

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE MARKETING OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

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Abstract: *The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all firms and organizations around the world, and this issue has not escaped the attention of arts, particularly performing arts organizations. Last few decades, performing arts audiences were shrinking due to economic, social, and technological changes, moreover, Covid-19 has been influenced strongly over the last two years. Therefore, it is crucial to understand and provide an extensive view of the market situation, the role of marketing, and the consequences of Covid-19 in the arts specifically in the field of performing arts. This paper aims to explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on performing arts organizations, more focusing on marketing circumstances during the pandemic period, and identifying research gaps. This paper systematically reviews a total of 88 publications from Scopus and Web of Science databases and analyzed them using a descriptive analysis method and VOSviewer. The findings of this study highlight five main themes from the data analysis to demonstrate the substantial and influential results including the number of publications by year, country, and journals in order to understand the market situation. Moreover, the study disclosed keyword co-occurrences and found a new challenging and influential impact of digital transformation on performing arts due to the Covid-19 crisis. Finally, the paper provides a conclusion and a future research agenda.*

Keywords: Arts, Performing arts, Marketing, Covid-19, Pandemic.

JEL classification: I18, L82, M31, Z11.

1. Introduction

On 30 January 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as an outbreak of Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and then on 11 March 2020, WHO declared it as a pandemic globally. Since the declaration of a pandemic, local governments started to make closures for non-crucial businesses, industries, and suspensions for social and other activities. As a result, cultural and arts institutions had to cancel, postpone, or re-design their events, moreover closed their doors and faced new and additional challenges as other business and industrial sectors.

In general, art provides aesthetic and psychological needs for people, which is a necessity of human life. Attending cultural events is a crucial predictor, which determines a human's quality of life and supports human wellbeing (Baranowski, Korczak and Zajac, 2020). One of the main achievements of cultural events is to allow audiences to be more active and socialized (Kochoska and Petrovski, 2015). Also, Kuzelewska and Tomaszuk (2020) stated that cultural activities are inseparable from human life and rights, it requires a security mechanism within the framework of international (including local) legal systems. However,

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the lockdown period changed the way of art consumption, and additionally cultural and arts organizations faced difficulties to run their activities. During the shutdown period, online attendance of arts and cultural activities is seen as an escapist therapy to isolation (Tajtáková, Žák and Filo, 2019). Arts, especially performing arts is a unique type of arts sector due to their special characteristics. In the performing arts, production and consumption processes happen at the same time, where artists and audiences are together with feelings like a religious ceremony (Duffett, 2012). These live performances can be recorded and delivered both online or offline, although the benefits of live performances such as socializing and being away from the atmosphere do not occur. The Covid-19 epidemic has transformed the ways of seeing and experiencing the performing arts (O'Grady, 2020), and most importantly the role of arts and culture has been extensively acknowledged in terms of education and entertainment sectors during economic downturns. Performing arts organizations have been restricted in their in-door activities since the beginning of the pandemic, and as a result, numerous operational modifications have occurred.

At present, performing arts organizations are still in a fluctuating situation, the role of marketing is changing, and the functions are still uncertain in the long run. Therefore, this paper aims to systematically review the literature on the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the performing arts, examine how the role of marketing of performing arts organizations changed during the pandemic period, and identify research gaps. This paper is structured as an introduction, theoretical background, research methodology, findings, and results from the research analysis. The result section highlighted the current marketing transformation in the field of performing arts followed by a conclusion and future agenda.

2. Theoretical background

This section provides a theoretical framework of performing arts marketing as well as the marketing of performing arts during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, in order to support the systematic literature review background that demonstrates the difference in the role of marketing of performing arts before and after the pandemic.

