

Causes of Juvenile Delinquency in Qatari Society

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the reasons why and how children turned into delinquents as well as to discern factors that put the children at risk/vulnerable for engaging in such behavior. The report also covered programmatic and policy responses for preventing delinquency of children and shielding them from its causes, as well as the status of coordination among other agencies in dealing with juvenile delinquency and childhood protection. To determine the societal attitudes in Qatari society toward juvenile delinquency under the justice system, eight focus groups were conducted representing different stakeholders in relation to the problem of juvenile delinquency. The talks centered on individual, family, peer and school related factors of juvenile delinquency and involvement in criminal activities in both formal and informal contexts. They also disclosed the high incidence of juvenile delinquency in Qatari and non-Qatari expatriate families, amongst boys, due to drug sales, drivers sexually abusing them or exerting a lot of control over their children. It also addresses problems that children face at school, including no breaks, long hours and strict rules. Contributors consider the impact of father absence and lack of maternal support on delinquency. Participants also mention the impact of online websites on sexual delinquency and global openings to children through games on iPads. Trainers also bemoaned the lack of external training for staff at social care centers, with some trainers who were not qualified to train social workers and child protection workers. They also spoke of trouble classifying juveniles by the nature of their alleged crimes and services split among different agencies. In conclusion, juvenile delinquency of Qatari youth is related to a set of factors at the personal, family, peer and institutional levels. Culturally tongue and coordinated, Multidisciplinary but soon developers are burned with surgeries. Longitudinal studies and assessment of the effectiveness of current prevention programs will continue to be necessary for policy development.

Keywords: Juvenile, delinquency, prevention, causes, Family, school, peers, Qatar

INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency is a significant concern in many societies globally, including Qatari. Knowledge about the roots and predisposing agents is an important prerequisite in order to prevent in a competent way as well as to create prevention programs. As previous studies indicate, juvenile delinquency in Qatar, as well as other communities around the world, is the product of a complex interplay of micro and macro-level elements. Several reasons including identity trait, peer pressure, breaking of family unit and dropout from education has been often reported as a source of juvenile delinquents (Al Thani, 2018; Al-Maadeed & Al-Kaabi, 2020). The weaknesses that make delinquency normative for Qatari young people are economic deprivation, deviant peer associations, family

conflict and lack of supervision. Research findings indicate that children from broken homes or neglected and abused children are more likely to commit illegal acts (Hassan, 2019). In the meantime, social change, urban development and global media have probably modified youth behaviors and risk perception. With 4% prevalence, Qatari culture and religion have their own exceptional social values that shape attitudes toward juvenile delinquency. Stakeholder focus group discussions suggest that community-focused attitudes, tend to view family and religious interventions over institutional offerings (Al-Sulaiti & Al-Hassan, 2021). Stakeholders express the need for prevention and intervention efforts to be culturally sensitive. Juvenile delinquency is a serious social problem in Qatar and it is associated with those individual and environmental factors which represent family, social, environmental & individual characteristics. It is important to understand these causes in order to develop effective prevention and intervention programs.

In this paper an integration of the empirical knowledge and social outlook of different origins existing nowadays on causes of juvenile delinquency in Qatar.

Theoretical Causes of Delinquency

Personal Characteristics. Delinquent juveniles exhibit personal characteristics like impulsiveness, recklessness, poor self-control, and psychological disturbances, leading to illegal activities like theft, sexual activity, smoking, drug use, and truancy. These disturbances are closely linked to juvenile delinquency. Adolescence is a crucial developmental stage for both male and female adolescents, characterized by hormonal and physiological changes.

Family and Parenting Factors. JUVENILE- FAMILY CRIME Relatively unstable and stimulating family environments have a substantial impact on the behavior of juveniles. Delinquency among children may be the result of abandonment or exposure and lack of care for child by one parents may increase their proneness to delinquency, as there is no supervision on them and reduces emotional support (Al Thani 2018). Conflicts between parents, children abandonment and poor supervision are associated with a higher rate of juvenile involvement in illegal behaviors (Al-Hassan & Al-Sulaiti, 2020).

