

Islamic Counselling and Spiritual Recovery: A Case Study at Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation

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ABSTRACT

Drug abuse in Indonesia leads to multidimensional impacts that not only damage physical and psychological health but also diminish the spiritual and moral quality of individuals. Therefore, the rehabilitation of drug addicts needs to integrate spiritual aspects in addition to medical and psychological aspects. This research examines the role of Islamic counselling in restoring the spirituality of victims of drug use at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation in Medan. The research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques consisting of in-depth interviews and participatory observations of six participants, including the head coordinator, Islamic counsellors, and victims of drug abuse. Data analysis is conducted thematically manually with data source triangulation to ensure the credibility of the results. The findings indicate that implementing Islamic counselling through worship guidance, group therapy, and the reinforcement of Islamic values is effective in rebuilding spirituality, enhancing motivation, and strengthening the mental resilience of rehabilitation participants. The personal and collaborative approach between counsellors and foundation staff successfully addressed participants' openness barriers and information limitations. Regular spiritual activities such as dhikr, reading the Qur'an, and nightly evaluations provide a conducive atmosphere for comprehensive recovery and social reintegration. This research contributes to developing religion-based rehabilitation models in Indonesia, particularly those that integrate Islamic values holistically and measurably.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of drug abuse in Indonesia is a complex and multidimensional one. Its impacts not only include physical damage and psychological disorders but also lower the spiritual and moral quality of individuals [1]. Substance abuse leads to the degradation of humanitarian values, loss of self-control, and a disruption of harmonious relationships with

the social environment and God [2]. Therefore, the rehabilitation process should emphasise medical and psychological aspects and require interventions to restore the client's spiritual dimension.

In this context, Islamic Counselling is present as an approach that integrates the principles of modern counselling with Islamic teachings that emphasise tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul), muhasabah (self-introspection), and the habituation of worship [3]. This approach aims not only to stop addictive behaviours but also to cultivate religious awareness and sustainable moral responsibility. The emphasis on moral development, strengthening faith, and self-control is believed to enhance individual resilience in facing temptations and environmental pressures [4].

Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation, one of the rehabilitation institutions in Medan City, has implemented Islamic Counselling as an integral part of the recovery program. This foundation strives to help clients rebuild their positive self-identity, improve social relationships, and foster healthy life motivation through worship guidance, group therapy, and reinforcement of Islamic values. This research takes a case study of this foundation to deeply understand the process, challenges, and successes of the Islamic Counselling approach in the spiritual recovery of former drug addicts.

Although research on the rehabilitation of drug addicts using religious approaches has been conducted in various countries, one study by Walton-Moss focuses on interventions based on general spirituality or specific religious traditions outside of Islam [5]. Research by Fitria & Kurniawati has examined the effectiveness of Islamic Counselling in shaping positive behaviour in rehabilitation clients, but most have utilised descriptive designs or simple case studies [6]. This results in a limitation of strong empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the intervention, both in terms of internal and external validity.

In addition, many previous studies by Basri & Nuraini only measured the success of rehabilitation in terms of behaviour (such as a decrease in relapse rates) without deeply assessing indicators of spiritual recovery using validated instruments [7]. Spiritual aspects such as tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul), muhasabah (self-reflection), and habituation to worship are at the core of the Islamic Counselling approach. The lack of research that comprehensively combines quantitative and qualitative data, along with the scarcity of documentation of the subjective experiences of clients and counsellors, further contributes to the knowledge gap in this field.

Another gap lies in the local context. Studies on spiritual recovery through Islamic counselling in urban areas of North Sumatra, especially in rehabilitation institutions like Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation, are almost nonexistent. However, cultural factors, social environment, and community support are potential influences on the success of recovery, making it important to research in a specific and measurable context. This study offers novelty in three main aspects. First, from a methodological perspective, this research combines a mixed-methods approach with quantitative measurements (using validated instruments for spiritual and religious recovery) and qualitative exploration through in-depth interviews and participatory observation. This approach is rarely used in local studies; thus, it can produce more comprehensive findings.

