

Coping and mental health (analytical theory study)

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Abstract: In this study, we will address the role of coping strategies to psychological stress in maintaining the mental health of the individual in a theoretical and analytical form, where we discussed the concepts of both terms with an emphasis on the coping functions of strategies that highlight their role in maintaining mental health or attempting to mitigate risk factors. Leading to the explosion of psychological and psychosomatic disorders of progressive severity and restoring the inner balance and adjustment of the stressed person based on the Lazarus and Folkman model, which identifies two types of strategies for coping with stressful situations.

The analysis of this role was made by linking the first concept to the analysis of the basic manifestations of mental health, that is to say that the maintenance of the manifestations of mental health is the first objective of the use of an individual in case he is faced with a specific problem that threatens his internal balance to an adaptive strategy or strategies that preserve for him the psychological, physical and social entity.

Keywords: coping; mental health; strategy; confrontation.

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1- Introduction

Life is full of happy, sad and distressing events, some of which he expected to happen and others which life suddenly shows him without introductions, in both case the individual faces these situations, particularly stressful, using strategies that restore internal balance if the situation poses a threat on his psychological, physical and social state...and others. Determining the type of strategies used only by the individual under pressure is subject to many personal factors such as:

-the center of control: and it is one of the personality variables that contributes to an effective role in determining how react to stressful situations. Bruschor and others (1994) concluded that individuals with an internal control center they use effective coping strategies negative ones such as avoidance and there for feel depressed and anxious.

-self-esteem: where self-esteem affects the individual's psychological health, level of accomplishment, compatibility with environmental demands, relationship with others, and psychological adjustment, the higher the self-esteem, the greater the depression and feeling of being exact.

- personality style: Friedman and Rosenman (1974) indicated that personality type (A) has basic traits and characteristics such as violence, aggressiveness, excitability, sense of time pressure and lack of patience, unlike the type of personality (B), which is more relaxed, patient, and satisfied with work and life.

- Hardness: Kobasa (1982) defines this concept as a feeling of cohesion, which means that the individual has a set of traits that help him cope with pressures, the most Important of which is having the ability to anticipate and cope to crises.

-Self-efficacy: the self is considered as one of the Important factors that help the individual to cope with stress, and Bondura (1978) considers it as the individual's belief that he has the ability to effectively manage and control events and situations to which he is exposed.(

Ariss,2016-2017, 24 -25)

In addition to many other factors surrounding the environment in which the individual lives, including factors related to the same situation between them:

- Situational factors: the characteristics and nature of the situation and the social support of others influence the quality of the response to stressful situations experienced by the individual.

- Demographic factors: individuals differ in their responses to stressful situations according to the variables of age, sex and the economic, social and cultural level the enjoy.(Maarouf,2012-2013 , 39)

In addition with respect to the demographic factor of gender, many studies in the field of coping have found a difference in terms of the use of these strategies for both sexes, women using strategies centered on emotion in the face of stressful factors, unlike men or males, who use problem-focused strategies.

The objective is for individuals to use these conscious strategies to confront the threat that throws them off balance and harms their adaptations and compatibility with themselves and with the surrounding to which they belong this achieving their psychological and

physical health. Each of them is confused with the others on the grounds that soul and body have a close and separable relationship because each affect the other. Damage to the body negatively affects mental health and the individual's impairment of psychological and mental disorders makes him vulnerable to physical harm, so the individual alters cognitive and behavioral efforts to cope with any situation that creates imbalance and misalignment for him.

1.2– Definition of coping

– According to Newman (1981), it is the efforts made by the individual to eliminate stress and create new ways of coping with new situations at each stage of life. (Ariss, 20)

– Lazarus & Folkman (1984), coping is efforts to control or reduce negative effects resulting from internal or external demands that exceed the individual's resources. (Schouitar, 2016– 2017, 64)

– according to Henderson and others (1992), the individual's attempt to control the demands and struggles of the external and internal environment which exhaust the sources of this adaptation, that's to say. The individual's efforts to control the internal and external environment and the relationship associated with them. (Ariss, 21)

– Ellis and others (1997): defined it as the way in which the individual perceives, interprets and evaluates the stresses of life, and their method of managing them until they reach a level of compatibility. (Schouitar, 65)

– Bruchon (2001), defines it as a set of reactions and strategies that individuals use to deal with stressful situations. (Maarouf, 2012– 2013, 35)

Based on the previous definitions, it is clear that each of the strategies of coping defined it in its own way and direction, some of them defined it as a method, efforts, attempt, reactions, however, what the definitions have in common is the purpose of these strategies, which is to control the situation, eliminate the resulting tension, and deal with stressful situations.

