

# Impact of Influencer Collaborations on Consumer Perception in the Eyewear Industry: Lenskart Versus Competitors

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study examines the impact of influencer collaborations on consumer perception, trust, and purchase intention in the Indian eyewear industry, with a comparative focus on Lenskart and other organized eyewear competitors. The research aims to understand how influencer credibility, content formats, and emotional engagement shape consumer attitudes toward eyewear brands.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** A cross-sectional, quantitative-dominant research design supported by qualitative content analysis was adopted. Primary data were collected through a structured online survey administered to 150 digitally active consumers aged 18–35 years using a 5-point Likert scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.84$ ). A non-probability convenience and snowball sampling technique was employed. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, independent sample t-tests/ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis with SPSS. Qualitative insights were obtained through systematic content analysis of influencer campaigns across major social media platforms.

**Findings/Result:** The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between influencer trust and brand perception ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Regression analysis indicates that influencer trust and brand perception significantly influence purchase intention ( $R^2 = 0.38$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Lenskart demonstrated higher brand recall, influencer trust, and social relatability compared to competing eyewear brands. Short-form video content, particularly Instagram Reels, was found to be most effective in enhancing visual appeal, while long-form reviews strengthened functional trust. The results suggest that emotionally engaging and authentic influencer content significantly enhances consumer confidence and loyalty.

**Originality/Value:** This study contributes to existing literature by offering a comparative, industry-specific analysis of influencer marketing effectiveness in the Indian eyewear sector—a high-involvement product category that combines functional and fashion attributes. By integrating quantitative consumer data with qualitative content analysis, the research provides actionable insights for eyewear brands seeking to optimize influencer strategies and strengthen digital consumer engagement.

**Keywords:** Influencer marketing, consumer perception, eyewear industry, Lenskart, brand trust, purchase intention, social media influencers

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Context

The eyewear industry has undergone a significant transformation over the past decade, evolving from a

purely functional necessity into a fashion-oriented lifestyle product that reflects individual personality and self-expression. With the rapid growth of digitalization and social media platforms, eyewear brands have increasingly shifted their marketing strategies from traditional advertising to influencer collaborations in order to shape consumer perceptions more effectively.

In the Indian market, Lenskart has emerged as a leading player by adopting a digital-first and influencer-driven marketing approach. Through extensive collaborations with social media influencers and content creators, the brand has positioned eyewear as an affordable, fashionable, and technology-enabled product. In contrast, other major organized eyewear competitors in India have adopted influencer marketing strategies with comparatively varied levels of digital engagement and consumer resonance.

The rise of social commerce and the increasing trust consumers place in digital influencers have further transformed brand–consumer communication. Consumers no longer rely solely on brand-generated advertising; instead, they actively seek authentic opinions, reviews, and recommendations from influencers they follow. As a result, influencer marketing has evolved into a multi-billion-dollar global industry, with eyewear brands investing heavily in collaborations with celebrities, macro-influencers, and micro-influencers to enhance visibility and credibility.

Despite the widespread adoption of influencer marketing, its effectiveness in shaping consumer perception, brand credibility, and purchase intention within the eyewear industry remains an important area of academic inquiry. While Lenskart has successfully established a strong digital presence and high consumer engagement, many competitors exhibit relatively lower engagement levels despite implementing similar promotional strategies. This study seeks to examine the impact of influencer collaborations on consumer perception in the eyewear industry by comparatively analyzing Lenskart and its major organized competitors.

## **1.2 Significance of the Study**

### **1.2.1 Importance of Influencer Marketing in the Eyewear Industry**

Eyewear represents a high-involvement product category, as purchase decisions are influenced by both functional considerations—such as comfort, prescription accuracy, and lens quality—and symbolic considerations, including style, brand image, and social identity. Unlike fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs), eyewear purchases involve a higher level of perceived risk, particularly in online settings.