2.1. Marketing of performing arts

In a general sense, the concept of marketing was introduced to the non-profit art sectors in the 1970s (Lee, 2005). Arts marketing is defined as an integrated management concept and a satisfying interchanging relationship between audiences and the organizations. The role of arts marketing is not only the task of attracting spectators to the performances, concerts, and shows but also the necessity to identify and promote the value and objectives of the organizations to wider audiences (Hill, O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan, 2003). As stated by researchers, a key distinction between commercial and art marketing is that the commercial marketing controls the character of a product or service by adapting it to the needs of the customers, whereas the role of arts marketing is interfacing the artist's inventions with acceptable audiences due to the specific nature of the cultural goods (Mokwa, Dawson and Prieve, 1980). Arts marketing developed in the 1990s, during this time the role of marketing became more associated and new marketing methods were analyzed (Lee, 2005). Then, during the 2000s, there was significant growth in the number of papers, articles, books, educational programs, scientific conferences, and research works on this subject (Evrard and Colbert, 2000).

The art covers many types of categories such as visual arts, graphic arts, literature, and architecture, and also one of the crucial branches of the art is performing arts including music, dance, opera, and theatre. The number of performing arts organizations, their audiences, and their contributions have increased significantly from the middle of the 1960s until the middle of the 1980s. However, in the last few decades, the market for performing

arts is declining and shrinking due to the economic, technological, social, and plenty amount of leisure activities. Therefore, performing arts organizations faced an issue to understand the social, economic, and most importantly the marketing affairs to resolve the problems (Scheff and Kotler, 1996). The reason for introducing marketing concepts into the performing arts organizations was to understand the nature of the services and products, to communicate with their audiences, to increase the number of audiences, to create a value for their consumers, and support the organization's goals. The application of performing arts marketing differs from standard commercial marketing because it focuses on selling artistic products and performances instead of creating a product based on consumers' needs and wants (Kerrigan, Fraser and Ozbilgin, 2016). The marketing tactics of performing arts aim to foster more relationships between the audiences and main services namely performances and shows (Bouder-Pailler, 1999). A researcher Ruth Rentschler (2002) divided performing arts marketing into three stages based on her research including a foundation period focused on audience studies, (1975-1984), a professionalization period focused on marketing implications and marketing mix (1985-1994), and a discovery period focused on a comprehensive approach to marketing strategy (1995-2000). Even the marketing has been applied recently to performing arts organizations, marketers are still working hard to improve and develop the most profitable marketing approaches for the performing arts.

As mentioned previously, the audiences of performing arts organizations were shrinking due to the economic and social changes, and plenty amount of leisure time activities even before the Covid-19 crisis. Furthermore, due to the decreased private support and public spending, performing arts organizations have been going through serious challenging times (Tubillejas-Andrés, Cervera-Taulet and García, 2020) and falling over hundreds of years (Wilson and Goldfarb, 2015). Since the last century, a small number of people have participated in the performances, the quality of art forms has been threatened, and the younger generation has not been able to perform the arts at the cultural and economic levels (Askegaard, 1999).

2.2. Marketing of performing arts during the Covid-19 crisis

In addition to the traditional challenges of performing arts organizations, the Covid-19 pandemic made pressure on performing arts organizations to rethink their production methods, directions, and approaches to survive in business (Terracini, 2020). Therefore, the traditional challenges and the Covid-19 both impacted seriously on the art and cultural sectors especially in the performing arts in a wide-angle view, and the sector was hit hard by the pandemic (Julia and Brady, 2020). All organizations were forced to ban physical access to the buildings and the processes during the pandemic, one of them was arts organizations, which resulted in more challenges and difficulties for the art market such as full lockdowns, income losses, and job insecurity for artists and employees, travel restrictions (Banks and O'Connor, 2020), event postpones and cancellations, and government or private support delays (Daley, 2021). Furthermore, the government put immediate limitations on travel and event gatherings amid the Covid-19 crisis.

Cultural participation is a significant factor in a human's quality of time (Baranowski, Korczak and Zając, 2020). However, during the pandemic period, people spent their time with their families, and most of the outdoor leisure activities were consumed tremendously like running, hiking, and biking. In this moment of global crisis, art consumption is frequently put aside from utilization. To ensure artistic consumption, cultural organizations shifted their activities to hybrid adapting to the pandemic regulations. One possible option to run their activities was online access, which could help people to boost their mental health, ease isolation, and meet their cultural and educational needs (Samaroudi, Echavarria and Perry, 2020).