And from there, we can define coping strategies as the individual's efforts to cope with and control the stressful situation.

1. 3– Types of coping strategies

There are many classifications developed by researchers for coping strategies, and here we relied on the classification developed by Lazarus and Folkman as the first classification from which other classifications emerged that depend on the same basic idea of confrontation. This classification consists of two types of coping, which are as follows:

1.3.1 problem focused coping strategies

These strategies are used when the individual has confidence in themselves and sees that they can make changes and come to appropriate solutions, as Maclan and Woodside add that problem solving is a complex mental process that takes place over several steps and understands the understanding of the problem, develop a plan and implement it these strategies are:

– search for a solution to the problem: in order to reach the desired solution, the individual sets an action plan to follow by accepting the solution that brings him psychological comfort, and thus emerges from this confrontation with more force.

– Social support seeking: where the individual gathers a lot of information and researches the individuals around them in order to understand the problem more deeply. (Ariss, 31)

Coping strategies therefore include inward-looking strategies that's to say an assessment of an individual's potential and capacities (personal resources) in order to solve the problem and the strategies directed outwards, that is, towards the surrounding or the environment surrounding the individual, because it works to modify the surrounding pressures and the means used to solve a stressful problem. Strategies that emphasize the search for social support, we mean the search for social support for the person (family, friends, etc), where many researchers have been interested in social support, and its role in reducing the risk of mental disorders and maintaining the mental health of individuals, because the individual who receives confinement and attention from the side of the entourage reinforces his self-confidence and creates in him many positive feelings such as a sense of appreciation, respect, care and emotional...etc.

Where Hagga and others (1934) defined it as the support of relatives, friends, and parent of an individual during crises, and this support allows the individual to manage stressful situations well using confrontational methods. (Ariss, 32)

1.3.2- Emotion- focused coping strategies

And here we mean all the efforts made by the individual to regulate the emotions and reduce the difficulties and emotional distress caused by the individual's stressful event instead of changing the relationship between the person and the environment, and these methods include walking away, avoiding thinking about stressors, and denial.

While Lazarus believes that emotion-focused coping strategies relate to emotional Responses and aim to regulate the negative emotions that arise from the stressful event the individual is facing. Among the methods used in these strategies:

– denial: this is similar to the escape strategy, where it works to defer the problem and the individual seeks to change the true meaning of the stressful situation, ignoring the seriousness of the situation or refusing to acknowledge what happened actually passed.

–avoidance: consist of diverting attention from the stressful situation through the use of substitutes represented in behavioral (sport) or cognitive (television and reading) activities, these methods are relatively effective and are different from flight, because they turn into dangerous behaviors such as the use of alcohol and drugs...etc (yahi, December 2019, 63)

1. 4- The functions of coping strategies

According to Lazarus and Folkman, coping strategies include all of the behaviors, thoughts, and even attitudes that a person use to cope with a situation, and Lazarus and his colleagues identified two main functions of coping strategies.

The first function: allows to modify and change the problem arising from the stressful situation.

The second function: concerns the modification and control of the emotional reactions resulting from the interaction of the individual with the environment. (Ariss, 27)

As Paes and others (1995) refer to four main functions of using coping strategies:

- The first function: is to find appropriate solutions to the problem or stressful situation or to change the situation.
- the second function: it refers to the creation of emotional balance by regulating affective relationships with others in order to control the source of stress.
- The third function: it refers to the empowerment of the individual for social interaction and the contraction of balanced social relations.
- The fourth function: it refers to the self-protection and appreciation of the individual as well as survival when the individual faces a great danger that threatens his life. (Yahi, 68)

Accordingly, and through the above, it becomes clear that the coping strategy has two main roles, one of which is to focus on the issue of the problem or stressful situation by addressing the problem and looking for solutions. directing individuals (personal) and social resources to solve this pressure-generating problem on the one hand, the second is to focus on the emotions emanating from the stressed individual, as it works to modify the emotions and affects resulting from this situation by reducing the tension resulting from the threat and reducing the emotional distress he feels (release of anger in certain actions, sports, for example, crying spells, especially in the female sex, resort to worship, etc.