Peer Influence and Social Networks. The importance of peer pressure and associations with deviant peer groups is understood. One of the strongest motivations behind delinquency among Qatari and non-Qatari children are peer pressure in Qatar (Khalil, 2017). The social networks serve as a context in which informal control is handed over to the negative others and, subsequently, leads to a higher tendency toward delinquency among adolescents.

Educational Engagement and School Environment. One of the strongest predictors is educational disengagement. Issues such as poor academic performance, truancy or dropout are risk factors for delinquent behavior in adolescents (Al-Khulaifi et al., 2022). Schools are important arenas for the implementation of interventions and nonattendance is frequently associated with offending.

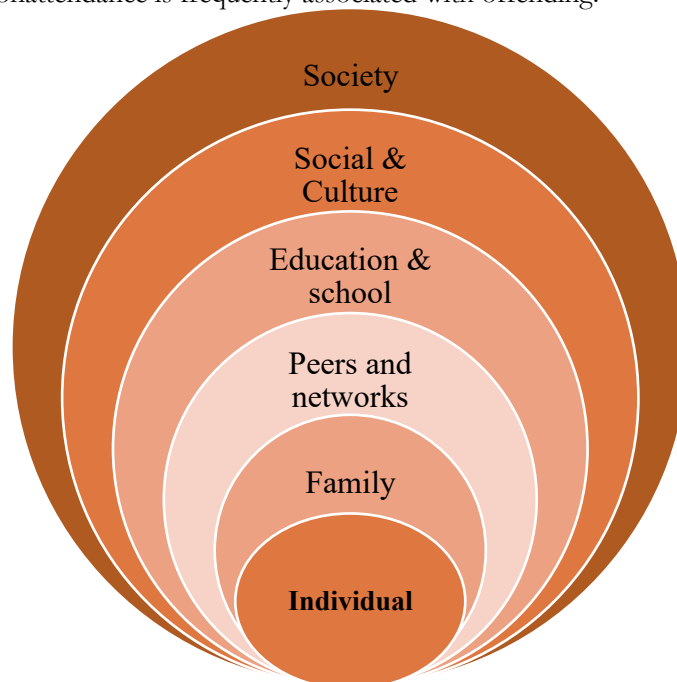


Figure 1 Theoretical causes of delinquency

Societal and Cultural Factors. Perceptions of youth behavior and justice are influenced by cultural values and societal standards. The concepts of family honor and religiosity in Qatar influences how society responds to

juvenile delinquency (Al-Maadeed & Al-Kaabi, 2020). Community stigma and exclusion in society may also contribute to a worsening of the offending behavior by young people.

Society. Social disadvantage and economic dispossession are accompanied with a risk of exposure to delinquency. Youth living in deprived areas are more likely to come into contact with criminal elements and are vulnerable to engagement with undesirables (Hassan, 2019). Urbanization and rapid social transformation are increasing the rate of instability, thereby complicating prevention programs.

The Study

The study addressed the cause of juvenile delinquency while identifying the risk factors and weaknesses that place children in contact with delinquents. (4) Actions and programs to deter delinquency and to shield children from it causes; (5) Existing activities by all involved in the process of combating juvenile crime, and protecting children. To explore community attitudes toward juvenile delinquents in Qatar with the criminal Justice system, eight discussions were organized involving different groups who might be affected by this problem. The debates focused on individual, family, peer and school level factors while discussing reasons for juvenile delinquency and engaging in illegal behaviors both inside and outside of schools. (see the participant profile table below).