Influencers play a critical role in reducing this perceived risk by visually demonstrating product usage, sharing personal experiences, and providing social validation. Through try-on videos, reviews, and styling content, influencers help consumers better evaluate eyewear products and build confidence in their purchasing decisions

### **1.2.2 Lenskart’s Market Position in Comparison to Competitors**

Lenskart has disrupted the Indian eyewear market by integrating influencer marketing into its core brand strategy. Key elements of this approach include collaborations with high-profile celebrities as well as micro-influencers, strong user-generated content initiatives, and a seamless omnichannel presence that connects digital influence with offline retail credibility.

In contrast, other organized eyewear competitors continue to rely more heavily on traditional advertising formats and limited influencer engagement, resulting in comparatively lower digital interaction and emotional connection with younger consumers. This study evaluates whether Lenskart’s influencer strategy is inherently more effective or whether similar approaches can be adapted by competitors to enhance consumer perception and engagement.

### 1.3 Research Problem

Despite the increasing use of influencer marketing across the eyewear sector, there is limited empirical research that quantitatively examines:

- The impact of influencer collaborations on consumer perception and brand credibility in the eyewear industry.
- The factors contributing to higher digital engagement for certain brands, such as Lenskart, compared to their competitors.
- The relative effectiveness of celebrity endorsements versus micro-influencer collaborations in influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intention.

### 1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze the role of influencer collaborations in shaping consumer perceptions of eyewear brands.
2. To compare the influencer marketing effectiveness of Lenskart with that of major organized eyewear competitors in India.
3. To evaluate the impact of different influencer tiers (celebrity, macro, and micro-influencers) on consumer engagement and purchase intention.
4. To assess the influence of consumer demographics such as age, gender, and location on receptiveness to influencer endorsements.

### 1.5 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do influencer collaborations influence brand trust and purchase intention in the eyewear industry?
2. What factors contribute to the higher effectiveness of Lenskart's influencer marketing strategy compared to its competitors?
3. Do consumers perceive influencer-endorsed eyewear brands as more credible and appealing than brands promoted through traditional advertising?
4. How does the type of influencer (celebrity versus micro-influencer) affect consumer perception and engagement?

### 1.6 Expected Contributions of the Study

This research is expected to make the following contributions:

- Provide practical insights for eyewear brands on optimizing influencer collaborations to enhance consumer perception and engagement.
- Assist competing eyewear brands in refining their digital marketing strategies to better compete with market leaders such as Lenskart.
- Contribute to academic literature on influencer marketing effectiveness in high-involvement and fashion-oriented product categories.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Influence

The academic understanding of influencer marketing is grounded in the psychology of persuasion and social influence. One of the most influential contributions in this area is Cialdini's (2007) principle of *Social Proof*, which explains that individuals often rely on the behavior and opinions of others when making decisions, particularly in situations characterized by uncertainty. In the context of the eyewear

industry—where frame selection is closely linked to social identity, appearance, and peer perception— influencers serve as reference points that reduce perceived social risk and guide consumer choice.

Extending this psychological foundation, the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model offers a structured framework for understanding consumer reactions to influencer content. Lim et al. (2017) applied this model to digital marketing, proposing that influencer-generated content functions as a *stimulus* that triggers emotional and cognitive evaluations within the consumer (*organism*), ultimately leading to behavioral outcomes such as brand search, purchase intention, or recommendation (*response*). This framework is particularly relevant for examining how influencer collaborations affect consumer perception and purchasing behavior in the eyewear sector.

## 2.2 The Evolution of Credibility and Trust in Influencer Marketing

Source credibility has long been recognized as a key determinant of persuasive communication effectiveness. Ohanian (2009) refined the Source Credibility Scale by identifying three core dimensions— *attractiveness*, *trustworthiness*, and *expertise*. While attractiveness contributes to visual appeal and brand desirability, expertise plays a critical role in high-involvement product categories such as eyewear, where consumers seek assurance regarding eye health, lens quality, and product reliability.