2-Definition of mental health

- According WHO (world health organization) 1946: health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (Aude and other, October 2020, 3)

- in 2008, the European pact for mental health and well-being state that mental health is a human right. It is essential for health, well-being and quality of life. It promotes learning, work and participation in society. (Viviane, 2010, 19)

- Mental health is: the general psychological state of the individual, which may be a little or not. If it is normal, then this normality has manifestation and features, and if it is abnormal, then there are symptoms. (Ibrahim, 2014, 17)

- mental health: is the state of integration of the different energies of the individual (cognitive, emotional, motivational), which leads to a good investment and which leads to the fulfillment of the existence of the individual. (Ibrahim, 18)

- in other definition: the individual who enjoys mental health is able to cope with difficulties, to make decisions and to take responsibility for him-self is close to him, turns towards people when needed and contributes to the development of his society and appreciates his presence with people, and feels his love for them and their love for him. (Willie, 2018, 176)

Based on the definitions provided for mental health, we find that there are those who experience it based on the idea of normality and pathology, and there are those who experience it based on the idea of adjustment that's to say the individual agrees with himself and his surroundings, each according to his own point of view. From there, a simplified

definition of mental health can be presented as including adjustment, equilibrium and adaptation, because it is the absence of psychological and physical disorders of the individual, his psychological adjustment with himself and his environment, and his good adaptation to the society in which he lives.

2.1– Indicators of mental health

Specialists, as evidenced by the literature, generally agree on certain indicators of mental health, in particular on the following personal characteristics (*guide clinique du personnel infirmier en soins primaires*, October 2011, 1):

- Self-knowledge and accurate self perception.
- self realization (of one`s potential)
- Autonomy (independence of spirit and action)
- Adequate perception of reality.
- commitment.
- mastery of certain skills (social and professional skills needed to integrate into one`s environment and cope with adversity and stress).
- Openness and flexibility.
- Relationship lasting and satisfying interpersonal skills.
- Ability to express and manage emotions.
- Self-esteem.

2.2– Determinants of mental health

We selected these factors on the basis of empirical work measuring their impact on mental health. It should be noted, however, that some of these factors are not only we have selected these factors on the basis of empirical works measuring their impact on mental health. It should be noted, however, that some of these factors are not only determinants of mental health, but also consequences of mental health status, determinants of mental health, but also of the consequences of the state of mental health.

2.2.1– individual factors

at this level are the determinants of mental health that have to do with the individual. These are factors that are specific to the individual, although they may be influenced by factors at other levels or their influence may depend on factors at other levels. These factors are: biological factors, psychological factors, life course factors.

biological factors

- Physical health: physical health and mental are strongly linked and it is established that physical health can influence mental health and cause psychological disorders.
- genetic factors: some mental disorders have some heritability, studied in particular using studies on twins this means that there is a risk of transmission of this mental disorder from one generation to the next, although this transmission is modulate by social and environmental factors.
- Gender: many studies have found systematic gender differences in the onset of mental disorders. Overall, women suffer from more mental disorders than them.

- sexual minorities: sexual minorities are defined either by sexual orientation (sexual self-identification, sexual behavior and sexual attraction) or by gender identification (internal representation of one's own femininity, masculinity, or androgyny).

- Ethnic minorities: belonging to an ethnic minority is a risk factor for the mental health of these people. This increased risk can be explained by the exposure of this population to discrimination, social exclusion, and unequal access to resources (financial, educational, health, employment, housing, etc). Many studies have focused on the correlation between racial discrimination or the perception of racism and the psychological state of individuals. The results indicate that the correlation between perceived (self-reported) racism and psychological well-being is negative, while it is positive between racial discrimination and psychological distress (stress, depression symptoms, etc).

psychological factors

- personality: personality can be described in 5 or 6 personality traits according to existing psychometric models, one of these traits, called neuroticism in the big five model, is correlated with several mental disorders.

