

Digital Skills and Research Methods

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Introduction

When computers and the Internet are used to enhance the student's educational experience, the term "virtual learning environment" (VLE) is used. Using a virtual learning environment (VLE) is a great way to keep track of students and teachers, as well as provide online support for both parties (Orange and Hobbs, 2018). A teacher ID or a student ID is typically provided to VLE users. The instructor has access to the same information that a student does, but he or she also can add or remove instructional materials and keep tabs on student progress. This technology was introduced before but it becomes worldwide famous during the lockdown period. Along with students in school and college, independent or home-based educational systems are also using VLE technology. Virtual Learning Environment kept a great impact on learning style and education system. As part of a larger learning management system, virtual learning environments are common. The good effects of VLE use in higher education could be transferred to the school sector. VLE research is needed because of its importance to the educational system.

Background

The VLE makes learning easier and more transportable by offering a wide range of services. With the help of the VLE's content management system, students and teachers may access and utilise instructional resources. Technology-enabled curriculum mapping and planning services also allow for lesson preparation, assessment, and customising of the learning experience (Thomas, 2012). This platform has a wide range of capabilities, including the ability to track students' progress and achievements. It also has email, alerts, chat, wikis, and blogs for communication and collaboration purposes... Live video or audio conferencing can also be used for real-time communication between students and teachers. Technology has enhanced accessibility, inclusivity, cost savings, technical skills, immediate feedback on learning, and greater flexibility and comfort for students result of the use of modern technology (Muller, 2012). Lesson planning, resource management, and student test progress tracking are all made easier with VLE technology, which is why teachers love it. The time saved by combining VLE and MIS systems is incalculable. It is possible to save and retrieve grades from the VLE, provide registration and behavioural data via reports, and automate user group management. With the help of MIS integration, mobile devices like smartphones and tablets can be used by employees to update data in the VLE directly from their mobile devices. Others, such as co-workers or children, can be

made aware of this information on-the-fly if the need arises. Despite its many advantages, the VLE technology has several limitations that are difficult to overcome. Teachers and students have problems cooperating, lack of support, and inadequate internet access as a result of the use of VLEs. End-users, too, may become reliant on technology. Software-related diseases like viruses, worms, and other destructive programs can also infect users' computers. To avoid any possible hazards, users must keep their user identities and accounts private. Passwords may need to be changed frequently and their strength must meet a particular standard to be considered secure enough (Klasnja-Milicevic et al., 2018). The accounts of users engaging in misuse may be suspended during an investigation. The Network Manager keeps a database of all of the backup dates and times, as well as the precise storage details of each backup, for safety purposes. New methods of teaching and learning will be required to keep up with the demands of today's pupils as technology advances. It's reasonable to assume that in the not-too-distant future, employees will have access to virtual science labs, museums devoted to humanities, archaeological sites, and periods of history (Hamilton, 2013).

Aims and Objectives

In the United Kingdom and other countries, educational institutions are beginning to use virtual learning technologies. Until the epidemic, virtual learning hadn't had the widespread adoption it has since then. No one foresaw the dynamic consequences of utilising this approach for such a huge number of students (Dittler, 2011). When it comes to determining the impact Moodle's Virtual Learning Environment has on students, this study uses both primary and secondary data from surveys. This study has the potential to yield new insights and improve virtual education offerings. In the study, students' virtual learning platform experience is the main goal. The research is focused on Moodle because it is the university's primary platform for continuing the virtual learning system. The channel's effectiveness as a teaching tool might also be taken into account. In the end, students will decide whether or not online education is worth it or not. The primary goal of the research was to find out if students had any previous experience with the virtual learning environment. Whether they like it or not, they will have had some exposure to a virtual learning environment. Inquiring into the pupils' familiarity with the VLE system was also a goal. After the epidemic, it was also determined whether or not the system might continue.

