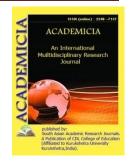


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# TICKLING THE TASTE PALLET OF THE PEOPLE OF BHUBANESWAR: A PERCEPTUAL STUDY ON THE AFFINITY TOWARDS FOOD OF NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN INDIA

# Dr. Somabhusana Janakiballav Mishra\*; Debasish Rout\*\*; Rachita Ota\*\*\*; Dr. Sushree Sangita Ray\*\*\*\*; Vineet Mehta\*\*\*\*

<sup>1, 2, 3,4</sup>Assistant Professor, Amity Global Business School, Bhubaneswar, INDIA

\*\*\*\*Student, BBA, Amity Global Business School, Bhubaneswar, INDIA

# ABSTRACT

Finding and analyzing the reasons of cultural differences with respect to culinary habits of different regions is one of the primary components of research into people's taste of different food items. This topic is of great importance in the pursuit of specific affinities towards food items. Grasping people's likeness towards different food items and assessing their preference through taste is an important aspect. This study tries to detect the interaction patterns of north and south Indian cuisines as well as characteristics of emotions towards the food items by people. In this study we have tried to find out the differences between the perceptions of people living in Bhubaneswar towards North and South Indian food by analyzing 258 respondents chosen using simple random sampling method in the city of Bhubaneswar. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis and chi-square test. Moreover, the study shows the feelings of individuals and the insight of taste diversity between South and North India and the characteristics that are sensitive under the influence of food diversity between the two regions' food items. The study helps to provide effective solutions from the macro perspective, which has been challenging for the cosmopolitan food distribution pattern.

**KEYWORDS**: Food Diversity; Taste Pallet; Culinary Habits; Bhubaneswar; India; North; South; Indian Food.

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#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Food Choice among people have always been considered as one of the most complex and a mind boggling process which is to a large extent guided not just by view of taste, cost, and accessibility yet additionally by customer worries about wellbeing, safety, and overall the environment that surrounds them. The idea of taste alludes to taste, smell, quality, and the delight that the consumer experiences with their association with the food. While taste is a significant driver of food decisions, it isn't the one in particular. The current accentuation in general wellbeing nourishment is on reasonable food frameworks and on the sufficiency, quality, and most importantly moderateness of the worldwide food supply.

There are numerous factors which act as influencers towards an individual's food preferences which give an entire arrangement of intends to intercede into and improve individuals' food decisions. These impacts that add to a person's food decisions incorporate individual elements, like information, individual taste inclination, mind-set, hunger level, wellbeing status, unique eating regimen necessities, identity, and individual pay. Natural factors like climate, season of day, the quick setting or notices additionally impact food decisions. Cafés and markets regularly exploit this. Other than these, there are certain indirect factors which are beyond one's control may likewise influence food decisions. For instance, government strategies may impact the expense to create food which may then be gone to the buyer. The subsequent changes in costs could thusly impact food buys.

Palatability relies upon the tactile properties of the food (taste, smell, surface, sound, and sight) and may impact food decision as it is relative to the delight experienced when eating a specific food. Taste is reliably viewed as one of the significant determinant of food conduct and food decision. As a general rule "taste" is the amount of all tangible incitements that are delivered by the ingestion of a food: taste as such smell, appearance, and surface of food. The palate of an individual is corresponding to the delight one encounters when eating a specific food. It is subject to the sensory based attributes of the food like taste, smell, quality and its look. Sweet based and food with high-fat content mostly has an unquestionable tangible allure. It isn't astounding to accept to the fact that the food is mostly accepted due to its alluring effect rather than its nourishment. Many studies have clearly specified the influence of the taste aspects on the appetite and food intake of individuals. These studies clearly highlight the aspects that with the increase of the palatability, the intake of food also increases while similar impact of taste on appetite is not clear.

Another important factor that influences a food choice or preference is the availability of food. One would opt for a food only if the food is available. But along with the availability there are many other hidden factors like sociological, cultural, historical factors which play a major role in framing our individual food choices.

Preferences related to food choices also get influenced by the life stages of the individuals and the power of influence of one factor in an individual would vary from one person to another. Hence, it's difficult for the food marketers to have a generalization strategy for everyone.

