




The Effectiveness of Cognitive Restructuring Counselling Containing *Wahdatul Ulum* Values to Increase Student Perseverance

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Abstract

In the modern era of academic pressure, individuals often face psychological challenges that affect their ability to persevere and succeed. Cognitive restructuring counselling has been shown to be effective in changing an individual's mindset, but there have not been many studies examining the influence of the integration of spiritual values such as *Wahdatul Ulum* in this context. This study aims to explore the effect of integrating *Wahdatul Ulum* values in cognitive restructuring counselling to increase mental resilience and student perseverance. This study uses a *Research and Development* (R&D) approach to develop and test a cognitive restructuring counselling model that integrates the values of *Wahdatul Ulum*. The population is students of FITK UIN SU Medan class of 2020 totaling 195 students. The research sample was 32 BKPI students who were selected purposively. Instrument development by identifying and analyzing literature, expert validation, limited trials, and developing cognitive restructuring counselling models covering aspects of *Wahdatul Ulum* values. Data analysis used the Wilcoxon test that utilizes SPSS 25 to detect any significant changes. The results showed that the perseverance of the treatment group increased significantly, while the perseverance of the control group decreased. These findings support the idea that the integration of spiritual values in counselling can provide an effective holistic approach to improving individual resilience. This research provides insight into how cognitive restructuring counselling with the *Wahdatul Ulum* approach can help students overcome psychological barriers and improve their ability to face challenges in daily life. The practical implication is that cognitive restructuring counselling with spiritual values can be an effective alternative to guidance and counselling services to improve students' perseverance and mental resilience.

Keywords: Perseverance, Cognitive Restructuring, Academic Resilience, *Wahdatul Ulum*

Abstrak

Pada era modern yang dipenuhi tekanan akademik, individu sering menghadapi tantangan psikologis yang mempengaruhi kemampuan untuk bertahan dan meraih keberhasilan. Konseling restrukturisasi kognitif telah terbukti efektif dalam mengubah pola pikir individu, tetapi belum banyak penelitian yang memeriksa pengaruh integrasi nilai-nilai spiritual seperti *Wahdatul Ulum* dalam konteks ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengaruh integrasi nilai-nilai *Wahdatul Ulum* dalam konseling restrukturisasi kognitif terhadap peningkatan ketahanan mental dan perseveransi mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan *Research and Development* (R&D) untuk mengembangkan dan menguji model konseling restrukturisasi kognitif yang mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai *Wahdatul Ulum*. Populasinya adalah mahasiswa FITK UIN SU Medan angkatan 2020 berjumlah 195 mahasiswa. Sampel penelitian sejumlah 32 mahasiswa BKPI yang dipilih secara purposive. Pengembangan instrumen dengan mengidentifikasi dan analisis literatur, validasi pakar, uji coba terbatas, dan pengembangan model konseling restrukturisasi kognitif yang mencakup aspek-aspek nilai-nilai *Wahdatul Ulum*. Analisis data menggunakan uji Wilcoxon yang memanfaatkan SPSS 25 untuk melihat peningkatan atau penurunan yang signifikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan perseverance kelompok perlakuan mengalami peningkatan yang signifikan, sedangkan perseverance kelompok kontrol mengalami penurunan. Temuan ini mendukung gagasan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai spiritual dalam konseling dapat memberikan pendekatan holistik yang efektif untuk meningkatkan ketahanan individu. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana konseling restrukturisasi kognitif dengan pendekatan *Wahdatul Ulum* dapat membantu mahasiswa mengatasi hambatan psikologis dan meningkatkan kemampuan untuk menghadapi tantangan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Implikasi praktisnya adalah bahwa konseling restrukturisasi kognitif dengan nilai-nilai spiritual dapat menjadi alternatif layanan bimbingan dan konseling yang efektif untuk meningkatkan ketekunan dan resiliensi mahasiswa.