Methods

As part of its primary investigation, Moodle was used to gather both quantitative and qualitative information. Students at the University of Wales Trinity Saint London campus were chosen at random to collect primary data for this research study. They were to survey 50 students. Ten questions were asked of the students as part of the research. There was a wide range of questions in each area of the questionnaire. As a result, their comments were re-examined and included in the final report of the study. Books and magazines were among the many places that secondary data was acquired from. It was necessary to do secondary research to acquire quantitative and qualitative data to better understand the VLE services and technological requirements, benefits, negative aspects, and challenges faced by university students, staff, and administration. They were discovered through the use of second-hand sources of publications. In those publications, virtual learning environments and their effects on students were the main focus. It was not possible to provide surveys to all of the respondents because of the lockdown. Student feedback was collected using Google Forms and forwarded directly to their inboxes. To ensure that only students from the university were participating, some questions were employed to ensure that no one from outside could answer them. The participants were protected from being identified. To ensure that there was no bias in the study, the researcher disguised their genuine names from them (Kumar, 2014). Growth in trust in both the data and its conclusions as a result of these processes working together is increasing.

Result

Ten questions were posed to students at the University of Wales Trinity Saint London campus to gather primary data. The first thing was wanted to know was if the students had any previous knowledge of using a Virtual Learning Environment. It has been reported that 100% of students reported using the Virtual Learning Environment, while 0% of students reported having never used it.

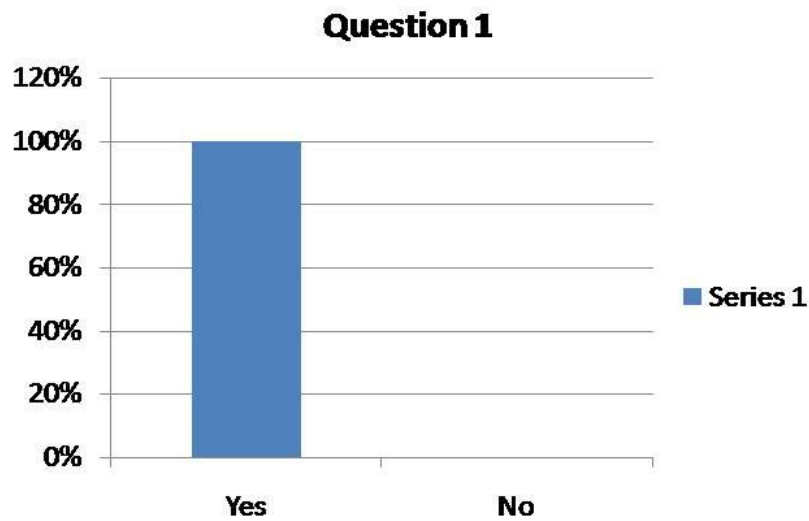


Fig: Experience of using VLE

The second question was whether or not they prefer to use VLEs for their higher education. 45 students which were 90% of the students who were asked this question said yes, while just the other 5 students that 10% of students said no.

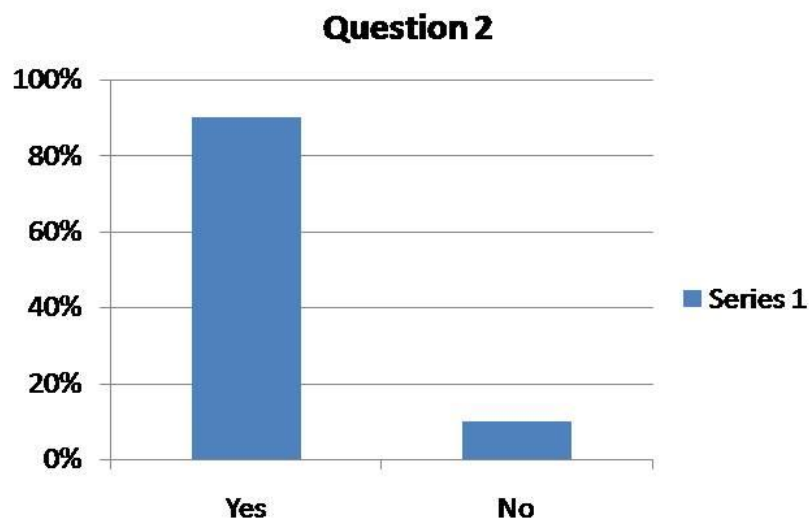


Fig: Prefer to use VLE for higher studies

For the third question, it was wanted to know if they had the required training to use the University's VLE for their academic work. 33 respondents said yes which was 65% of the students, while other 17 students said no which was 35% of the students.