On the other hand, certain traits can have an indirect impact on health (physical and mental) because they are associated with behaviors that promote or, on the contrary, are detrimental to health. Indeed, positive emotionality is positively associated with social behaviors such as good interpersonal relationship, support and social integration.

- Psychosocial skills: researchers have demonstrated the protective effect of several individual variables, which can be grouped under the term life skills or psychosocial skills. These skills are central to the vision of health promotion advocated by the world health organization. according to this model, these psychosocial skills contribute to the general state of health of people, to their mental health in particular, because they promote the emergence of behavior that promote good health.

Researchers agree to define them as skills and abilities needed to make decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and face life in a healthy and productive way.

life course factors

- Childhood: Certain behaviors in childhood are associated with depressive and anxiety disorders in adulthood. This includes problems with attention and hyperactivity, socially withdrawn, aggressive, anti-social, or disruptive behaviors and poor academic performance.

- Negative early childhood experiences: negative early childhood experiences have a profound influence on mental health, and their impact can be significant and long-lasting. Work in the field of epigenetics even suggests that certain experiences in early childhood are able to modify the epigenome, that is to say the expression of genes, in a way that can be transmitted to the next generation.

- Migration status: migration status has a direct impact on the mental health of individuals; various epidemiological studies have shown that levels of depression in the migrant population are higher than in the mainstream population.

2.2.2- social and economic factors

The determinants located at the second level, the social and economic factors in the rest of the document, can be organized into two sub-categories: the determinants which are related to the relatives and the social circle of a person, and the determinants that are related to a person's economic situation.

relative and social circle

- Family: the family context has an impact on the mental health of children throughout their lives. The influence of family-related factors begins in fetal life. Indeed, the exposure of the fetus to certain risk factors during pregnancy can have significant consequences on the mental health of the individual when he reaches adulthood.

The attachment style, which is acquired through contact with the main responsible adults during the first years of life (usually the parent), has a major impact on mental health in adulthood. According to the attachment theory.

- social support: social support, that is to say the fact of knowing that one is loved, esteemed, valued, and that one is part of a social network, has needed a very great positive influence on physical and mental health. A systematic review found that social support was protective against depression in children, adults and the elderly, although these groups found support from different sources.

economic situation

A person's economic situation includes all aspects that contribute to their purchasing power. It is a multidimensional concept that is measured using different indicators the most commonly used factors are professional category, level of education and income.

-Socio-economic status: there is a strong consensus in the literature as to the negative relationship between socio-economic level and the onset of mental disorders. According to the world health organization, this link goes even further since there is a two-way relationship between mental health and socio-economic level: poor mental health leads to a decrease in employment and income, which in turn negatively influence mental health.

- Employment: unemployment or job insecurity have negative effects on mental health. Example mortality is higher among temporary workers compared to workers with permanent contracts (WHO 2008). Job insecurity is strongly associated with symptoms of depression.

- Income: a low income can put a person in situation of poverty, even if they are employed. Poverty has strong negative impact on mental health (WHO 2014) poor people have poorer mental health than middle, and high-income people.

- debts: the negative link between income and mental health described above is partly explained by having debt, people with debt are more likely to have mental disorders, and more indebtedness, the greater the likelihood of suffering from mental disorders. It is interesting to note that this relationship is maintained even when controlling for the effect of other socio-economic variables such as age, ethnicity, marital status, but also the level of education, social class and employment.

-level of education: level of education refers to the process by which a person receives structured and systematic instruction or training, especially at school or university.

Education can provide important opportunities for a person's life, especially in terms of developing life skills and self-determination. Many studies have found a negative correlation between level of education and mental disorders or a positive correlation between level of education and well-being.

2.2.3– societal factors

At third level of analysis, we examine factors that are at the societal level, and which relate to the political, environmental and cultural dynamics of a given society.

social and economic policy

public policies include all the laws, rules and legislations that govern a given society. These policies are able to exert a direct or indirect influence on mental health.

- Social inequalities: On the one hand because they concern health as such, but also because they concern areas varied such as education, employment, food, housing, wages and neighborhood life. It is obvious that these areas are influenced by the policies of a country.