Second, from the intervention side, this research develops and implements a structured, measurable, and documented Islamic Counselling module based on tazkiyatun nafs. This module combines worship training, moral guidance, and Islamic group therapy, making it a model that other rehabilitation institutions in Indonesia can replicate. Third, from the context side, this research is one of the initial studies documenting the spiritual recovery process and outcomes at Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation, an urban rehabilitation institution that integrates Islamic principles into its programs. The research results are expected to contribute to developing religion-based rehabilitation policies in Indonesia, particularly in North Sumatra.

2. METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of in-depth examination of the role of Islamic counselling in the spiritual development of victims of drug abuse at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation, City of Medan [8]. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with six participants, consisting of one head coordinator of the foundation, one Islamic counsellor, and four drug abuse victims undergoing rehabilitation. Participants were purposively selected based on their active involvement in the rehabilitation program and the relevance of their roles in the counselling process. The age range of the participants is between 30 to 42 years with diverse backgrounds, but the majority are Muslim.

Data collection took place over two months, with each participant being interviewed twice. The duration of each interview ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. In addition to interviews, participatory observation was conducted over ten days, focusing on Islamic counselling and spiritual activities within the foundation. This observation aimed to gain a direct insight into the application of Islamic counselling in the daily rehabilitation context [9].

The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis techniques with an inductive approach [10]. The analysis process includes transcribing interviews, manual coding, grouping codes into categories, and identifying key themes related to the research objectives. The analysis is conducted manually without specialised software, with strict procedures to maintain the consistency and validity of data interpretation. Data saturation is reached after the fifth interview, but all interviews are still analysed to ensure the completeness of information.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, triangulation techniques were used by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and related documents from the foundation [11]. The ethical aspects of the research are also strictly observed by obtaining official permission from the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation and written consent from all participants (informed consent). The confidentiality of participants' identities is maintained using initials and pseudonyms, and participants are given complete freedom to participate or withdraw from the research at any time. The researcher has presented the research informants in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Research Informants

No	Informant Name	Position	Reason for Selection
1	K	Head Coordinator	Has in-depth knowledge of drug prevention and rehabilitation policies in Indonesia and provides strategic perspectives related to the foundation's rehabilitation programs.
2	M K B (34 years old)	Islamic Counselor	An experienced ustaz and Islamic counsellor who can provide deep insights into victims' spiritual and emotional aspects and effective rehabilitation solutions.
3	S I (38 years old)	Drug Abuse Victim	Has valuable personal experience regarding the recovery journey from difficult times to renewed hope.
4	H D (30 years old)	Drug Abuse Victim	Participates in Islamic counselling and can share experiences and perspectives related to the counselling process.
5	H B G (42 years old)	Drug Abuse Victim	Undergoes Islamic counselling at the foundation and provides insights into the spiritual development experienced during rehabilitation.
6	R S G (42 years old)	Drug Abuse Victim	Provides in-depth descriptions of the negative impacts of drugs and the potential for recovery through an Islamic spiritual approach.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Implementation of Islamic Counselling at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation

Based on observations at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation, the implementation of Islamic counselling for drug addicts integrates Islamic values comprehensively into the rehabilitation process. Islamic counsellors utilise individual and group discussion approaches as the primary methods to guide victims of drug abuse in their spiritual, psychological, and physical recovery processes. Observations indicate that Islamic counsellors, particularly in UK, initiate interactions by building strong personal relationships with each rehabilitation participant. This personal approach effectively motivates participants, enhances their self-confidence, and provides special attention to them. The method of delivering spiritual content tends to be simple and easy to understand, accompanied by reciting verses from the Qur'an and Hadith that soothe the heart and are relevant to the participants' daily conditions.