There is no uncertainty that the cost of food is an essential determinant of food decision. Regardless of whether cost is restrictive relies in a general sense upon an individual's pay and financial status. Low-pay bunches have a more prominent inclination to unbalanced and nutrition



free diet. Nonetheless, admittance to more cash doesn't naturally compare to a superior quality eating regimen however the scope of food varieties from which one can pick should increment. Accessibility to the source of the food is another significant factor impacting food decisions.

The influence of Culture also plays an important role in the consumer decision-making process for Food. However, it has been observed that the cultural aspects may change with the situation and environment which may encourage an individual to try out new food options

Considering Culture and Tradition as one of the most essential element, Indian Sub-continent is considered to be one of the best platforms for the Food Companies to try out various options with different food ingredients and taste. It has been observed that the major crop in the region of North India is wheat, so, in most of the North Indian food items, one can discover the impact of this crop overall. From the use of wheat, many of the foods like naan, parathas, chapatis and others are made.

The main feature of North Indian cuisine is that there is heavy influence of Persian and Mughlai style of cooking, if food is cooked for a vegetarian or non-vegetarian person. Vegetables and spices growing in North India, as well as a variety of seasonal fruits, can also be found in different dishes of it. The basic ingredients of North Indian food are onions, tomatoes, ginger and garlic. These dishes are flavoured with the help of curry, spices, ghee and oil. The use of rice can be observed in pulao or the biryani. On the other hand, South Indian food is mostly comprised of dishes in which the use of coconut and rice is very common. Coconut is used in the process of making the chutney and curry. The most popular dishes of South Indian cuisine are the Dosa and Idli, in which a mixture of rice and lentils is present.

Seafood dishes are also often used in south. From the medical point of view, South Indian food is considered as healthy due to the major cause of less use of rich creams and ghee, no matter whether they are made up for a vegetarian or non-vegetarian person. Previously, no such studies for the perspectives of people have been done in the entire region or anywhere to nearby regions. This is the first time that people of a city (Bhubaneswar in this case) are evaluated to know about their different perspectives about different food cultures.

In macro cultural phenomena, obtaining of data to express meanings, values, and discourse in a specific social context on a large scale is difficult. However, such concerns are the primary focus of cultural geography. Such methods can provide many opportunities for the study of cultural geography from the macro level view.

From the point of view of cultural geography, cultural diversities begin from the varieties in dayby-day life and practices, which have particular implications and qualities. The investigation of how everyday life builds a person's experience of space and place covers a few perspectives, including the food, language, customs, etc. Particularities of diets and customs of North and South India are the exact transporters of local culture. In crossing many regions, for example, when individuals go from South to North or the other way around, the food cultures become very noticeable. Under the structure of cultural geography, clashes will happen among local and outer cultures, in this way bringing forth a progression of various local insights and encounters.

The discernment and examination of a cultural image dependent on information, similar to online media information, conform to investigate method of cultural geography. This study face up the cultural importance and value systems from individuals' day to day life and practices. The



accompanying investigation takes geographical food -people's perception related topic data from "Perception of North Indian and South Indian Food" a questionnaire survey conducted on the Google Forms platform. It follows the Chi-square test and then finally performs an emotion analysis under the influence of food cultural differences of South and North India. This type of study has never been done in the whole geographical region; therefore attempt has been made to address the most important gaps in this study.

# 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The perception of people towards the food of different cultures is very complex, and also very significant to analyse the overall taste of the population of an entire region. People's perception towards any food culture depends upon a number factors such as varieties, taste, aroma, spices, ingredients etc,. Along with these, the quality of food also matters a lot.(Anita Goyal and N.P. Singh, 2007)

The differences in the perception of people towards different food cultures have always been a hot topic. There has always been a contradictory statement among the people and their views have never matched in most of the cases. Each food culture, whether it is North Indian or South India has its own significance which cannot be denied.(Dr. Mohan Kumar, InithaRina, 2015)