Table 1 Participant recruitment table

Participants	Sector	Gender	Rationale for Selection
Decision-makers	Government Sector	Mixed group (males and females) Number: (8)	- To understand protection and rehabilitation strategies and programs - Identify causes of juvenile delinquency
Public Prosecutors and Judges	Judiciary	Mixed group (males and females) Number: (6)	- Identify causes of juvenile delinquency - To understand protection and rehabilitation strategies and programs
Juvenile police officers	Executive body	Mixed group (males and females) Number: (4)	Identify causes of juvenile delinquency
Social workers	Government sector	Mixed group (males and females) Number: (8)	Strategies and programs
Psychologists	Government sector	Mixed group (males and females) Number: (6)	Identify causes of juvenile delinquency on personal level
Convicted juveniles	Youth sector	Males Number (10)	- Identifying personal factors contributing to juvenile delinquency - Understanding school-related factors and the influence of negative peer groups - Recognizing risk and vulnerability factors
Detained juveniles	Youth sector	Males Number(10)	- Identifying personal factors contributing to juvenile delinquency - Understanding school-related factors and the influence of negative peer groups - Recognizing risk and vulnerability factors
Social work and social sciences departments	Education	Females Number 12	Identify causes of juvenile delinquency

Key Questions

- 1) What are the *personal factors* that contribute to juvenile delinquency (children under 16 years of age)?
- 2) What *family-related factors* (child-rearing practices) contribute to juvenile delinquency?
- 3) What role do *peer groups* play in juvenile delinquency?
- 4) What *school-related factors* contribute to juvenile delinquency?
- 5) What *societal factors* contribute to juvenile delinquency?
- 6) What *risk and vulnerability* factors expose children under 16 to delinquency?
- 7) What are the *prevention, protection, and rehabilitation strategies* for juvenile delinquency in Qatar?

8) What are the *prevention and protection programs*, including rehabilitation and aftercare programs, in Qatar?

FINDINGS

1: The Individual factors

This issue relates to the individual's personality characteristics and personal issues related to juvenile delinquency and law violative behaviors. Discussions indicated that there are personal influences, involving psychological defects, mental illness and psychopathic tendencies can incline young people to offend or make them willing tools in the hands of criminals.

Personal Characteristics. From middle school on, teenagers can experience hyper sensitivity and mental health and emotional problems that would benefit from medication or other professional help. Individual factors for delinquency include challenges in adjusting to the environment, lower problem-solving abilities, and finding identity. Itself can play the role of a source, which shapes basing deviant behavior on imitation.

Main findings. Personality and motives were found to play a role in delinquency in focus groups. These are the reasons they can find in communication, understanding juvenile's psychology, going into the cause of their problems. Social workers and psychologists say that those considerations need to be mapped from the outset of any investigation, in some cases through psychological assessments.

Practical Ideas. The program includes an in-depth analysis of the offending juvenile at entry to the criminal justice system, a selection of cases for referral to specialized agencies, improvement of professional skills, exchange between professionals and families as well as consolidation of local cooperation with crime victims.

Excerpts from Focus Groups

- "I know from other people that someone does drugs for sex."
- "They do all this actin' above and beyond for the money."
- "Fear that she would be blackmailed with a recorded video."
- "He may let you drive a car for sex."
- "I like to smoke in order to get a buzz, especially after I eat or when I wake up."
- "If you don't have enemies, you're not popular."
- "The devil tells me to take stuff."

Family-Related Factors

Family background can / could determine the entire life course for your child and poor socialization may cause a child to be wayward. Socialization condition children on appropriate social behavior and little or no socialization lands them in crime. Ultimate, as well as absence, can also result in delinquency. Parent education impacts on child rearing for delinquency. The causes of the social evil of delinquency rest in the family, where inadequate socialization, bad child rearing practices, both negligence and over indulgence have an important part to play.

Parental Control Failure: Disinvestment, Disintegration, and Desuetude. "For us one of the main causes [of juvenile delinquency] is poor parenting, lack of support and family disintegration," said a participant during the focus group discussion. Parents' insufficient monitoring, ignorance of their child's friends, and how much time they spend with them are associated with deviant behaviour. Emotional neglect can result in crazy, stupid, anti-social behavior such as drug and alcohol abuse. Negligence of parents and lack of their supervision also lead to delinquency in young, because the resources at home are occupied by fathers who are busy earning leaving no time for mothers to bring up children.