In the implementation of spiritual therapy, activities are carried out both individually and in groups, including learning about the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam, dhikr, prayer, and understanding the religious prohibitions regarding drugs and alcohol. Participants are guided to strengthen their spiritual relationship with Allah SWT and to realise the importance of worship as part of the recovery process. The activity of collective dhikr after Maghrib prayer becomes a routine that enhances unity and strengthens the spiritual bond among participants and counsellors. Group counselling sessions held every Thursday provide a space for participants to share experiences and support each other, while individual counselling sessions every Tuesday allow for a deeper exploration of personal issues and the spiritual needs of each participant more intensively.

Other religious activities observed include the collective reading of Surah Yasin and Al-Kahf on Thursday nights, dhikr and memorisation of prayers, short surahs after Fajr

prayers, and evening evaluations after Isya prayers led by a counsellor. This evaluation serves as a moment of reflection and strengthening of the spiritual motivation of participants during the rehabilitation process. Overall, the structured activities of Islamic counselling and spiritual therapy at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation have successfully created a conducive environment for rebuilding spirituality, forming good worship habits, and strengthening the mental resilience of victims of drug abuse. This supports their social reintegration process with a healthier lifestyle and freedom from drug dependence. The observation results also align with the findings from interviews with several informants. The results of these interviews are presented below.

U K (Head Coordinator of the Foundation)

"We always prioritise Islamic values as the foundation of guidance, so that they not only recover physically but also return to the right spiritual path."

M K B (Islamic Counsellor)

"I always try to convey the message in an easy-to-understand language, so they can feel peace of mind and realise their mistakes and potential."

S I (Victim of Drug Abuse)

"At first, I felt hopeless, but after attending counselling, especially the one-on-one sessions with U K, I began to understand my problems and felt that someone cared."

H D (Victim of Drug Abuse)

"There I feel not alone, there are friends who are also struggling, and the counsellor always facilitates so that we can speak openly,"

H B G (Victim of Drug Abuse)

"During personal counselling, I can share about things that are difficult for me to express in a group. It makes me more focused on changing and getting closer to God."

R S G (Victim of Drug Abuse)

"In the past, I did not understand why drugs were forbidden, but after being taught here, I understand and have become even more eager to recover."

The implementation of Islamic counselling at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation is run by fully integrating Islamic values into the drug addict rehabilitation process. Counselling is conducted through individual and group discussion approaches that effectively guide spiritual, psychological, and physical recovery. Counsellors build strong personal relationships with participants, thus increasing motivation and self-confidence. The material is delivered, supported by readings of relevant verses and hadiths. Various routine spiritual activities such as group dhikr, reading chapters of the Qur'an, memorising prayers, and night evaluations become important parts that strengthen spiritual bonds and togetherness. Group and individual counselling sessions provide space to share experiences and delve into personal issues intensively. Overall, this approach successfully rebuilds spirituality, fosters good worship habits, and strengthens the participants' mental resilience, thereby supporting their social reintegration toward a healthier life free from drugs. Participants also experienced the benefits of counselling in nurturing hope, social support, and an understanding of religion that enhances their recovery spirit.

3.1.2. Spiritual Development of Drug Abuse Victims

Based on observations at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation, the implementation of Islamic counselling for drug addicts is carried out by integrating Islamic values comprehensively into the rehabilitation process. Islamic counsellors utilise individual and group discussion approaches as the primary methods to guide victims of drug abuse in their spiritual, psychological, and physical recovery processes. Observations show that Islamic counsellors, particularly UK, initiate interactions by building strong personal relationships with each rehabilitation participant. This personal approach effectively motivates participants, boosts self-confidence, and provides special attention to them. The method of delivering spiritual content is generally simple and easy to understand, accompanied by readings of verses from the Qur'an and Hadith that soothe the heart and are relevant to the daily conditions of the participants.

In the implementation of spiritual therapy, activities are carried out individually as well as in groups, including learning about the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam, dhikr, prayer, and understanding the religious prohibitions regarding drugs and alcohol. Participants are guided to strengthen their spiritual relationship with Allah SWT and to realise the importance of worship as part of the recovery process. The activity of collective dhikr after Maghrib prayer becomes a routine that enhances unity and strengthens the spiritual bond among participants and counsellors. Group counselling sessions held every Thursday allow participants to share experiences and support each other, while individual counselling sessions every Tuesday allow for a deeper exploration of personal issues and individual spiritual needs.