Around the 7000 BC, sesame, brinjal and the hump cattle were domesticated in Indus Valley. Up to 3000 B.C., turmeric, cardamom, pepper and mustard were harvested in India. A lot of the recipes first emerged during the initial time of Vedic period, when India was heavily forested and complemented with agricultural activities. During Vedic times, the general diet included fruits, vegetables, meat, cereals, dairy products and honey. Over some time, some sections of population adopted vegetarianism because of the ancient Hindu philosophy of non-violence. This particular practice gained more and more popularity after the arrival of Buddhism (Satvik), where the diversity of fruits, vegetables and cereals could be easily grown during the year .(Anupam Jaina, Rakhi N Kb and Ganesh Bagler)

All over the history, India's borders have witnessed the path of many people looking for their distinctly fragrant spices. India's spices from cardamom to turmeric have created many delicious dishes in the world. As the country of twenty-eight states, specific regional cuisines showing seasonal ingredients and some unique cooking techniques can be found in the rice-laden south from the wheat-bearing north. Each of the section boasts a special culinary preference shaped by the agricultural, historical, religious and other influences.(Arjun Appadurai, 2017)

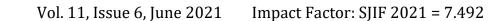
Now -a- days, there is a big competition between various cultural cuisines, each having its own significance and value for its people (Bharath M Josaim, M Sadiq Sohail, 2007).

For such a type of reason, the researchers have conducted this study to ascertain the preferences of food lovers of Bhubaneswar towards the North and South Indian Cuisine, and included various crucial factors such as food type, attributes, demographic profile, influencing factors etc.

# **3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

After intense literature review, the objective of the research has been framed:

1) To determine whether there is any relation between the demographic profile of people of Bhubaneswar and the choice of cuisine.



- 2) To analyze the relation between the choice of cuisine and the food attributes.
- 3) To examine the emotional characteristics of the respondents based on cultural food disparity between north and south India.

# **4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Scope of this study is restricted to recognize the elements affecting the choice or influencing the type of cuisine that people of Bhubaneswar choose, and their satisfaction levels about the food of north and south India.

# **5 METHODOLOGIES**

**STUDY AREA AND DESCRIPTION OF DATA:** The study undertakes the entire region of Bhubaneswar, in the state of Odisha as its area of study. The topic of this study involves the affinity towards cuisines of Northern and Southern part of India. Research data of the study is taken from the 258 respondents through a questionnaire. This particular study is based on the primary data that has been gathered from the citizens of Bhubaneswar city and some of its outskirt areas, who answered a structured questionnaire. The study used 'simple random sampling' technique to select the samples. This questionnaire was made for the intention of gathering data on the diverse elements that influence the thinking or perception of people living in Bhubaneswar. An effort has been made to find out whether there is any relation between (a) gender and cuisine type, (b) age and cuisine type, (c) cuisine selected by people and its food attributes, also a comparison is made to analyse the emotions with respect to their culture. In the sample, some people who natively belong to Bhubaneswar but are currently living in different places of India were also included to ascertain their thoughts (as they might have got changed when they changed their places).

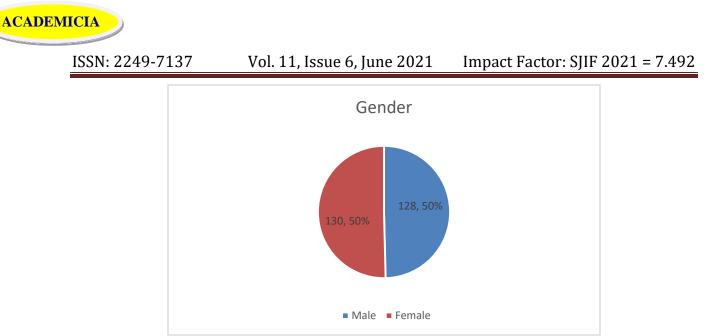
To figure out the association has been done through Chi-Square Test;

Chi-square Test:

Chi-square test formula =  $\Sigma$  ((observed frequency-expected frequency) ^2/expected frequency)

# 6 DATA ANALYSIS AND DATA INTERPRETATION

A questionnaire has been formed to understand about the perception of citizens of Bhubaneswar towards the cuisine of Northern and Southern part of India. Data analysis provides us information regarding the different patterns and association between the variables. Here 258 respondents were taken and it was observed that there were 128 Male and 130 Female in total, which contributed almost 50% each as shown in 'Figure 1'.