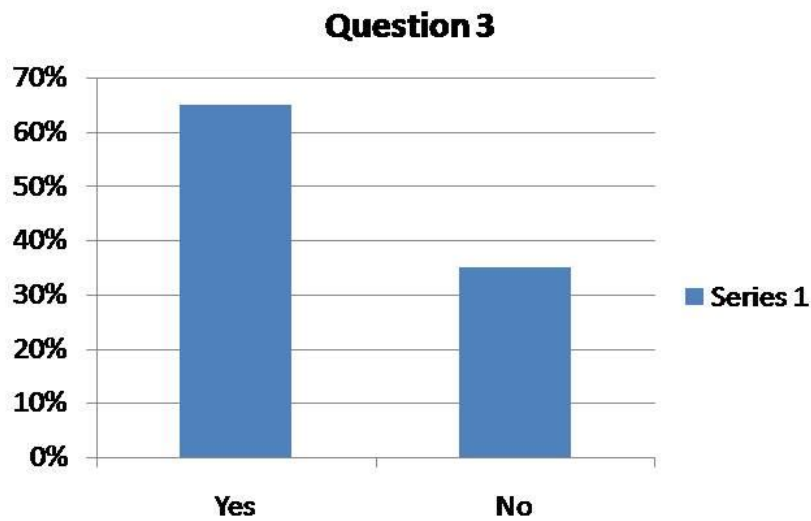


Fig: Have the training to use VLE

When asked if they wanted to see the university continue using the VLE platform after the epidemic, the respondents said yes. 60% of students highly agreed with the plan, 20% agreed, 10% agreed but were unsure of their position, 5% disapproved, and the other 5% highly disagreed.

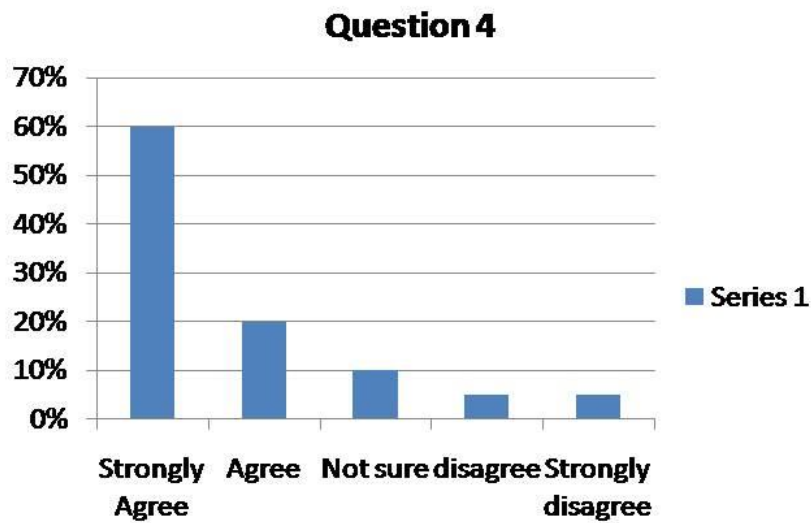


Fig: Would like to see the usage of VLE after the pandemic

To find out if students prefer to communicate with their professors and friends using VLE, it was asked to them the fifth question. For example, 30% of students said they strongly agreed, 30% of students said they agreed, 20% said they weren't sure, 10% said they disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed.