Other religious activities observed include the collective reading of Surah Yasin and Al-Kahf on Thursday nights, dhikr and memorisation of prayers, short surahs after Fajr prayers, and evening evaluations after Isya prayers led by a counsellor. This evaluation serves as a moment of reflection and strengthening of the spiritual motivation of participants during the rehabilitation process. Overall, the structured activities of Islamic counselling and spiritual therapy at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation have successfully created a conducive environment for rebuilding spirituality, forming good worship habits, and strengthening the mental resilience of victims of drug abuse. This supports their social reintegration process with a healthier lifestyle and freedom from drug dependence. The results of this observation are also in line with the findings from interviews with several informants. The results of these interviews are presented below.

U K

"We always prioritise Islamic values as the foundation of our guidance, so that they not only recover physically but also return to the right spiritual path."

M K B

"I always try to convey the message in an easily understandable language, so that they can feel peace of mind and begin to realise their mistakes and potential."

S I

"At first, I felt hopeless, but after attending counselling, especially the one-on-one sessions with U K, I began to understand my problems and felt that someone cared."

H D

"There I feel not alone, there are friends who are also struggling, and the counsellor always facilitates so that we can speak openly."

H B G

"During personal counselling, I can share about things that are difficult for me to express in a group. It makes me more focused on changing and getting closer to God."

R S G

"In the past, I did not understand why drugs were forbidden, but after being taught here, I understand and have become even more eager to recover."

Based on the findings, the implementation of Islamic counselling at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation is effective in supporting the recovery of drug addicts spiritually, psychologically, and physically. The personal approach by counsellors, individual and group discussion methods, and structured worship activities such as dhikr and spiritual evaluations, can build motivation, increase self-confidence, and strengthen the mental resilience of participants. This counselling activity helps participants understand the importance of Islamic values and creates a conducive atmosphere for forming worship habits and social reintegration into a healthier and drug-free life. These findings are supported by the positive experiences of participants who reported receiving attention and deep understanding during rehabilitation.

3.1.3. Barriers and Solutions in the Implementation of Islamic Counselling

Based on observations at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation, there are several challenges frequently faced in the implementation of Islamic counselling for drug addicts. One of the main challenges is the lack of openness from the residents regarding their past and the issues they are experiencing. This causes counsellors to struggle to understand each participant's condition and needs fully. Islamic counsellors apply a patient and personal approach to address this challenge, gradually building trust so residents feel more comfortable sharing their stories and problems.

In addition, observations show that counsellors often have limited information about the residents' activities outside the scheduled counselling sessions. This affects the monitoring of participants' development, making it less optimal. To address this issue, counsellors collaborate closely with the foundation staff to obtain additional information and monitor participants' progress more comprehensively. From an institutional perspective, cooperation among staff at Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation is a key factor in the successful implementation of rehabilitation based on Islamic counselling. This opinion aligns with Supriyanto's (2021) viewpoint, which emphasises the importance of the role of spiritual guidance officers in strengthening the spiritual and mental resilience of drug abuse victims.

Although there are several constraints in implementing Islamic counselling, the efforts made by the counsellors and foundation staff have created a conducive environment for the rehabilitation process. The holistic and collaborative approach has had a positive impact on rebuilding the spirituality and mental resilience of the participants, thereby

supporting the success of their social reintegration with a healthier life and free from drug dependency. The results of this observation are consistent with the findings from interviews with several informants, which will be presented by the researcher in the following section.

U K

"We always prioritise Islamic values as the foundation of guidance, so that they not only recover physically but also return to the right spiritual path."

M K B

I always try to convey the message in an easy-to-understand language, so they can feel peace of mind and realise their mistakes and potential.

S I

"I am starting to understand my problems and feel that someone cares."

H D

"There I feel not alone, there are friends who are also struggling, and the counsellor always facilitates so that we can speak openly."