The nature of credibility has evolved with the rise of social media platforms. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) highlighted the shift from traditional one-way corporate communication to interactive, dialogue-based engagement facilitated by social media. This transition has altered consumer trust dynamics, with audiences increasingly perceiving influencers as more authentic and relatable than conventional brand spokespersons. Supporting this view, Munnukka et al. (2016) found that peer-like digital influencers often exert greater persuasive power than professional models, as they are perceived to be less commercially biased and more aligned with consumer interests.

## 2.3 Influencer Tiers: Celebrity Versus Micro-Influencers

A central debate in influencer marketing literature concerns the trade-off between reach and engagement. De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) demonstrated that although celebrity influencers offer extensive reach, micro-influencers tend to generate higher levels of brand likability and perceived authenticity due to their niche audiences and closer follower relationships. These findings suggest that influencer effectiveness is not solely dependent on follower count but on the quality of audience interaction.

Further empirical evidence by Schouten, Janssen, and Verspaget (2020) indicates that social media influencers are often perceived as more relatable than traditional celebrities. This relatability fosters what Kay, Mulcahy, and Kasabov (2020) describe as *parasocial relationships*, wherein consumers develop one-sided emotional bonds with influencers. Such relationships make brand endorsements—particularly for fashion-oriented products like eyewear—feel more like personal recommendations than commercial promotions, thereby enhancing persuasion effectiveness.

## 2.4 Platform Dynamics and the Role of Visual Content

The effectiveness of influencer marketing is also shaped by platform characteristics. Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu (2019) emphasized that Instagram’s visual-centric architecture makes it particularly effective for products tied to visual identity, such as eyewear. Visual demonstrations, styling content, and aesthetic presentation allow consumers to better imagine product usage and self-expression.

Comparative platform studies by Sokolova and Kefi (2020) reveal a functional distinction across social media channels. YouTube is more effective for high-involvement, informational content—such as detailed reviews explaining lens technology or eye-care features—while Instagram and short-form video platforms

are more influential in driving fashion-based and impulsive purchase decisions. Lou and Yuan (2019) further argue that influencer content must balance *informativeness* and *entertainment* to be effective. When influencers fail to communicate functional value, such as pricing benefits or virtual try-on features, conversion rates tend to decline.

### 2.5 Authenticity, Transparency, and Influencer Fatigue

As influencer marketing becomes increasingly saturated, authenticity has emerged as a critical concern. Audrezet, de Kerviler, and Moulard (2020) introduced the concept of *image congruity*, suggesting that influencer endorsements are effective only when there is alignment between the influencer's lifestyle and the promoted product. A mismatch can create an "authenticity gap," leading to consumer skepticism and diminished trust.

Campbell and Farrell (2020) further explain that influencer marketing delivers both psychological and social value by enabling consumers to feel fashionable and socially connected. Brown and Hayes (2008) conceptualize influencers as "market shapers" who actively define fashion norms and consumption criteria. However, recent research also highlights the risks associated with overexposure. Xiao et al. (2023) found that excessive brand endorsements by a single influencer can lead to influencer fatigue, negatively impacting brand equity and consumer trust.

### 2.6 Strategic Integration of Influencer Marketing in Emerging Markets

In emerging markets such as India, influencer marketing strategies increasingly emphasize omnichannel integration. Vrontis et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review and concluded that the most effective brands leverage influencers not only to drive online engagement but also to stimulate offline store visits, thereby bridging the digital-physical divide. This approach is particularly relevant for eyewear brands that combine online influence with in-store trials and consultations.