An essential consequence of the pandemic for performing arts is the gigantic growth in the use of technologies and learning (Baicu, et al., 2020). Digital and technological media are

important tools of marketing communication for arts organizations to attract new audiences and build a loyal relationship with their existing audiences. Performing arts organizations also were adjusting their marketing strategies with digital and social media to connect with their audiences, provide an intensive experience, and advertise their activities. During the long-term pandemic period, those performing arts organizations faced changing their activities totally to a digital turn. According to a research, technological services used less by older and low-income people (Cruz-Cárdenas, et al., 2019). Whereas, most of the consumers of performing arts organizations segmented as the highest part of the society such as middle-aged, educated, and well-paid, therefore it was an advantage to reach out to their audiences effortlessly, and to plan sufficient digital marketing strategies. On the one hand, it was an advantage for performing arts organizations to organize online events because it made huge possibilities to watch their performances from all around the world, and also helped to boost the reputation and favorable image of the art world in the network sufficiently (Pashkus, Pashkus and Koltsova, 2021).

3. Methodology

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted strongly the arts industry, as a result, the art market has changed tremendously worldwide. It is critical to understand and provide a comprehensive view of the market condition, the role of marketing, and the effects of Covid-19 in the arts, particularly in the sphere of the performing arts. To assure reliable and valid results for the research, this research adopts a systematic literature review approach. Differing from a traditional literature review, a systematic literature review adopts a scientific, transparent, and replicable process. This leads to an evolving collaborative insight based on a theoretical synthesis of existing works (Cook, et al., 1997).

To discover sufficient literature, the search is conducted within the academic literature including Scopus and Web of Science databases, as they are considered the largest, most popular, and multidisciplinary scientific online databases. For this systematic search, the following keyword search terms are used: "Arts" AND "Marketing" AND "Covid*". All search results are included until the 12th of January in 2022. These statistics can be utilized to demonstrate the huge changes in the performing arts during the pandemic period from a marketing point of view.

The selection criteria of this research are based on the PRISMA statement (Moher, et al., 2009). The research principally focused on existing literature mapping the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on marketing in the field of arts and then narrowed it down to the specific field of performing arts. The results from the initial search are cultivated into three stages as follows: initial identification, screening criteria, and final clarification. In the first stage, 7 research resulted in Scopus, and 165 research resulted in Web of Science, including articles, review articles, early accesses, proceedings papers, editorial materials, conference papers, and a book chapter. For filtering, a total of 44 results are excluded in this stage due to their research areas. Overall, 128 results are exported with full records to the Excel file for further analysis. In the second stage, to preserve the quality of the review, all duplications are checked carefully. First, research abstracts were screened thoroughly, and then a careful evaluation of the full papers was examined to determine the relevance for further analysis. 40 results were excluded due to their research areas, document types, and languages and a total of 88 results have transferred to RIS, CSV, and Tab-delimited formats for further analysis. In the final stage, 6 results were from Scopus and 82 results from Web of Science, then overall 88 results were analyzed using a descriptive analysis method, and the VOSviewer program. All the literature inclusion and exclusion criteria at every stage are shown in Figure 1.

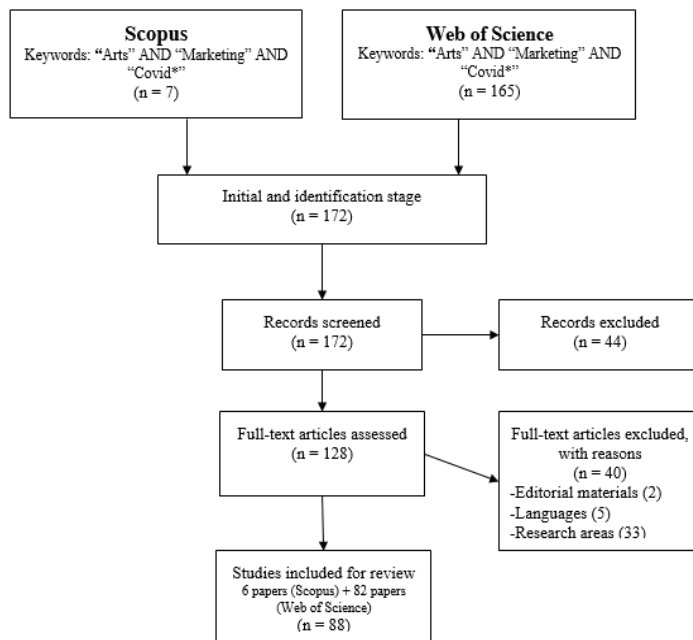


Figure 1: A flow diagram based on PRISMA statement: summary of systematic search and review process