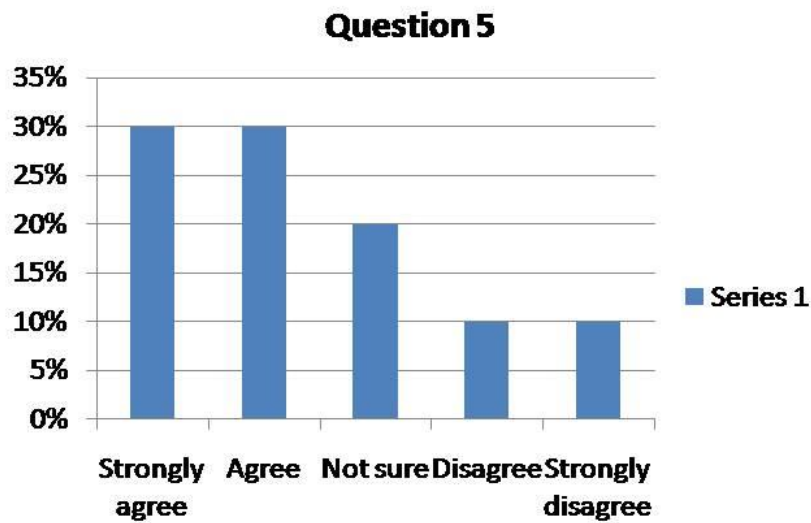


Fig: Prefer to communicate via VLE

Students were asked to rate the impact of the online learning platform during the pandemic on the sixth question. Among those polled, 70% of students rated the platform as 5 stars, 20% of students gave it a 4-star rating, and 10% of students gave it a 3-star rating.

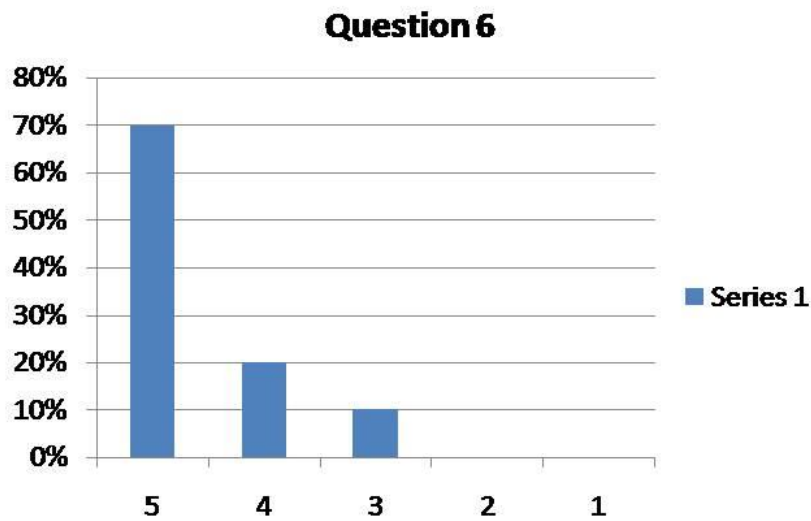


Fig: Rating of the impact of online learning during the pandemic

Students were asked to rank their preference for studying in a VLE for the seventh question. 60% of students awarded the course a rating of 5 out of 5, while 30% of students gave it a rating of 4, and 10% of students gave it a rating of 3.

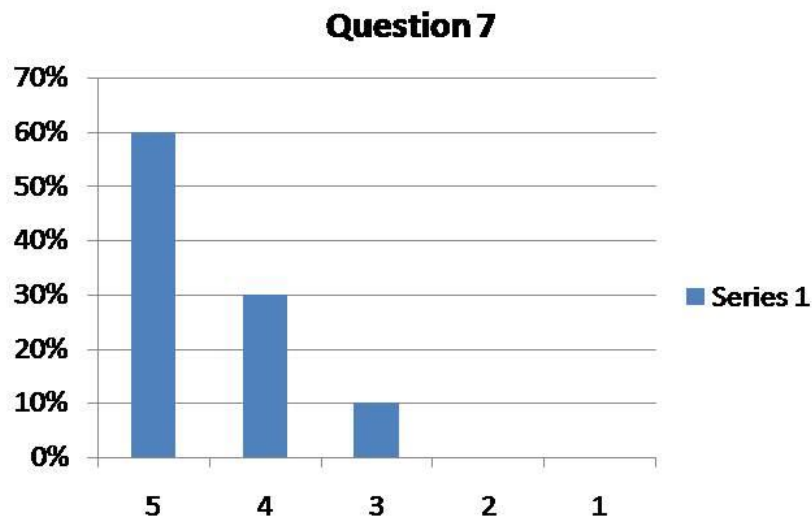


Fig: Rating of preference to do study in VLE

When it came to the eighth question, they wanted to know if their online training was helping them complete their task. 90% of those polled said yes, while only 10% said no.