# Figure 1: Pie chart showing the total number and percentage of Male and Female respondents.

The number of respondents belonging to different age groups is represented in figure-2 below:

16 were in the age group of "Below 15", 111 under the age group "15-24", 50 of them were in "25-34", 29 in the group of "35-44", 21 belongs to "45-54" age group, under "55-64" age group 22 respondents and 9 respondents were in "65 and above" age group.

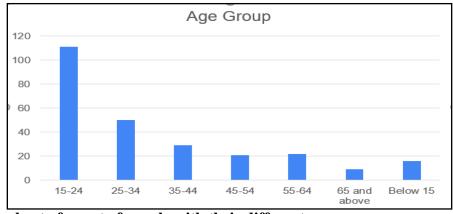


Figure 2: Bar chart of count of people with their different age group.

The study of association between 'the gender and the choice of cuisine' is shown in 'Table 1(a) and 1(b) Table 1(a) includes the observed values, whereas table 1(b) includes the expected values with the value of 'p' from the Chi-square test.

H0a: There is no relation between the 'Gender' and 'Type of cuisine'.

H1a: There is a relation between the 'Gender' and 'Type of cuisine'



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TABLE 1(A): CHI-SQUARE TABLE OF OBSERVED VALUES				
<b>Count of Gender</b>	Column Labels			
Row Labels	North Indian food	South Indian food	<b>Grand Total</b>	
Female	41	89	130	
Male	95	33	128	
Grand Total	136	122	258	

#### TABLE 1(B): P VALUE OF CHI-SQUARE WITH EXPECTED VALUES

<b>Row Labels</b>	North Indian food	South Indian food
Female	68.5	61.4
Male	67.47	60.52
Grand Total	6.43014E-12	

The 'Table 1(a)' shows a cross tabulation of observed values of type of cuisine (North Indian or South Indian) chosen by different genders (male or female). Total numbers of males who chose cuisines of Northern part and Southern part of India were 95 and 33 respectively, and the total number of females who chose cuisines of Northern part and Southern part of India was 41 and 89 respectively.

Table 1(b) shows expected frequencies for same factors along with p value of the chi-square test. It is shown in the table that value of p is 6.43014E-12 which is less than the 0.05. Hence it is said to be significant, and it means that the null hypothesis is rejected. Further it can be assumed that there is a relation between the 'Gender' and 'Type of cuisine' (which type of cuisine is preferred by which specific gender).

Forthwith to study the association between 'the age group and the choice of cuisine' is conducted below in 'Table 2(a) and 2(b). Table 2(a) includes the observed values, whereas table 2(b) includes the expected values with the value of 'p' from the Chi-square test.

H0b: There is no relation between the 'age group' and 'Type of cuisine'.

H1b: There is a relation between the 'age group' and 'Type of cuisine'

TABLE 2(A): CHI-SQUARE TABLE OF OBSERVED VALUES					
Count of cousine preference	Column Labels				
Row Labels	North	Indian	South	Indian	Grand
	food		food		Total
15-24	54		57		111
25-34	26		24		50
35-44	10		19		29
45-54	17		4		21
55-64	12		10		22
65 and above	6		3		9
Below 15	11		5		16
Grand Total	136		122		258



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	TABLE 2(B):	P VALUE OI	F CHI-SQUARE W	ITH EXPECTED VA	LUES
	<b>Row Labels</b>		North Indian	food South Indian	food
	15-24		58.5	52.4	
	25-34		26.3	23.6	
	35-44		15.2	13.7	
	45-54		11.06	9.9	
	55-64		11.6	10.4	
	65 and above		4.7	4.2	
	Below 15		8.4	7.5	
	p value for chi squ	are test	0.033603653		

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The 'Table 2(a)' shows a cross tabulation of observed values of type of cuisine (North Indian or South Indian) chosen by different age group. Total numbers of people in age group 'below 15' who chose cuisines of Northern part and Southern part of India were 11 and 5 respectively, total numbers of people in age group '15-24' who chose cuisines of Northern part and Southern part of India were 54 and 57, people in the age group '25-34' chose cuisines of Northern and Southern part of India were 26 and 24, respondents in the age group '35-44' chose cuisines of Northern and Southern part of India were 10 and 19, respondents in age group '45-54' prefer cuisines of North and South India were 17 and 4, in the age group '55-64' 12 chose North Indian food whereas 10 selected South Indian food, number of people in age group '65 & above' chose cuisines of North and South India were 6 and 3respecyively.