Source: Author’s processing based on own data (2022)

4. Results

The results of this systematic literature review disclose the important findings of the research. The author chose the following results from the VOSviewer analysis to demonstrate the significant changes in the field including categorization of the years, countries, journals, co-occurrence of the keywords, and the most crucial finding is the digital transformation of marketing in the field of performing arts during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

4.1. The outline of the year

During the Covid-19 pandemic period, a total of 88 publications have found on Scopus and Web of Science databases in this area. 11 of all publications have published in 2020. Whereas, the number of publications increased rapidly in 2021 accounting for 77 of 88 publications, which is a dominant resource of the publications in this systematic review overall. Each company, organization, and industry are challenged to reassess their strategies due to the impact of Covid-19 throughout the world, one of them is performing arts organizations. The pandemic period is still going on, and we are not going back to normal life easily. Therefore, the number of publications seems to increase in the upcoming years more focusing on how to make sufficient strategies and to adapt them in this transformation period, likewise how to pass this challenging period without any loss.

4.2. The outline of the country

Figure 2 reports the outline of the countries analyzed in this paper. The majority of the papers are published in Australia (purple), followed by England (blue), India (yellow), the USA (green), Canada (purple), some of the European countries, and China (purple). Most of

the works connected each other in one way or another in terms of countries, and the high number of works published in developed countries as is customary. It suggested that there are more research works needed for the market of performing arts from other developed and developing countries.

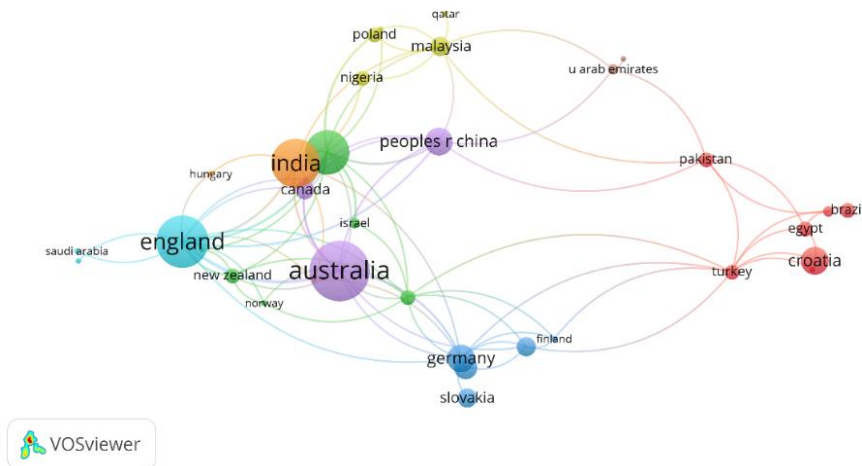


Figure 2. The number of publications by country (network visualization)
Source: Author's analysis based on own data (2022)

4.3. The outline of the journal

This research study included a wide range of journals, which applies to many different research fields. A total number of publications were published in 65 scientific journals, and the most published journals are shown in Figure 3. Colors of the figure range from blue, green, and yellow. A high number of items and weights is indicated by a yellow color, and reversely, the low number of items and weights is indicated by blue color. The below figure demonstrates that the highest 5 journals are Arts, Interdisciplinary management, Contemporary economics, Cogent Arts & Humanities, and Marketing identity: COVID-2.0. A top journal is Arts, with a total number of 9 papers altogether. The publications in those journals mainly referred to the impact of Covid-19 on the role of marketing in performing arts organizations from different perspectives.