- social services: social services are all public or private services ensuring the protection of vulnerable people in a given society. This vulnerability can be temporary (e.g.: unemployment, old age), or more permanent (e.g. disability).accessibility to maternal services including, among other things, information and advice on parental and educational strategies, protects the mental health of adult and children.

- nurseries and schools: nurseries and school have an important role play because of their impact on both children and their parents. First, education is a crucial protective factor for mental health. School, by working directly with children, have a direct impact on every day well-being, and play an active role in the development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills of children and young people.

- self-determination: self determination is the ability to be master of one's destiny, to make one's own decisions that govern one's life. Feeling strong self-determination in one's life. Has a positive impact on mental health.

environment and infrastructures

- infrastructure: (housing, water, sanitation, waste) the infrastructure that surrounds the individual has signification effects on their mental health. Example housing instability is known to have negative effects on mental health. Being homeless predicts the onset of depressive symptoms.

- exposure to violence and crime: according to the world health organization, the absence of violence is a key determinant of mental health. In addition, the presence of violence in one's community is strongly associated with the development of post-traumatic stress symptoms and problems of aggressive behavior and deviance.

- neighborhood safety and trust: the quality of neighborhood in which we live influences our mental health. A California study of 44,921 adults found that concerns about neighborhood safety reduced physical activity. Which in turn negatively influences mental health. Additionally a large UK study looked at the mental health of 3,340 children and young people and found that their perception of neighborhood trust and safety impacted their mental health, particularly in emerging emotional disorders.

–nature: many studies have shown positive effects of exposure to nature on mental health, including mood. Example workers whose view in the office includes natural element are less stressed and more satisfied in their work.

culture

Culture is a dynamic system of norms, values and rules that are developed by communities and are based on their interaction with their social and natural environment. Culture provides a frame of reference for people that helps regulate the discomfort created when encountering uncertainty. Moreover, some authors suggest that changing social norms (example during migration) could lead to depressive disorders, but the evidence for this effect is less formal than one might wish.

– Stigmatization: stigma is in psychology, the setting aside of a person for their differences which are considered contrary to the norms of society. Social stigma can be defined as a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context. According to the world health organization, the absence of discrimination is a key determinant of mental health.

– Cultural beliefs: the existence of predominant beliefs in a given culture can influence the way certain population approach mental health and illness. Erroneous beliefs about the causes and treatments of mental disorders can lead to differences in how people respond to them. Including hindering help-seeking. (Andrea, 2021, 12 – 20)

3–the role of coping strategies in maintaining an individual's mental health

Coping strategies are cognitive and behavioral efforts made by the individual when exposed to stressful situations that threaten his psychological and physical entity and put his stability and adjustment in jeopardy and imbalance. In this case, the individual creates psychological stress that bears certain characteristics, sometimes as a stimulus and sometimes as a response, where Taylor defined stress as: a process of evaluating events is it harmful, threatening or stimulating? The response to these events takes the form of emotional, behavioral, physiological and cognitive changes.(Faiza, 2013–2014, 15)

Based on Taylor's definition, it is clear that psychological stress goes beyond stimulus and response to the interactive relationship between the two concepts to bear the concept of evaluation of its kind, the primary (the is the situation threatening or not?) and secondary (evaluation of personal and peripheral resources). This stress has a direct negative impact on the mental health of the individual, makes him the object of emotional, cognitive, affective and even physical imbalances, and this manifests itself through the appearance of psychosomatic and somatoform disorders... and here manifestations of good mental health include:

–positive: where a person's positivity is represented in their ability to do so in any field and not being subject to the obstacles that may come their way, they do not feel helpless but rather always seek to use all means necessary and means to overcome them.

–optimism: a person who enjoys mental health should be characterized by having an optimistic outlook on things. Man to invest his energies, which leads to waste and exhaustion. On other hand, pessimism is considered to be one of the reasons for the decline

in the mental health of individuals, as it reduces the realization of man to invest his energies, which leads to waste and exhaustion.

–the individual is aware of his abilities: here the individual becomes aware of the fact that there are individual differences between people and is fully aware of the limits of his abilities and capacities, because he sets his own objective commensurate with his abilities, and thus avoid failure and frustration factors. Objectives those are difficult for him to achieve, causing him to feel frustration, failure and low self-confidence, which negatively affects his psychological health and psychological adjustment.