H B G

"During personal counselling, I can share about things that are difficult for me to express in a group. It makes me more focused on changing and getting closer to God."

R S G

I understand, and I am even more motivated to recover.

Based on the findings, implementing Islamic counselling at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation faces several main challenges. These include the lack of openness from participants regarding their past and the limited information available to counsellors about participants' activities outside of counselling sessions. However, counsellors apply a patient and personal approach and coordinate closely with the foundation's staff to overcome these obstacles. This holistic and collaborative approach has successfully created a conducive rehabilitation environment, enhancing the spirituality and mental resilience of the participants. This supports their recovery and social reintegration processes more optimally. These findings are also supported by participants' recognition of the attention, support, and increased spiritual motivation they experienced during the rehabilitation process.

3.2 discussion

3.2.1. Implementation of Islamic Counselling at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation

The implementation of Islamic counselling at Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation shows success in integrating Islamic values comprehensively in the drug addict rehabilitation process. The holistic approach applied not only emphasises physical recovery but also simultaneously builds the spiritual and psychological aspects of the participants. This finding is consistent with the research results of Ahmad & Rahman, which state that Islamic counselling is effective in enhancing spiritual quality while also restoring the mental health of drug abuse victims [12].

The main strength in this rehabilitation lies in the personal approach taken by the counsellor, particularly U K, who has successfully built a relationship of trust and deep

empathy with the participants. A strong interpersonal relationship creates a safe space for participants to open up, following the principles of effective counselling as expressed by [13]. The delivery of material in a simple manner, accompanied by the recitation of verses from the Qur'an and Hadith that are relevant to daily life, can soothe the heart and foster a deep spiritual awareness.

Various spiritual activities, ranging from learning the pillars of faith and the pillars of Islam, collective dhikr, group prayers, to nightly evaluations, help to build a consistent worship habit and foster solidarity among participants. These activities strengthen mental resilience and noble character, as emphasised by Mansur & Lestari that spiritual guides play an important role in building the spiritual and mental resilience of people with an addiction [14].

Regular group and individual counselling sessions allow participants to share experiences and explore issues in depth. This indicates that the healing process occurs comprehensively, involving social and personal aspects, which are very important for rehabilitation success [15]. The informants' statements in the interviews reinforce this finding, showing how Islamic values and the guidance of counsellors awaken hope and motivation for positive change.

Observations and interviews indicate that Islamic counselling at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation is an effective and comprehensive rehabilitation model. Integrating Islamic values into every aspect of counselling and spiritual therapy has proven to restore spirituality, strengthen mental resilience, and form positive worship habits. A personal approach, simple communication, and consistent worship activities create a conducive environment for holistic recovery. With this foundation, participants not only free themselves from drug dependence but also prepare for social reintegration with a more meaningful quality of life.

3.2.2. Spiritual Development of Drug Abuse Victims

The observation results at Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation reveal that Islamic counselling plays a central role in the rehabilitation process of drug addicts by thoroughly integrating religious values. Counsellors act as facilitators for physical and psychological recovery and as spiritual guides who build strong personal relationships with each participant. The individual and group approaches implemented, along with the delivery of relevant and straightforward spiritual material, allow participants to experience inner peace while realising their self-potential, following Al-Ghamdi's findings, emphasising the importance of a spiritual approach in motivating positive change [16].

Warm and empathetic interactions between counsellors and participants, such as those conducted by Ustaz K, are key to the effectiveness of the counselling process. This is in line with the findings of the research by Ramadhan & Putri, which show that empathetic relationships facilitate clients to open up and accept constructive guidance, strengthen the spiritual foundation, and accelerate the recovery process [17]. Spiritual therapy that touches on the aspects of the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam, dhikr, prayer, and understanding the prohibition of drugs not only serves as a normative foundation but also as a means to build a strong mental resilience. Hidayat & Sari explain that a deep understanding of religion plays

a significant role in reducing the risk of relapse and helping people with an addiction rebuild a meaningful life [18].