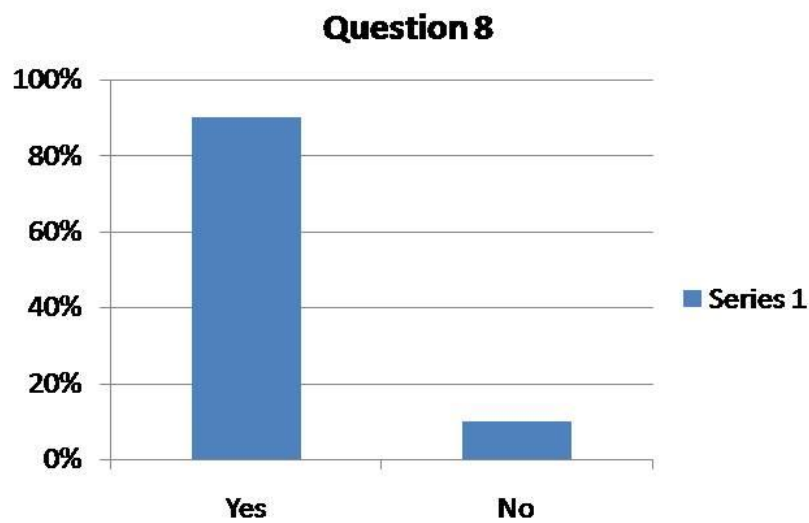


Fig: Does e-learning provide appropriate support to complete assignments

In the ninth question, they were asked what their opinion was about the VLE resources available for each module they were taking in their studies. Yes was the answer given by all of the students.

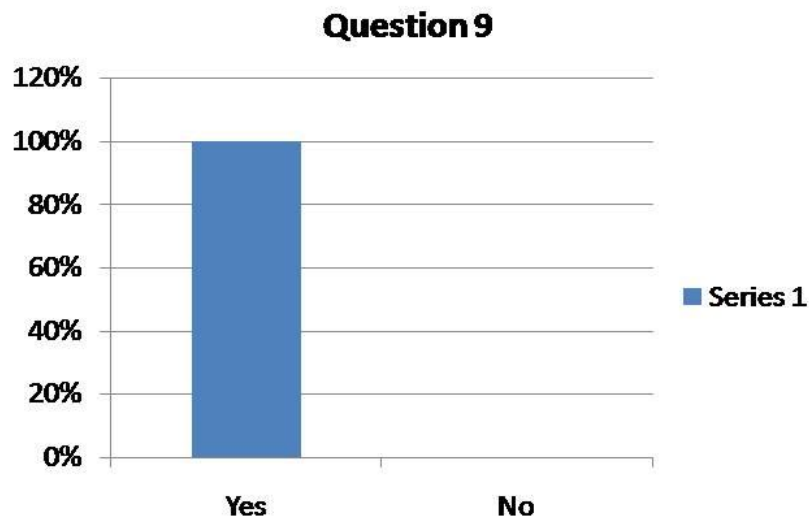


Fig: Finding appropriate resources in VLE

The final question asked participants about their level of satisfaction with the assistance they received from professors, university administrators, and management while studying under lockdown. Students were 40% extremely satisfied, 40% satisfied, and 20% unsatisfied.

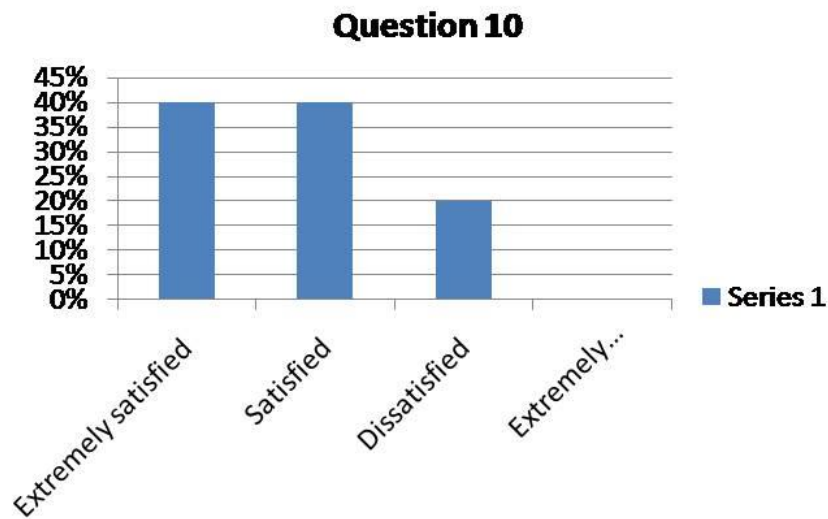


Fig: How satisfied the students were with the support lecturers, admin, and management