Leung et al. (2022) emphasize that as influencer marketing matures, *niche congruency* becomes a dominant driver of return on investment. Specialized influencers—such as technology-oriented content creators reviewing lens coatings or eye-care features—tend to be more persuasive than generic lifestyle influencers. Hudders and Lou (2023) further identified the "disclosure effect," noting that transparent sponsorship disclosures can enhance trust by signaling ethical professionalism. Similarly, Wang et al. (2022) found that vlog-based influencer content generates a higher sense of social presence, strengthening consumer trust. Recent studies by Belanche et al. (2024) and Masuda et al. (2022) demonstrate that emotional expression and real-time interaction reduce perceived purchase risk, while Ferreira et al. (2023) highlight the role of reward-driven engagement in short-form video content. Zhang and Xu (2024) conceptualize influencers as human brands, suggesting that consumers gravitate toward aspirational and competence-oriented influencers who reflect their ideal self-image.

### 2.7 Research Gap

Despite the extensive body of literature on influencer marketing, source credibility, and digital engagement, limited empirical research has examined the **comparative impact of influencer collaborations within the Indian eyewear industry**. Existing studies largely focus on general fashion or FMCG categories, with insufficient attention to high-involvement products such as eyewear that combine functional and aesthetic considerations. Moreover, few studies directly compare the influencer strategies of dominant digital-first brands and their organized competitors. Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to empirically analyze how influencer collaborations shape consumer perception, trust, and purchase intention in the Indian eyewear market.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative-dominant research design supported by qualitative content analysis to examine the impact of influencer collaborations on consumer perception in the eyewear industry. The primary emphasis is placed on quantitative methods to measure consumer attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intentions, while qualitative analysis is used to provide contextual understanding of influencer communication strategies and audience responses.

A comparative research framework is employed to analyze differences in influencer marketing effectiveness between Lenskart and major organized eyewear competitors in India. This approach enables a structured comparison of brand-wise influencer strategies and their influence on consumer trust, engagement, and purchase intention. The integration of quantitative and qualitative insights enhances the robustness of the findings through methodological triangulation without compromising statistical rigor.

#### 3.2 Target Population and Sampling Technique

The target population for this study comprises digital natives in India, specifically Generation Z and Millennials aged between 18 and 35 years. This demographic group was selected due to its high level of social media engagement and strong exposure to influencer-generated content, making it particularly relevant to fashion-oriented eyewear consumption.

A total of 150 valid responses were collected for the quantitative analysis. This sample size is considered sufficient to achieve a 95% confidence level with an approximate margin of error of 8%, which is acceptable for perception-based research in marketing studies.

A non-probability convenience and snowball sampling technique was employed. Initial respondents were contacted through social media platforms and professional networks, and they subsequently referred additional participants who met the predefined age and digital activity criteria. This sampling approach was selected due to its suitability for digitally active populations, time efficiency, and feasibility within resource constraints.

#### 3.3 Data Collection Methods

##### 3.3.1 Quantitative Data Collection

Primary quantitative data were collected using a structured online questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The survey instrument was designed to measure key constructs related to influencer marketing and consumer perception, including:

- Trust in influencers
- Perceived authenticity of influencer collaborations
- Brand image of Lenskart and its competitors
- Consumer engagement with influencer content
- Purchase intention and brand loyalty

Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*), enabling standardized measurement and suitability for statistical analysis.

##### 3.3.2 Qualitative Data Collection

To complement the quantitative findings, qualitative content analysis was conducted on influencer-generated content related to eyewear brands. This analysis focused on publicly available social media posts and did not involve direct participant interaction.

The qualitative component examined:

- Influencer posts promoting Lenskart and competing eyewear brands
- Engagement indicators such as likes, comments, and shares
- Consumer sentiment expressed in comment sections
- Types of influencer campaigns, including testimonial-based, discount-oriented, and lifestyle-oriented promotions

This method provided contextual insights into influencer communication styles, audience reactions, and brand positioning across digital platforms.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Prior to hypothesis testing, assumptions of normality and multicollinearity were examined and found to be within acceptable limits.

The following statistical techniques were employed:

- Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) to summarize respondent characteristics and overall perception trends
- Correlation analysis to assess relationships between influencer trust, brand perception, and purchase intention
- Regression analysis to evaluate the predictive impact of influencer collaborations on purchase intention
- Independent sample t-tests and ANOVA to compare consumer perceptions of Lenskart and competing eyewear brands

Qualitative content analysis findings were interpreted thematically to support and contextualize the quantitative results.