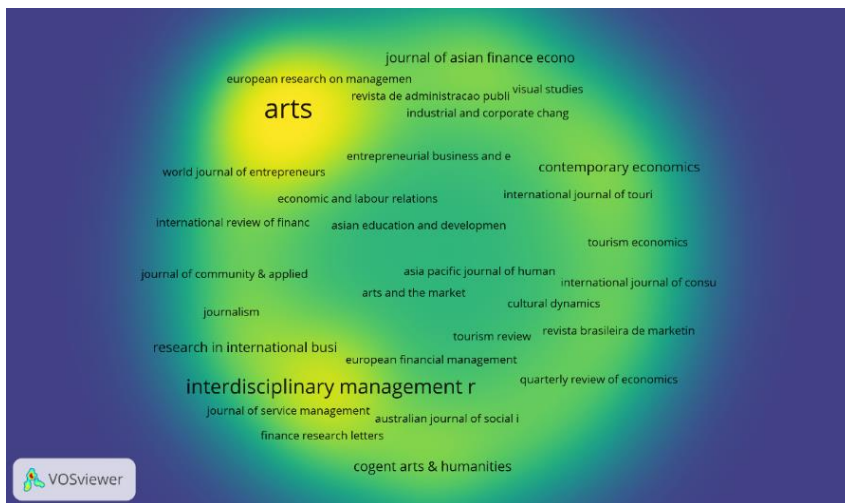


Figure 3. The number of publications by journals (density visualization)
 Source: Author's analysis based on own data (2022)

4.4. The outline of the co-occurrence

A co-occurrence map reveals the total number of occurrences of a keyword in all documents, and deliberate the publication hotspots in the discipline zones. Figure 4 revealed the relation between keywords of the publications studied in this paper. Every keyword is clustered into colors, the highest number of keyword occurrences represented by a bigger circle frame, and generally, all clusters are strongly connected to each other. A shorter distance between clusters reveals a strong relation, and inversely a longer distance between clusters shows a weak relation between them. From the 88 publications, the VOSviewer revealed 560 keywords totally, and the most relevant clusters were Covid-19*, digital transformation, art* market, impacts, arts marketing, marketing, and determinants.

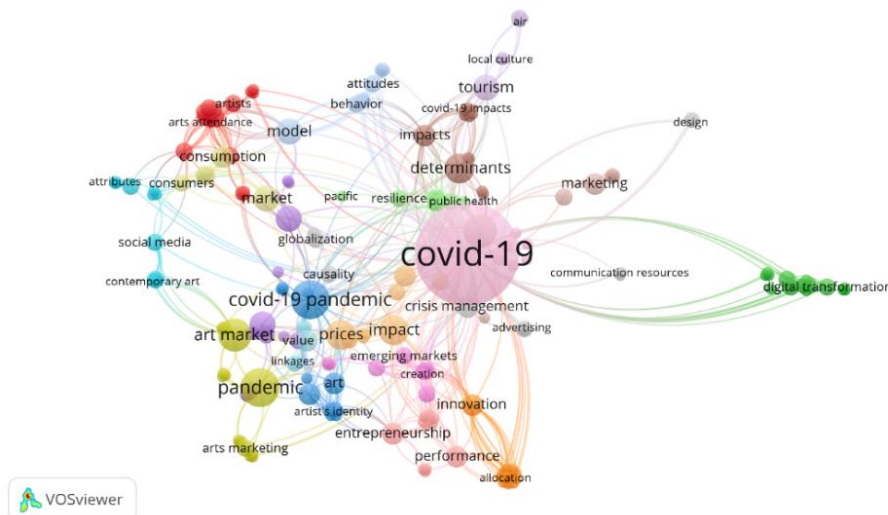


Figure 4. Co-occurrence map of keywords (network visualization)

Source: Author's analysis based on own data (2022)

The first big cluster was Covid-19 (pink), which indicated a powerful keyword factor of all publications. Other clusters connected with a short distance beside a digital transformation

(green). As mentioned above, a long-distance connection indicates a weak relation with other indicators or clusters. Figure 4 reports that a digital transformation cluster is a new concept and only associated with the Covid-19* cluster firmly, therefore which assume that a digital transformation item has aroused due to the impact of the Covid-19*.