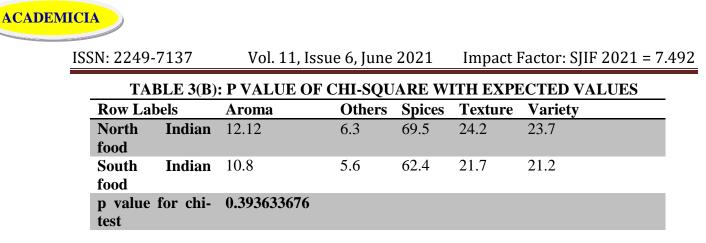
Table 2(b) shows expected frequencies for same factors along with p value of the chi-square test. It is shown in the table that value of p is 0.0336 which is less than the 0.05. Hence it is presumed to be significant, and it implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. Further it can be assumed that there is a relation between the 'age group' and 'Type of cuisine'.

In order to understand the association between 'the type of cuisine chosen by people' and 'the attributes of food', a Chi Square test is conducted, which has been displayed in 'Table 3(a) and 3(b). Table 3(a) includes the observed values, whereas table 3(b) includes the expected values with the value of 'p' in the Chi-square test.

H0c: There is no relationship between the 'food attribute' and 'Type of cuisine'.

H1c: There is a relationship between the 'food attribute' and 'Type of cuisine'.

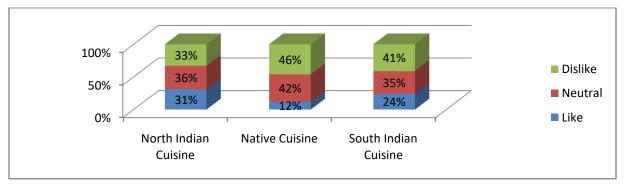
TABLE 3(A): CHI-SQUARE TABLE OF OBSERVED VALUES						5
<b>Count of Cuisine</b>	Column					
	Labels					
Row Labels	Aroma	Others	Spices	Texture	Variety	Grand Total
North Indian food	15	8	71	22	20	136
South Indian food	. 8	4	61	24	25	122
Grand Total	23	12	132	46	45	258



The 'Table 3(a)' shows a cross tabulation of observed values of type of cuisine (North Indian or South Indian) chosen by people with what reason i.e. Food Attributes of that particular cuisine. The people, who chose North Indian cuisine, 15 liked its aroma, 71 liked spices, 22 liked textures, 20 liked variety and 8 for other reasons than these. The people, who chose South Indian cuisine, 8 liked it for aroma, 61 liked spices, 24 liked textures, and 25 liked variety and 4 for other reasons than these.

Table 3(b) shows expected frequencies for same factors along with p value of the chi-square test. It is shown in the table that value of p is 0.393 which is more than the 0.05. Hence it is not said to be significant, and it implies that the null hypothesis is accepted. Further it can be concluded that there is no significant association between the 'food attribute (the reason of choice) and 'Type of cuisine'. It could not establish a connection on the basis of which factor people choose a particular cuisine, which attribute of its food enables them to choose a particular cuisine?

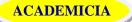
Now to analyse the emotional characteristics of people based on cultural food disparities between Northern and Southern India, we hereby have made a comparison with the help of a column chart analysis to examine whether the attitude of people about food of Southern and Northern India will show a positive, negative, or neutral emotion. To get a further optional information, we have also included the native food in the study area in this analysis i.e. cuisine of Odisha. Here the respondents were provided a scale of 3 units "1, 2 and 3" representing "dislike", "neutral" and "like" respectively.



# Figure 3:Column-chart displaying prefernces of the respondents towards different cuisines

The left column shows the data about Northern part of Indian Food. Here it is clearly visible that the people of Bhubaneswar posed 31% like, 36% neutral and 33% dislike for the same.