Kata Kunci: Perseverance, Restrukturisasi Kognitif, Resiliensi Akademik, *Wahdatul Ulum*



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INTRODUCTION

Resilience and perseverance are very important aspects of human life (Cassidy, 2016). In the modern era filled with various pressures, challenges, and obstacles, individuals are often faced with situations where mental resilience is the key to achieving success. Resilience is not just the ability to overcome physical problems, but also the ability to face and overcome psychological obstacles that may arise on the way to achieving goals (Kutlu, et al., 2017).

One interesting approach to overcoming the decline in learning motivation is cognitive restructuring counselling. This approach focuses on changing individual mindsets and beliefs as a strategy for overcoming challenges (Utami Fitri & Kushendar, 2019). Research by Herdian shows that individuals with high levels of perseverance tend to be better able to overcome declining motivation and remain diligent in learning efforts (Herdian, 2022). Furthermore, perseverance is also closely related to grit, as explained by Datu, where perseverance becomes the key to achieving goals and desired results (Datu, 2021). The combination of perseverance and passion becomes the power to stay focused and try hard, despite difficulties, and show a deep and consistent love for certain goals or activities (Jachimowicz, et al., 2018). In addition, other studies show that perseverance also plays a crucial role in forming healthy living habits. This perseverance encourages shared awareness about health between students and teachers, as well as ensuring continued motivation in physical activity participation (Rutberg et al., 2020).

In future student business activities, consistency of interest and business

perseverance are important in the success of an entrepreneurial career (Salisu, et al., 2020). Other studies state that perseverance has a significant positive impact in shaping salesperson performance and commitment in a B2B sales environment (Lastner, et al., 2022). Other research points to perseverance as a moderating factor between psychological distress and life satisfaction. The results showed that perseverance of effort has a filtering effect on the negative impact of psychological stress on life satisfaction. The implication is, that the level of perseverance of effort can be a modifiable factor to improve positive outcomes in life (Boerma et al., 2020). Thus, perseverance is not only relevant in the context of learning but also has a significant impact on various aspects of life.

Preliminary studies conducted show that the level of academic resilience of students in the aspect of perseverance is in the low category which is influenced by decreased learning motivation during the pandemic. This issue involves the challenge of maintaining focus and enthusiasm towards long-term academic goals. Factors such as high workload, academic pressure, or lack of social support can be obstacles to maintaining persistence. In this context, students may have difficulty sustaining diligent efforts, and this can affect their mental well-being and life satisfaction levels.

Approach CBT emphasizes that thoughts influence feelings and actions, and irrational or unhelpful core beliefs can contribute to anxiety and depression, affecting resilience. CBT was shown to increase the effectiveness of standard treatments by increasing persistence during exposure exercise for anxiety disorders (Randall & McNeil, 2017). Perseverance,

defined as the ability to pursue goals over time despite obstacles, is closely related to resilience, motivation, drive, determination, passion, and earnestness, and is considered essential for success in life (Garcia-Caballero et al., 2018). Cognitive counselling interventions, therefore, play an important role in improving perseverance. These interventions focus on increasing accurate and flexible thinking, increasing motivation for change, and developing a "completion mindset," all of which are essential for building resilience and perseverance. Therefore, individuals who want to improve their perseverance may benefit from cognitive counselling interventions.

However, in the context of an increasingly multicultural and diverse society (Akhmadi, 2019), there is also the potential to integrate spiritual values and principles in counselling in addition to cognitive restructuring approaches. One concept that is rich in the context of spiritual values is *Wahdatul Ulum* (Ritonga, 2022). *Wahdatul Ulum* is a concept in Islamic teachings that emphasizes the unity between exoteric and esoteric knowledge, with an emphasis on integrating knowledge with spiritual values (Harahap et al., 2022).