– the ability to establish fruitful social relationships: where it is considered the most important pillar of mental health, a person who maintains strong social relationship with others enjoys good mental health, and failing to do, it would negatively affect his morale and his psychological adjustment.

–respecting the individual and the culture of the society while acquiring a degree of the independence from it: when the individual behave in a manner that is acceptable in his society and consistent with the norms, traditions and customs of that society with his distinction of independent personality with a clear opinion on the various issues and issues presented to him, and his respect for all cultural groups of different social classes, this individual enjoys good mental health.

–satisfaction of the individual for his motivations and needs: the method of satisfying the psychological and psychological needs of the individual is what determines the extent of his enjoyment of mental health, and that excessive or negligent satisfaction in the satisfaction of these needs leads to a defect in his psychological state.

–a healthy relationship with self: this relationship is represented by self-understanding, self-acceptance and self-development.

–emotional balance: it is achieved through the individual's ability to deal with psychological conflicts and to control their emotions and express them in an appropriate and socially acceptable way.

–flexibility: the mentally health individual always tries to find substitutes for behavior that fails to achieve the objective.

–the ability to sacrifice and serve others: sanity in this regard appears in the individual's cooperation with others for the good of his society within the limits of his abilities and capabilities.

–physical health: where the integrity of the body is achieved only with the integrity of the nervous system, which controls the movement of organs, blood circulation and the secretions of the glands, and the integrity of the glandular system, which ensures the chemical balance in the body, as the state of physical health of the individual may prevent him from achieving some of his ambitions, so he does not feel happy and satisfied, and psychological stability is not reached for him.(Yahi, December 2019, 74)

And to preserve these normal aspects of mental health from harm, the individual resort to strategies that allow adaptation and adjustment and give him the capacity to confront and challenge negative events, because the individual uses sometimes emotion-based strategies

and at other times problem-solving based strategies depending on the nature of the situation and the demographics and personality of the individual. In addition, maintain personal characteristics, social relationships and physical health.

In case the individual suffers from some organic disease, or is exposed to a major financial crisis, or has a difficult experience... he resorts to one of the strategies at the beginning of the situation, after which he can use another strategy that brings comfort, including the strategy of seeking social support, where social connection plays a major role in mitigating the severity of stress, it is also considered an important source of security and assistance. While Bashir Abdel Muti (2004) considers social support to be one of the forms of social relationships that provide the individual with the help they seek and a general source of security they need, especially when something threatens them. and that he is unable to cope with stresses and disorders that may be life-threatening and affect his adjustment. (Choueiter, 2017-2016, 127)

Gentry and Goodwin (1995) define it as network of relationships that provides continuous support to the individual regardless of the psychological stresses in their life, and it is either present when the stress arises or the individual has the perception or the expectation that it will activate. When exposed to stress. (Choueiter, 2017-2016, 129) Thus, social support, as one of the social determinants of mental health, is a coping strategy in itself to ensure the maintenance of this determinant.

4-Conclusion

The present study aimed to highlight the role of coping strategies in maintaining mental health. According to this perception, we tried to study the role played by these strategies in maintaining aspect of mental health, which is considered, on the other hand, as one of the conscious mechanisms or means used by the individual when exposed to embarrassing situations and stressful situations. this stress exerts violent effects on the personality traits or the individual and affects all psychological and physical aspects of the person, and its effects extends after that to the evening in the social, professional and economic aspects. In addition, the individual performs a cognitive mental process called appraisal. Where he assesses the nature of the situations, it is threatening or not? This is called the primary appraisal, then, he evaluates his personal resources (capacities and predisposition) and his social resources, this is called secondary appraisal. Here, each individual relies on a specific coping strategy to deal with the stressful situation. here we ask the question, why the individual resorts to this strategy, where we answer that the feeling of danger, of disorder, and a feeling of loss of internal balance is the motivation of these strategies that is to say the attempt to restore psychological balance and preserve the characteristics of the individual which distinguish him from others and which preserve his psychological health, and hence his physical health, and stay away from psychological stress, which is on the one hand a psychological accumulation, and risk factors that can be explosive for certain psychological and mental disorders depending on the personality structure of the individual.

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