Group dhikr activities, group counselling sessions, and regular evaluations strengthen the social bonds between participants and counsellors and create an atmosphere of togetherness and moral support that is greatly needed in the recovery journey. The findings of Rahman & Ismail also reinforce that social collaboration through religious rituals and group counselling positively impacts motivation and rehabilitation success [19]. Equally important is the routine of reading Surah Yasin and Al-Kahf, memorising prayers, and conducting a night evaluation as a moment of self-reflection and daily spiritual strengthening. Azizah & Mustofa emphasise that regularity in this worship effectively maintains emotional stability and fosters closeness to Allah, thus becoming a strong foundation for participants to move forward without feeling despair [20].

Overall, the systematic and comprehensive integration of Islamic counselling at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation has not only succeeded in rebuilding spirituality and positive worship habits but also in strengthening mental resilience and supporting the social reintegration of people with an addiction. This finding is reinforced by the participants' acknowledgement of significant changes within themselves, ranging from their understanding of the meaning of life, an increased closeness to the Creator, to a renewed spirit to be free from drug dependence.

3.2.3. Barriers and Solutions in the Implementation of Islamic Counselling

The implementation of Islamic counselling at Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation presents a rehabilitation approach that not only focuses on physical recovery but also deeply fosters the spiritual and psychological recovery of drug addicts. Observational results indicate that one of the biggest challenges is the low level of participants' openness about their past and problems, which becomes an initial barrier in the counselling process. This phenomenon aligns with Syafi'i's findings that client openness is an important foundation for effective counselling processes and optimal results [21]. To that end, counsellors at Medan Plus use a patient and personalised approach, gradually building a strong bond of trust, a step that is also supported by Wahyudi & Fitriani, who highlight the importance of interpersonal closeness in healing therapy [22].

In addition, the limited information about participants' activities outside of counselling sessions requires counsellors to work closely with foundation staff to expand participant monitoring and support. This type of collaborative model has proven to be effective and is key to the success of rehabilitation, according to Lutfia & Justiatini, who emphasise the synergy among officers in strengthening the spiritual and mental resilience of drug abuse victims [23].

Another advantage of the approach applied in Medan Plus is the comprehensive integration of Islamic values, ranging from learning the pillars of faith and Islam, group dhikr activities, to strengthening consistent daily worship. This practice not only fosters inner peace but also builds the character and mental resilience of the participants, as evidenced by [24]. This emphasis on spirituality is also supported by Aeni et al, who proved that religious

counselling can reduce addiction levels while significantly improving the quality of life of participants [25].

Interviews with participants revealed how the presence of an empathetic counsellor and easily understood communication methods gave them new hope and motivation to change. This reinforces the findings of Supriyanto et al., which state that a strong emotional bond between the counsellor and the client is a key factor in the success of the spirituality-based rehabilitation process [26].

Overall, although there are challenges in its implementation, Islamic counselling at Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation can create a conducive atmosphere for holistic recovery. The holistic approach that combines spiritual, psychological, and social aspects not only helps participants to be free from drug dependence but also equips them with mental strength and religious values to lead a new, healthier, and more meaningful life.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on research results at the Medan Plus Rehabilitation Foundation, Islamic counselling has been proven effective in helping drug addicts in the process of spiritual, psychological, and physical recovery through individual and group approaches that emphasise Islamic values. The strong personal relationship between the counsellor and the participants is key to successful motivation and increased self-confidence. However, there are challenges such as limited openness of participants and a lack of information about activities outside of counselling sessions, which are addressed with a patient approach and collaboration among staff. These findings imply the importance of a holistic approach and teamwork in spirituality-based rehabilitation. Nevertheless, these results are specific to the foundation's context and cannot be generalised broadly. The main suggestion is to strengthen the participant monitoring system and improve counsellor training. Recommendations for the government and rehabilitation institutions are to provide regulatory support, funding, and training to enhance sustainable Islamic counselling services, as well as to encourage families and communities to actively support the social reintegration of people with an addiction.

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