Although cognitive restructuring has been shown to be effective in changing an individual's mindset (Arsini et al., 2022), there have not been many studies that specifically examine the effect of applying the values of *Wahdatul Ulum* in this context (Talib et al., 2023). However, some sources indicate that *Wahdatul Ulum* can be integrated with various fields of science, including psychology and counselling (Harahap et al., 2022; Haris, 2021). Cognitive restructuring counselling can help individuals overcome problems and barriers in behavior and reward, so as to help individuals achieve happiness and

well-being in daily life (Mohamad Yusop et al., 2020). The inclusion of *Wahdatul Ulum* values in cognitive restructuring counselling can assist individuals in developing a better understanding and appreciation of themselves, others, and the world flanking the region (Fridayanto, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to investigate how cognitive restructuring counselling that utilizes the values of *Wahdatul Ulum* affects the increase in the level of individual perseverance in the face of obstacles and obstacles.

METHOD

This study aims to expand the cognitive restructuring approach by integrating the values of *Wahdatul Ulum* in the counselling process. This research uses research and development methods (Borg et al., 1984; Zakariah, et al., 2020). Instrument developed by identifying and analyzing literature, expert validation, limited trials, and developing cognitive restructuring counselling models covering aspects of *Wahdatul Ulum* values. The research participants were students of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra Medan, class of 2020 with a population of 11 study programs totaling 195 students, namely Islamic Religious Education Study Program, Arabic, Islamic Education Counseling Guidance, English Tadris, Mathematics Education, Early Childhood Education, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education, Islamic Management Education, Social Studies Teaching, Biology Teaching, Tadris Indonesian The research sample for the trial was 32 students (16 students for the treatment group and 16 students for the control group) selected by purposive. The application of *Wahdatul Ulum* values in counseling sessions, counselors can provide

more comprehensive and integrated support to students to increase academic resilience, especially aspects of perseverance. The integration of *Wahdatul Ulum* values in cognitive restructuring creates new opportunities to incorporate spiritual elements (Abdurrahman, 2019) in an effort to increase mental resilience and the ability of individuals to face challenges in daily life.

Data analysis using non-parametric tests using the Wilcoxon test through the SPSS 25 program to see significant increases or decreases. The construct of model development is carried out with the theory of academic resilience developed by Cassidy (2016), expert assessment, and model trials. Data analysis using statistical tests, Wilcoxon test. Based on the results of empirical tests, cognitive restructuring guidance has been proven effective in increasing student persistence. Research findings show that the cognitive restructuring guidance model can be used as an alternative to guidance and counselling services so that students can improve student persistence.

RESULT

The implementation of the cognitive restructuring guidance model intervention by applying *Wahdatul Ulum* values was carried out in five sessions as follows: a) Before being given treatment or intervention, students were given a pretest first, from the results of the pretest data processing, 32 students had a low level of academic resilience and had insignificantly different characteristics; b) Implementation of cognitive restructuring model to improve academic resilience skills of students who experience academic problems.

The implementation stage of cognitive restructuring techniques is based

on an agreement between researchers as counsellors and BKPI students in semester V of North Sumatra State Islamic University Medan who are samples and counsellors, agreements related to time, place, and tools/media used. The group counselling service process in this study was planned for 6 meeting sessions with an allocation of approximately 120 minutes/session. The details of each session are as follows: 1) Introduction, is an orientation to form and consolidate with students who are research samples. In the introduction session, *Wahdatul Ulum* values which include the integration of religious sciences and general sciences at UIN North Sumatra Medan can be described through a holistic approach to counselling. It refers to a thorough understanding of the balance between scientific and religious aspects in shaping the mindset of individuals; 2) Session I, is the stage of implementing group guidance services using a cognitive restructuring model with the theme "How to deal with academic problems". This session reflects the value of openness to various views and experiences, as well as simplicity in dealing with academic problems. This is in line with the principles of *Wahdatul Ulum* which encourage deep understanding and appreciation of the complexity of science; 3) Session II, is the stage of implementing group guidance services using a cognitive restructuring model with the theme "Telling and asking".