Styles in child rearing: Indulgence or strictness. Developmentally risky parent behaviors, such as high levels of permissiveness and overindulgence/buying—of the kid but also at earlier ages—and giving stuff they need to work for have severe negative effects over time on their charges, putting them in harm's way (such as accepting offers by others or actively seeking out sources that lead to harm). Excessively indulgent parenting may lead to legal infractions among adolescents. Parental manipulation as a cause of delinquency and legal difficulties. They can also be sexually abused or harassed, and suffer the effects of victimization from domestic violence including perhaps learning maladaptive coping mechanisms.

Key Findings. Focus groups suggested the importance of family in young people's lives by indicating that hard discipline, family conflict and authoritative parenting styles were likely to lead to delinquency. Official representatives said that while the majority of cases happen in families where both parents live together, divorce can have a harmful impact on a child's emotional state.

Practical Ideas. Implementation ideas include running support workshops for parents and families of at-risk children, deepening communication between families and authorities, playing an increased role in civil society

organizations, establishing a social worker training system, and allowing the family counseling center to take on its responsibility for promoting positive parenting practices.

Excerpts from Focus Group Discussions

- "One that will follow father's example"
- "There is no role of the father, and he doesn't help the mother."
- "The father is busy and the mother is busy."
- "I dislike listening to them because they don't respect my opinion."
- "When I decide to see my friends, my mom and dad tell me that they won't let me, and that's not fair."
- "A girl tried to commit suicide after her father divorced her mother."

School-Related Factors

School organization is a major factor in determining the personality of the child and singling out those at risk. It's the second largest factor in youth delinquency next to family. Inadequate school and classroom management may effect delinquent child's behavior or drive them to delinquency.

School Climate (Administration and School Services). The youth focus group talked about school administration-in relation to teaching and academic level performance. the aspects they had problems with included: low academic performance, heavy workload, and difficulty to understand the English language. Frustration with behavior by some teachers was one of the complaints expressed by some participants. Some, though, had positive reactions to school, particularly youth in juvenile detention facilities. They also observed a poor school climate/culture, over lack of awareness and counseling programs provision, and stressed the necessity of good communication between schools and parents. And some students and teachers physically beat them, harass them and subject them to physical punishment, they said. They also found that there were a number of subcultures in the school, and it can lead students to model other people's behavior. They also emphasised the influence of deviant peer groups in establishing delinquent gangs as well as more juvenile delinquents.

Practical Ideas. The objectives consist of: developing collaboration between schools and families in a coordinated manner; addressing the problems teenagers bring with them to school; promoting school involvement through media communication by engaging youth, social workers and other professionals like teachers, etc.; working with NGOs on ways to make families become integrated into society; creating action plans; launching recreational programs for women that will cause an increase in the amount of time they spend with their children and at school during the day (when women are home men take care of themselves); recruiting volunteers. These actions are designed to enhance the learning experience and student satisfaction.

Excerpts from Focus Group Discussions

- "Nobody in this school even studies."
- "When you have a teacher who is absent, there's chaos and upheaval."
- "Even if the teacher is wrong, they always blame the student."
- "The students are hit by the academic director."
- "If you ain't cheating, you're not trying."
- "If someone hits me or gets on my nerves I'll kill them."
- "It started at school and it got to my family, they wouldn't listen to me."
- "The teacher was shouting at me, and when he went to hit me, I went to hit him."
- "My folks learned that I had skipped school."
- "I cut school and just go chill with my friends."

Bad Influences

They found that negative relationships and associating with delinquent peers, spending time with these peers and affiliation with their behavior could move young people into illegal involvement and delinquency. These actions are frequently modelled by friends, who have the potential to transmit defiant and deviant behaviours to adolescents. One bad apple can spoil the whole bunch of peers and put them into delinquency. They can be subjected to inappropriate relationships, confusion about roles between the sexes and satanism through exposure to other cultures. The influence and pressure of peer groups can make delinquency seem an appealing way for young people to demonstrate their independence from parents and gain acceptance into a desired community. It may do so through petty crime or outright crime. The study also demonstrates the role of parental monitoring, knowledge about children's friends and affiliation with deviant peers in the control of adolescent behavior.