### 3.5 Validity and Reliability

#### 3.5.1 Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of respondents prior to full-scale data collection. Internal consistency of the Likert-scale items was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability.

#### 3.5.2 Validity

Validity was ensured through multiple measures:

- Content validity was established by aligning survey items with research objectives and relevant literature
- Construct validity was assessed through factor structure examination where applicable
- Triangulation of quantitative survey data and qualitative content analysis enhanced overall validity
- Care was taken to avoid leading or biased questions in the questionnaire design

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Objective of Data Analysis

The objective of this chapter is to empirically examine the influence of influencer collaborations on consumer trust, brand perception, purchase intention, and brand loyalty within the eyewear industry. The chapter also compares the relative effectiveness of Lenskart's influencer marketing strategy with that of

other major organized eyewear competitors in India. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted to derive meaningful and evidence-based insights.

## 4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

### 4.2.1 Demographic and Social Media Usage Profile

Descriptive statistical techniques were employed to summarize the demographic characteristics and digital behavior of the respondents.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 150)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25	72	48.0
	26–35	58	38.7
	Above 35	20	13.3
Gender	Male	78	52.0
	Female	72	48.0
Occupation	Student	54	36.0
	Working Professional	76	50.7
	Others	20	13.3

The data indicate a strong representation of digitally active young consumers, which aligns with the study’s focus on influencer-driven marketing and supports the relevance of the selected target population.

### 4.2.2 Social Media Platform Preference and Influencer Following

**Table 4.2: Social Media and Influencer Engagement Patterns**

Variable	Yes (%)	No (%)
Instagram used for eyewear discovery	84	16
Follows at least one lifestyle influencer	92	8
Follows official eyewear brand pages	22	78

The findings reveal a high dependence on Instagram as a primary platform for eyewear discovery. While a substantial majority of respondents follow lifestyle influencers, relatively few engage directly with brand-owned social media pages. This pattern supports the premise of human-centric branding, indicating that consumers perceive influencer communication as more relatable and credible than corporate messaging.

### 4.2.3 Effectiveness of Influencer Content Formats (“Visual Trust”)

**Table 4.3: Effectiveness of Influencer Content Formats**

Content Format	Effectiveness (%)	Primary Impact Dimension
Instagram Reels / Short Videos	76	Style perception
YouTube Long-form Reviews	62	Functional trust
Static Image Posts	34	Low engagement

The results suggest that short-form video content is particularly effective in enhancing visual appeal and style perception, while long-form video reviews contribute more strongly to functional trust related to lens quality and eye-care features. Static image posts were perceived as less engaging and more promotional in nature.

#### 4.2.4 Brand-wise Comparative Perception Analysis

**Table 4.4: Mean Scores of Brand Perception Variables**

(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Brand Category	Brand Recall	Influencer Trust	Social Relatability
Lenskart	4.6	4.4	4.5
Major Organized Competitors	3.9	4.1	3.2
Other Eyewear Brands	3.5	3.7	3.6

Lenskart recorded the highest mean scores across all evaluated dimensions, indicating stronger brand recall, influencer trust, and perceived social relatability. In contrast, other organized competitors exhibited comparatively lower scores, particularly in relatability, suggesting less emotional resonance with digitally active consumers.

#### 4.2.5 Correlation Analysis

**Table 4.5: Correlation Matrix**

Variables	Influencer Trust	Brand Perception	Purchase Intention	Brand Loyalty
Influencer Trust	1.00	0.71**	0.62**	0.48*
Brand Perception	0.71**	1.00	0.69**	0.58**
Purchase Intention	0.62**	0.69**	1.00	0.61**

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

The analysis indicates a strong positive relationship between influencer trust and brand perception ( $r = 0.71$ ), suggesting that higher influencer credibility is associated with more favorable brand evaluations.