The right column shows the data about Southern part of Indian Food. Here it is visible that the people posed 24% like, 35% neutral and 41% dislike.



The centre column shows the data about the native cuisine of Odisha. Here it is visible that the people posed 12% like, 42% neutral and 46% dislike.

And if we just consider the total likes only, then the percentage is as follows:

- North Indian Food- 31%
- South Indian Food- 24%
- Native Cuisine of Odisha- 12%

If it is checked, then it is found that maximum percentage of likes were given to the food of North India i.e. 31%, then comes the South Indian Food in the second position with 24% of likes and the native acquiring the last position with just 12% likes. This infers that the North Indian Food is most preferred and the native is least preferred.

It was earlier believed by masses that "The North Indian Food is sweet and food in southern part of India is spicy". The actual insight of this scenario has been well displayed by the pie-chart of Figure -4 which is based on the responses.

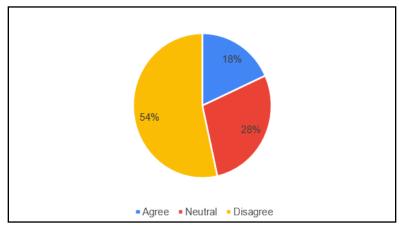


Figure 4: Response of the people towards taste of food

With this, it is clearly visible that most of the people disagree (54%) with the statement that "The North Indian Food is sweet and South Indian food is spicy".

# OUTCOMES FROM THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

The whole questionnaire was made up of structured questions, where all the questions were close-ended (only providing options to choose from) accept the last one (which was an open-ended). The last question which was "Something else you would like to mention about what factor influence your choice of cuisine (in case)", gave the respondents an open forum to put their views on.

People wrote about so many factors like the taste, spices and all, but the most general factor which was highlighted in the opinions was 'too much use of yogurt, cream, ghee, butter and oils in North Indian Food'. These ingredients proved to be significant for the people who were in love with North Indian food, but a big negative aspect for the South Indian food lovers and the health conscious people.



A lot of views stated that the North Indian food is very unhealthy in nature. It includes all heavy oils, ghee and creams which are not good for the health of a person. A large number of respondents said that they were health conscious for which they prefer not to eat North Indian food but rather the South Indian one. Many gave the statement that doctors haven't allowed them to eat heavy food items, so they preferred South Indian food.

Basically these are not the negative aspects of the North Indian food. These are just the ingredients which are necessarily required for most of the food items of North India, as mentioned earlier North Indian has influence of both 'Mughlai' and 'Persian'. These ingredients are must for a North Indian food lover. In the same way, those who didn't like sweet flavour of the food or the flavour of coconut, they didn't go for the South Indian food rather preferred the North Indian one.

Hence, it can be presumed that the ingredients like 'Yogurt, Ghee, Butter, Oil, Coconut, sweetness and Cream' influence the choice of cuisine by the people of Bhubaneswar to some extent.

# 7 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study has firmly displayed the aspects of the food lover's preference towards any cuisines is not dependent on any specific food based attributes. On the contrary, it has been observed and clearly mentioned by the respondents that their preference is highly influenced on the availability of the food. In Odisha, most of the restaurants, Food Stalls mostly offer a wide variety of cuisines from northern and southern part of India, while the diverse Native Cusine is highly neglected.

The Chhapan Bhog served to Lord Jagannath clearly depicts the vast diversity of Native cuisines which based on the diverse taste palette of the habitants. These cuisines are confined only to the temple as their prasads. But, the widespread commercial promotion of these food categories which may comprise of different taste ranging from sweet to sour to spicy and salty has not been considered by the marketers. The restaurant owners may target the tourists from different corners of the world who rush to Puri Dham every year with these diverse taste foods and through them promote the native food globally.

# 8 FUTURE SCOPE

The study has got confined to only Northern and Southern part of Indian Food, while Indian Subcontinent is filled up with many multiple cuisines, which has not been discussed in the study. If considering a single state which is sub-divided into different districts, towns where people have different taste buds and food choices. Keeping in mind the above aspect the study could have evolved in the similar direction.

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