In this session, *Wahdatul Ulum* values such as dialogue and involvement can be reflected in the communication between counsellors and counsellors. It reflects the importance of speaking and asking questions in the learning process and cognitive restructuring; 4) Session III, is the stage of implementing group guidance services using a cognitive restructuring

model with the theme "The right way to learn". This session puts forward the value of a deep understanding of the right way to learn, in line with the principles of *Wahdatul Ulum* which encourage a deeper understanding of various aspects of science; 5) Session IV, is the stage of implementing group guidance services using a cognitive restructuring model with the theme "Why I find it difficult to understand lessons". This session reflects the importance of understanding that science does not have to be separated into separate categories, but can be integrated. In this context, students can be invited to understand how knowledge from various subjects or disciplines can help in understanding difficult subject matter. In the context of cognitive restructuring, the active involvement of students in the learning and counselling process is key. This reflects the value of *Wahdatul Ulum* which encourages full involvement in understanding complex issues. A holistic understanding of the causes of difficulty in understanding lessons is an important value in *Wahdatul Ulum*. This includes recognizing that academic problems are not necessarily limited to technical issues, but can involve psychological, social, and spiritual factors.

Students need to learn to be more tolerant of themselves when facing difficulties in understanding lessons. This means understanding that each individual has a different level of understanding, and it is an ongoing process. These sessions can provide opportunities for students to develop self-leadership in overcoming academic difficulties. This reflects the value of *Wahdatul Ulum* which combines moral and ethical aspects in the learning process; 6) Session V, is the stage of implementing group guidance using a cognitive restructuring model with the theme

"Interpreting the situation positively". In this session, the value of optimism in interpreting the situation positively can be reflected. This refers to the belief that a positive approach to dealing with difficult problems or situations can help students achieve academic resilience. c) The implementation of the posttest, given after the tutoring session ends, is to determine the development of cognitive restructuring models through group guidance to increase student academic resilience.

After going through the validity test of the trial questionnaire, it was found that r product moment $n=100$, $\alpha=0.05$ was 0.194. After conducting question trials and validity tests, 29 of the 30 questionnaires provided were valid and in accordance with the indicators. In the reliability test of 29 questionnaires, Cronbach's Alpha was obtained at 0.882 which showed 29 reliable targets. Based on these results, 29 questionnaires can be used as research instruments. An overview of academic resilience in aspects of Perseverance before and after treatment in both the treatment group and the control group is presented in [Table 1](#).

[Table 1](#) shows that prior to the intervention, pretest results showed that none of the students in either the Treatment or Control groups, had a "Very High" level of academic resilience. However, there was little difference between the two groups in the "High" category, where 12.5% of each group had high levels of academic resilience. In the "Low" category, 75% of the Treatment group and 81.25% of the Control group had low levels of academic resilience. Lastly, in the "Very Low" category, 12.5% of the Treatment group and 6.25% of the Control group had very low levels of academic resilience.

After the intervention, there was an interesting change in the profile of academic resilience. The Treatment Group experienced the most significant changes, with 25% of clients reaching the "Very High" level, which had previously not happened at all. In addition, as many as 75% of the Treatment group achieved the "High" level, which showed a large improvement compared to the pretest. On the other hand, in the Control group, none reached "Very High" levels after the intervention. Most were still in the "Low" category (68.75%), and there was a significant increase in the "Very Low" category (25%). This table shows that interventions given to the Treatment group had a significant positive impact on clients' levels of academic resilience, particularly in the "Very High" and "High" categories. Meanwhile, the Control group remained lower in academic resilience, with most still in the "Low" category.

Based on the Table 2 presented, it can be seen that the average academic resilience score of the perseverance aspect in the treatment group on the pretest was 22 lower than the average post-test score of 34.56. Test effectiveness on the data presented using non-parametric analysis with the Wilcoxon test because participants in each sample group were less than 30. The results of the Wilcoxon test in the treatment group obtained a p-value or sig score of 0.000 ($\alpha < 0.05$), this shows that the psychological flexibility of aspects of student admission before and after treatment in the treatment group is significantly different. This means that cognitive restructuring counselling is effective in increasing student academic resilience in the aspect of perseverance.

