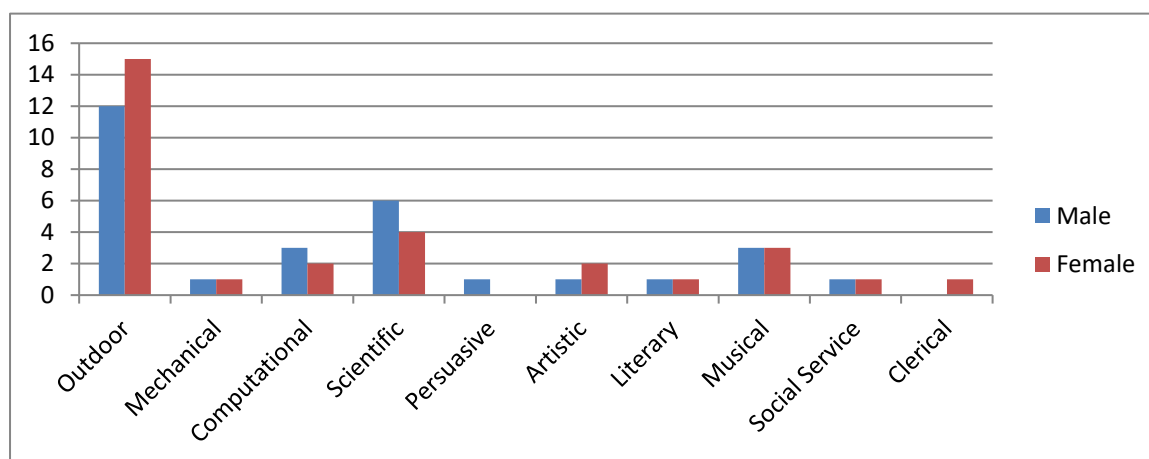


Figure 1. Graph representing Vocational Interest of Male and Female High school students

2. Comparison of Intelligence

Table 2. Comparison of Intelligence between Male and Female High school Students

Measures	Male (n ₁ =30)		Female (n ₂ =30)		t-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Verbal Intelligence	34.87	13.44	23.97	11.23	3.408**
Non-verbal Intelligence	38.97	11.41	37.70	7.96	0.499

** $p < 0.001$

Table 2 indicates that male and female high school students differed in their scores on intelligence test. The difference was significant in verbal intelligence, with males scoring higher than female high school students. Males scored slightly better on the test of non-verbal intelligence too but the difference was not statistically significant, indicating that the difference noted might have occurred due to chance.

A comparison of performance on intelligence is also depicted through the graph below -

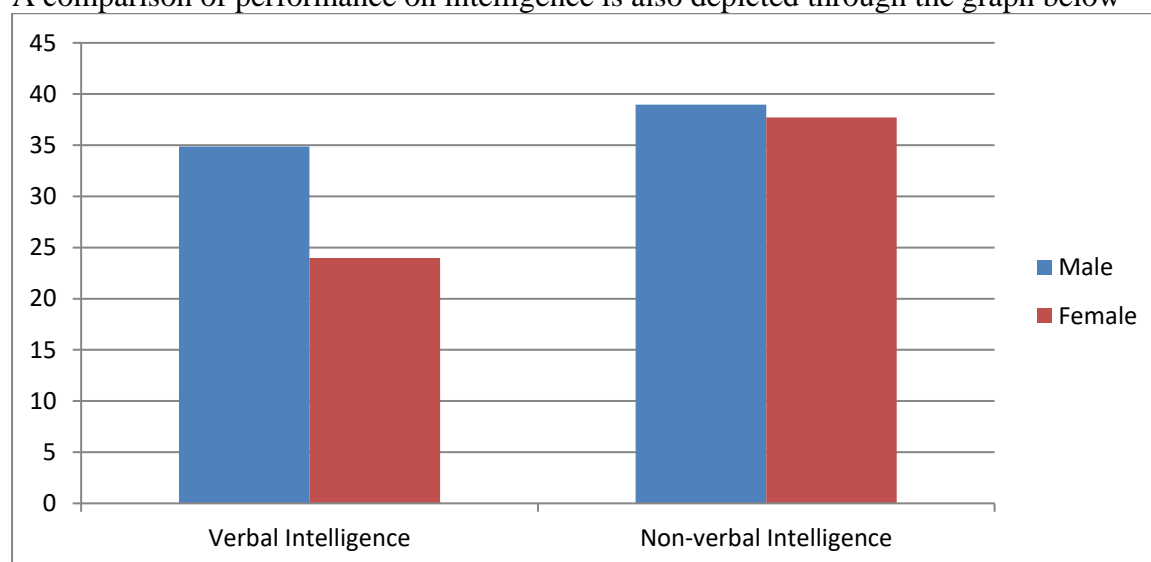


Figure 1. Graph representing Verbal and Non-verbal Intelligence of Male and Female High school students