4.5. Digital transformation

Digital platforms, social media, and online payments are supporting arts organizations to be creative and innovative (Holliman and Rowley, 2014). Mostly, arts organizations create digital content such as videos, podcasts, and ad-funded content, and upload them to a website, web pages, and other platforms. Digital contents also include e-books, whitepapers, podcasts, blog or vlog posts, videos, and everything that audiences expect from digital platforms (Halvorson, Rach and Cancilla, 2012). Due to the consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, cultural and arts organizations shifted their activities to digital platforms more strongly ever than before. Generally, digital channels provide new business opportunities, transactions, and purchases at a distance, communication, and networking all through the world for the art market (Samdanis, 2016). Since the beginning of the epidemic, consumption patterns have vanished such as public, indoor, and physical, and while on the contrary other consumption patterns have risen fiercely, they are slighter influenced by social distancing such as virtual or digital, open-access, and home (Radermecker, 2020). Cultural and arts organizations were trying to adjust digital innovations and transformations in their activities responding to this demand including online live events, virtual exhibitions or sales, free open access to materials, videos, 3D concerts, and so on. Even before the pandemic, these digital innovations made a huge profit for some platforms such as Spotify, Netflix, Amazon, and contrarily theatres and museums had to change their business models and strategies promptly to this challenge by increasing their digital and online access, availability, visibility, and creating new contents (Borowiecki and Navarrete, 2017).

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, arts attendance and funding have decreased significantly in the long-term, however, on the other side, it impelled the arts organizations to do online transformation totally (Bell, 2021). During this lockdown period, cultural and arts organizations created new online content and modified their existing materials (Szedmák, 2021). Also, audiences had only one option to choose online cultural content all over the world during the lockdown period, and these kinds of online activities helped audiences to decrease the feeling of isolation, upgrade their mental health, and reinforce the educational and creative needs of various audiences. During a pandemic period especially at the beginning of 2020, the number of online audiences has increased significantly, and millions of people changed their everyday lifestyles such as work, education, and social activities to digital and online platforms to meet the requirement for social distancing (Samaroudi, Echavarria and Perry, 2020). Moreover, artists started to explore ways to reach their audiences online and distributed their ongoing projects and existing artworks on social platforms (Banks and Connor, 2020). However, it was sorrowful for musicians to play in an empty theatre to connect with their audiences online (Keen, 2020), and on the other hand, it was a new challenge for artists to transform their experiences into a digital universe.

5. Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted hugely on everyone's life, moreover strongly on business, industrial companies, and non-profit organizations. One of them was cultural and arts organizations and these organizations needed to change their strategies and operations during this period. In the field of performing arts, the Covid-19 has brought many changes, challenges, and consequences. Therefore, it was necessary to study how to surmount this pandemic period, identify further directions, and how to adapt those challenges to their future organizational goals and strategies. Based on these reasons, this study attempted to

understand the impact of the Covid-19 on the marketing of the field of performing arts and revealed significant findings which can be a valuable contribution to arts and performing arts organizations. In this paper, a total of 88 publications were analyzed systematically. The number of publications has increased rapidly in 2021 compared with 2020. Those works have been published mostly in Australia, the USA, Canada, and England, and in the future, there are more research works necessary for the market of performing arts from other developed and developing countries. A substantial finding during the Covid-19 period in the performing arts sector was a digital turn and transformation. Performing arts is a service organization, where audiences get physical experiences of attending their performances. Therefore, it was challenging to transform their strategies and activities into digital platforms. In the upcoming years, it is obvious that firms and organizations will continue their activities and functions more actively on digital platforms. Therefore, this paper provides future recommendations for firms and organizations on using and incorporating digital and social media mainly in their processes. Moreover, digital marketing is expected to expand its dimensions wider in the field of arts organizations. Future research is suggested to fill the gap of how performing arts organizations changed their business and marketing strategies, and how to implement those strategies and their functions into the big transformations and changes aroused by the impact of Covid-19.

Due to the pandemic, the art market is changing tremendously and this topic has still remained understudied. The main limitations of this systematic literature review are research methods, disciplines, and territories; thus, it is suggested for future studies focus on collecting primary and secondary data to examine the market and marketing changes and difficulties during the pandemic period in other arts disciplines at a global level extensively.

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Bio-note

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