Table 1. Student Academic Resilience Profile

Variable	Group	
	Treatment (n=16)	Control (n=16)
	Perseverance Aspects	
Academic Resilience		
Pretest		
Very High	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Tall	2 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)
Low	12 (75%)	13 (81.25%)
Very Low	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.25%)
Academic Resilience		
Posttest		
Very High	4 (25%)	0 (0%)
Tall	12 (75%)	1 (6.25%)
Low	0%	11 (68.75%)
Very Low	0%	4 (25%)

Table 2. Analysis of the Effectiveness of Cognitive Restructuring Counseling on Perseverance

Component	Perseverance Aspect			
	Treatment Group		Control Group	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
N	16	16	16	16
Average	22	34,56	22,88	18,75
Lowest score	13	28	13	13
Top Rated	38	48	28	28
Perseverance Aspect				
Non-parametric Test: Wilcoxon Test (Samples less than 30)				
Criteria: Sig. 0.000 < 0.05				
Meaning: there is an average difference				
Sig.	0.00 Significant		0.021 Significant	

DISCUSSION

The results of the Wilcoxon test in the treatment group obtained a p-value or sig score of 0.000 ($\alpha < 0.05$), this shows that the psychological flexibility of aspects of student admission before and after treatment in the treatment group is significantly different. This means that cognitive restructuring counselling is effective in increasing students' academic resilience in aspects of perseverance.

Cognitive restructuring counselling is known as an effective approach in shaping the mindset of students (Beck, 1993). An emphasis on identifying and changing negative mindsets can help students overcome academic challenges. Meichenbaum suggests that this approach can bring about positive changes in self-perception and the ability to overcome obstacles (Meichenbaum, 2010). The incorporation of *Wahdatul Ulum's* values gives an additional dimension to cognitive restructuring counselling. Religious values and spirituality can motivate students by providing a strong value framework to face difficulties. This concept has been discussed by Nasr and Al-Attas, who highlight the role of religious values in shaping identity and purpose in life (Al-Attas, 1993; Nasr, 1981). Increasing student perseverance is the main goal of this counselling approach. Recent studies, such as research shows that levels of persistence can have a positive impact on academic achievement and the achievement of long-term goals (Credé et al., 2017; Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). Therefore, increased perseverance through cognitive restructuring counseling can play a key role in student success.

Refers (Karabiyik, 2020) Aspects perseverance has a positive relationship with GPA. In addition, the results obtained in this case are also in line with research conducted in the field of education by (Kutlu, Ö., Kula-Kartal, S., & Şimşek, 2017; Strayhorn, 2014). However, this is contrary to the significant negative relationship determined by (Toprak, 2020). The positive relationships found support the idea that perseverance facilitates when students seek to improve skills or when faced with difficulties (Kutlu, Ö., Kula-Kartal, S., & Şimşek, 2017).

This counselling also applies the values of *Wahdatul Ulum* as seen from the findings that many students ask Allah to be given ease in studying, doing practices that make it easier for the brain to receive knowledge, and doing *zikrullah* to calm down when they start to get tired and stressed following lectures or when doing assignments. This is based on Thaha/20:114, as follows.

فَتَعَلَى اللَّهِ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُفْضَلَ إِلَيْكَ
وَحْيُهُ وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ١١٤

Meaning: Most High God, the true King. Do not rush (read) the Qur'an before it has finished its revelation to you and say, "O my Lord, add knowledge to me." (Surah Thaha/20:114) (Kemenag, 2015).

The above verse explains that Allah commanded the Prophet *sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam* to ask for additional knowledge. This means that in addition to trying to understand science, it must be accompanied by prayer to God so that it is easier to understand science. *Wahdatul Ulum* also acknowledged that knowledge comes from Allah (Harahap, 2019). Praying before and after prayer is a concept of *Wahdatul Ulum* where the real knowledge comes from Allah Almighty, humans are then given the opportunity to pursue His Love, and this is an integral part of piety to Allah (Ritonga, 2022). By praying and making efforts, Allah will grant the prayer of His servant based on Q.S. al-Baqarah/2:186.

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ١٨٦

When My servants ask you (Prophet Muhammad) about Me, I am indeed near. I grant the request of the one who prays when he prays to Me. Therefore, let them fulfil my (commandments) and have faith in me that they may always be righteous (Kemenag, 2015).