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to study gender difference in Vocational Interest and Intelligence among High school students. To materialize this aim following objectives were formulated to be achieved through this study: To study and compare vocational interest of male and female High school students and, To study and compare Intelligence of male and female High school students. It was hypothesized that – 1. Male and female High school students will differ in their Vocational Interest and, 2. There will be significant difference in Intelligence between male and female High school students. In keeping with the objectives, a cross sectional study was designed with a total of 60 participants (30 male and 30 female high school students). The two groups were similar in their age and level of education. Their vocational interest was measured using Interest Inventory and Intelligence was measured using Bureau of Psychology Test no 14 (Verbal Intelligence) and Standard Progressive Matrices (non-verbal Intelligence). The data was first checked for homogeneity using Levene’s Test and was found to be homogeneous. Therefore, parametric test (t-test) was used for comparing means. SPSS version 20 was used for analysing data.

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The results of the present study are discussed under following heads –

- Gender difference in Vocational Interest among High school students
- Gender difference in Intelligence among High school students

Gender difference in Vocational Interest among High school students

The result of the present study showed that male high school students had more interest in Computational and Scientific areas in comparison to female counterparts. Whereas female students had more interest in Outdoor, Artistic and Clerical areas compared to males. Higher interest of females in outdoor area is a new finding and may indicate that females are now developing interest in areas which were previously considered to be dominated by men.

The finding that male and female high school students differed in their vocational interest support our first hypothesis. The finding of the present study is generally in line with previous researches e.g., Hoff et al., (2018) who using Holland's vocational interests found significant gender disparities in vocational interest when youths were in middle school.

The finding is also in lines with the research of Andrei, Christopher, & Iliescu (2017) who studied the age and gender differences in the variability of Holland's six vocational dimensions and found significant differences in variability for all vocational interest dimensions except investigative, the most pronounced differences in variability across age and gender were observed for realistic and conventional dimensions.

In the present study, though the difference was found on some dimensions of vocational interest, there was no difference in dimensions of Mechanical, Literary, Musical, and Social Service. This finding is supported by the research of Mustata Andreea- Elena (2014) who studied the role of gender in the formation of vocational interests and career orientation during adolescence and found no gender differences regarding vocational interests or career orientation.

Gender difference in Intelligence among High school students

The second finding of the present study is that male and female high school students differed in their intelligence supports our second hypothesis. In the present study, it was found that males performed better on verbal intelligence compared to females while there was no significant difference in their non-verbal intelligence.

This finding is generally contrary to the findings documented in literature. Most studies have previously noted that females tend to perform better on verbal tests compared to males. For example, Hyde & Shibley (2006) found that females have been performing slightly better in verbal fluency, specifically in vocabulary and reading comprehension and significantly higher in speech production and essay writing. Similar finding was reported by Barel & Tzischinsky (2018) who explored the developmental patterns of sex differences in verbal and visuospatial abilities and found sex differences in verbal fluency, with girls and women outperforming boys and men in this task.

However, there are a few studies which partially supports the finding of the present study. For example, Richard Lynn (1994) after examining the literature reported that- among adults, males have slightly higher verbal and reasoning abilities than females and a more pronounced superiority on spatial abilities. If the three abilities are combined to form general intelligence, the mean for males is 4 IQ points higher than the mean for females. Among

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children up to the age of around 14 year the sex differences are smaller because girls mature earlier than boys.

Though the present study has documented superior intelligence of male high school students especially in the area of verbal intelligence, the same is not fully supported by existing literature. Therefore, based on the findings of the present study we cannot resolve existing debate of gender differences in intelligence.

CONCLUSION

The present study investigated gender difference in vocational interest and intelligence among high school students who were studying in government Intermediate Colleges (GIC). The findings of the study indicated that male students had more interest in Computational and Scientific areas in comparison to female counterparts. Whereas female students shown more interest in Outdoor, Artistic and Clerical areas compared to males. The two groups also differed in their intelligence. Contrary to literature, findings of the current study indicated that males were high in their verbal intelligence compared to females but no significant difference was found in nonverbal intelligence between the two genders. It can be concluded that the two genders differ in their vocational interest and intelligence.

Implications

1. The findings of the study will help understand the individual differences among children and adolescents in a better way especially those which are occurring due to difference in gender.
2. Understanding the gender differences in vocational interest and intelligence, the counsellors will be able to utilize this information in counselling children and will be able to better guide them as per their choices and abilities.
3. The study will pave way for future researches in this direction.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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