Discussion

At this time, virtual learning environments are more popular than ever before because of the lockdown. During the lockdown, there was no option to continue physical classes. A virtual learning environment (VLE) was required to run the education system during the lockdown. Every student in the UK and throughout the world was experienced a virtual classroom. More than 90% of the university's students prefer the platform and wish to see it used even after the outbreak. They found appropriate support and resources to finish their assignments from the e-learning system through the internet (Carliner and Shank, 2016). The learning approach is not preferred by all pupils, however, because there are still certain challenges and no sufficient instruction-related technology was offered to all students. All students will accept the system if the issues are fixed. Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) are the preferred method of communication for the

majority of students. As a result, the virtual learning environment (VLE) has had a significant impact throughout the pandemic, and students prefer to do their coursework there. A student's task is supported by the e-learning system, and students can access the necessary and appropriate resources in the virtual learning environment (VLE). Student satisfaction is high because of these benefits and support from lecturers, university administration, and management. This primary research was conducted using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and an Excel spreadsheet. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered using a secondary research approach, which helps students, teachers, and administrators understand how a virtual learning environment can benefit them and how it can also be a hindrance.

From these researches, some issues come on fronts that need to solve. Firstly need to get personal about the VLE technology. Social distancing or physical distancing can be removed by getting socially connected online. Students need to motivate to engage with online classes as they find them boring after some time. With a structured class day, students become unenthusiastic gradually. So, their outline and tasks need to be clear and well defined. Students need to monitor properly when they face problems and challenges. The management system needs to launch a monitor performance to determine who is facing intense personal challenges. High speed of internet access, equipment quality, technical expertise, and time zone difference create an equity gap among the students. This gap needs to remove to ensure the equity learning gap. Rapid conversion of the physical classroom into online spaces can also demotivate the learners. So, Courses online need to be interesting and fresh to maintain the attention of students.

Conclusion

Despite the virtual learning environment's long history, several new effects have been uncovered. These outcomes had a significant impact. A positive reaction was seen in both the primary and secondary data studied. Students are enthused with virtual learning for a variety of reasons. According to the outcomes of the study, students were able to adapt quickly to the university's online platform. Since virtual learning may continue after the outbreak, it has various advantages over traditional offline schooling. Students are facing various problems to use this technology. If these problems are solved, the VLE system will be more acceptable.

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Appendix

Google Forms

Having trouble with viewing or submitting this form?

FILL IN USING GOOGLE FORMS

I've invited you to fill in a form:

Online Survey Virtual Learning Environment

Dear students

Q1. Do you have an experience in relation to the usage of Virtual Learning Environment? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q2. Do you prefer to use VLE for your higher studies? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q3. Do you have proper training to use University VLE for your studies? *

- ☐ yes
☐ No

Q4. What would you like to see that the university continue to use VLE Platform after pandemic as well? *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Not sure
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree

Q5. Do you prefer to communicate with your lecturers and your friends via VLE? *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Not sure
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree

Q6. Please rate the impact of the online learning platform on your academic studies during pandemic? *

1 2 3 4 5

Low Impact ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ High Impact

Q7. Please rate your preferences to do your studies in VLE. *

1 2 3 4 5

Low preference ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ High preference

Q8. Does your e-learning provide appropriate support to complete your assignment? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q9. Do you find required and appropriate resources in VLE for each module which you study? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q10. Since lockdown, how satisfied you are in relation to the support which you received from lecturers, university admin and management towards on your studies? *

☐ Extremely Dissatisfied

☐ Dissatisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Extremely satisfied

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