#### 4.2.6 Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

**Table 4.6: Regression Results – Purchase Intention as Dependent Variable**

Predictor Variable	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-value	Significance
Influencer Trust	0.49	6.21	0.000
Brand Perception	0.41	5.37	0.000
R <sup>2</sup>	0.38		

The regression model explains 38% of the variance in purchase intention, indicating that influencer trust and brand perception **significantly influence** consumer buying intention.

- **H1:** Influencer collaborations significantly influence purchase intention – *Supported* ( $p < 0.05$ )
- **H2:** Influencer credibility significantly shapes brand perception – *Supported* ( $p < 0.01$ )

Comparative analysis revealed that Lenskart demonstrated a higher explanatory influence on purchase intention relative to competing eyewear brands.

### 4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

#### 4.3.1 Thematic Analysis

Qualitative analysis revealed four dominant themes: influencer authenticity, emotional engagement, brand differentiation, and purchase motivation. Respondents frequently described Lenskart’s influencer content as relatable and trustworthy. Storytelling-based campaigns and real-life product demonstrations were found to enhance confidence in product quality and purchase decisions.

#### 4.3.2 Content Analysis of Influencer Campaigns

**Table 4.7: Content Engagement Comparison**

Brand Category	Average Engagement Level	Engagement Rate (%)
Lenskart	High	6.8
Major Organized Competitors	Moderate	4.1
Other Eyewear Brands	Moderate	3.6

Lenskart achieved the highest engagement rates across platforms, particularly through Instagram Reels and YouTube collaborations, supported by a diversified influencer portfolio and consistent messaging strategy.

### 4.4 Key Findings Summary

The findings indicate that influencer collaborations significantly influence consumer perception, purchase intention, and brand loyalty in the eyewear industry. Lenskart demonstrates superior performance relative to other eyewear brands due to its multi-tier influencer strategy, visually engaging content, and strong emotional connect with consumers.

## 5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Discussion of Findings

The primary objective of this study was to examine how influencer collaborations shape consumer perception, trust, and purchase intention in the eyewear industry, with a comparative focus on Lenskart and other organized eyewear competitors in India. The findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses are discussed in light of established theoretical frameworks.

The quantitative results indicate a strong and statistically significant relationship between influencer trust and brand perception ( $r = 0.71$ ), suggesting that influencers play a critical role in shaping consumer attitudes toward eyewear brands. Regression analysis further demonstrates that influencer trust and brand perception significantly influence purchase intention ( $R^2 = 0.38$ ), reinforcing the role of influencer credibility in high-involvement purchase categories.

Qualitative insights support these findings by highlighting consumer perceptions of influencer authenticity, emotional connection, and relatability. Respondents consistently reported greater confidence in brands promoted through experiential content such as try-on videos, storytelling narratives, and real-life usage demonstrations. These results align with the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model, where influencer content functions as the stimulus, consumer trust and emotional engagement act as internal responses, and purchase intention emerges as the behavioral outcome.

Lenskart’s comparatively stronger performance can be attributed to its diversified influencer portfolio, visually engaging content formats, and ability to combine functional information with aspirational

branding. In contrast, other organized competitors demonstrated relatively lower emotional engagement, limiting their resonance with digitally active consumers.

## 5.2 Conclusion

This study concludes that influencer collaborations constitute a highly effective marketing mechanism for shaping consumer perception and influencing purchase behavior in the Indian eyewear industry. Empirical evidence confirms that influencer trust and positive brand perception are key determinants of consumer purchase intention and loyalty.

Lenskart's success is driven by its strategic use of multi-tier influencers, strong emphasis on visual storytelling, and integration of digital innovation such as virtual try-ons and interactive content. The findings indicate that influencer marketing is not merely a promotional tool but a long-term brand-building strategy capable of fostering emotional attachment and sustained consumer relationships.

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