According to Thobari in his tafsir, the word *yarsyudun* has the same meaning as the word *ihda'* (leader). In other words, in the context of counselling, *irsyad* can be interpreted as a request for guidance to individuals who have expertise and professionalism in their field, namely a counsellor, to find solutions, while still emphasizing the importance of counselling to try their best to be in line with the goals to be achieved. Therefore, in the concept of Islamic counselling, *irshad* is not a passive act of counselling, but rather a concrete effort to improve oneself.

The findings of the statistical test results above are in line with the findings on the student counselling worksheet found in session-5 which is the work stage. At this stage, counsellors are invited to find out why counsellors interpret situations positively through the use of the concept of *Wahdatul Ulum*. The perseverance aspect is an individual who works hard (keeps trying and doesn't give up easily), focuses on plans and goals, accepts and utilizes *Feedback*, able to solve problems creatively and imaginatively and positions difficulties as opportunities for growth (Karabiyik, 2020). According to Dobson (Sholihah et al., 2019), cognitive restructuring techniques are particularly useful for counsellors who experience stress, distortions in thinking, and also for counsellors who show disapproval of behavioral change methods. Referring to Ellis (Corey, 2013) posited that cognitive restructuring is a technique used in cognitive therapy (Putri et al., 2019) that provides guidance to individuals on how to improve themselves by replacing negative thoughts with constructive beliefs. Perseverance involves a strong focus on goals and good planning (Muiz, 2023). Cognitive restructuring can help individuals overcome distractions and

sharpen a client's focus on importance. It can also help plan the actions needed to achieve goals more efficiently (Talib et al., 2023). Praying before and after prayer is a concept of *Wahdatul Ulum* where the real knowledge comes from Allah Almighty, humans are then given the opportunity to pursue His Love, and this is an integral part of piety to Allah (Ritonga, 2022).

Furthermore, the table.1 showed the average pre-test and post-test of the control group where there was a significant decrease from the average pre-test 22.88 and post-test 18.75. Test effectiveness on the data presented using non-parametric analysis with the Wilcoxon test because participants in each sample group were less than 30. The results of the Wilcoxon test in the control group obtained a p-value or sig score. of 0.021 ($\alpha < 0.05$), this shows that academic resilience in aspects of *perseverance* before and after treatment in the control group has a significant difference. This means that the control group without cognitive restructuring counselling treatment experienced a decrease in the perseverance aspect.

Findings that show a decrease in aspects of perseverance in the control group proved that the absence of cognitive restructuring counselling services did not provide a significant improvement and even decreased in the control group. This is fairly reasonable because the data retrieval process is good Pre-test and post-test The condition of students undergoing the online lecture process, conditions and situations can affect students because students experience conditions that are not ideal as they should be (Ilyas, 2020). When it comes to research (McCracken, et al., 2021) The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a detrimental impact on mental health and well-being around the world, and even the world of education is also experiencing an

online learning process. (Al Siebert, 2005) High resilience will make a person able to get up, and face the difficulties of life so that a person can make negative situations and adapt that produce positive situations. Therefore, cognitive restructuring counselling interventions are promoted to improve students' academic resilience. Academic resilience can turn problems into opportunities, failures into achievements, and inadequacies into advantages (Arsini et al., 2022). Some students who face this kind of problem, some are able to persist in facing academic.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that the group that received the cognitive restructuring counselling intervention with *Wahdatul Ulum* values experienced a significant increase in the level of academic resilience, especially in the aspect of variance, compared to the control group that did not receive the intervention. This suggests that the integration of spiritual and religious values, as represented by *Wahdatul Ulum* in counselling, can provide tangible benefits in helping individuals overcome academic challenges. However, keep in mind that the results of this study may be affected by the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and online learning which can affect student conditions. Cognitive restructuring counseling that incorporates elements of spiritual values can be an effective approach in improving mental resilience and an individual's ability to overcome obstacles in an educational context, especially in terms of increasing student awareness in facing academic challenges.

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