Practical Ideas. Parents should know friends of their children, and they should pay calls." School media should emphasize the evil of bad company, conduct sensitization workshop; care to develop television programs targeting youth and parents.

Excerpts from Focus Groups

- "A boy flees home to see his friends."
- "Everybody want to stay out late; that's their personal freedom."
- "Someone could ask for weed in exchange for something I want from them."
- "If he needs money, perhaps he will steal or engage in crime."

Societal Causes

Qatari social and cultural changes such as the technology, culture diffusion and expatriate workers have been associated which facilitated the its adolescence sub-cultures with of excessive competences including vandalism which become involved in delinquency thereby items elves need to interfere.

Subcultures. The proliferation of subcultures among different nationalities in Qatar that come into contact with students and youth can result in over exposure, which can exposes them to various forms of offenses and courts. Unmonitored internet use can make them susceptible to negative information such as pornography and misinformation. Drugs and tobacco may also be introduced by subcultures. Juvenile Delinquency is caused largely due to the societal pressures such as peer influence, poverty, high unemployment rate and a becoming tough get on life which leads these children to start deviant behaviors. And there are a lot of cross-dressing and same sex relationships, and inappropriate behaviors. Some neighborhoods have more deviance than others.

Practical Ideas. Civil-society organizations are mobilizing for social awareness, promoting community cohesion and role of school counsellors in the resolution of juvenile delinquency with authorities and setting up coordination meetings formal / not conformist neighborhood.

Excerpts from Focus Group Discussions

- "Drivers sexually abuse children."
- "A girl who becomes delinquent the first thing that happens to her is she gets too much controlling of her."
- "Online websites are one of the causes of sexual waywardness."
- "Worldwide openness for children promotes delinquency by playing games on iPads."
- "The more that society rigidly restricts, the more delinquency you have."

Preventive Measures and Protection, Care and Rehabilitation Programs

Focus groups reported a range of prevention, care and rehabilitation programs for juvenile delinquency in line with Qatar Vision 2030 plan. Motto of the Juvenile Police Department is "Towards a Generation Free from Delinquency", as preparations are already on to draw up a new juvenile law.

Legislation. The 1996 Juvenile Law is also being amended to extend coverage to children under the age of 18, protecting juvenile rights by permitting removal from parental custody and placement in care facilities. What's most important in the law is it is child-centered – there is no such thing as a juvenile conviction on a child's record. Special judge and special court with public prosecutor, police officers, social workers and psychologists deal with juvenile cases employing deterrence motivation guidance.

Prevention, Protection, and Care Programs. The prevention, protection, and care programs for juveniles were divided among the focus groups considering the non-delinquent with risk and without risk juvenile category. These programs are tailored to certain situations, including digital hazards, drug prevention and e-cigarettes. They also point out positive activities available at juvenile detention centers, like sports and religious classes. However, they are not well-practiced due to lack of facility, a cumbersome legal process and authority of the social workers. Inefficacious of punishment and soft probation are recorded as factors in delinquency and repetitions.

Key Findings

Focus group interviews with decision makers, administrators and juvenile police officers underscored a comfort in working with juvenile cases because of the promotion of the child best interest. Problems in the implementation of programs, non-cooperation and ambiguity in bylaws also held back advancement. They stressed the need for community participation to solve problems of juvenile delinquency.

Practical Recommendations. The plan offers such steps as expediting the adoption of a new juvenile justice law, setting up a coordination mechanism, carrying out prevention work programs and enhancing professionals' know-how; organizing specialized training; establishing special premises for locking up minors and improving family counseling services.

Excerpts from Focus Group Discussions

- “Staff on the social care center are seldom given the opportunity for external training.”
- “There are some trainers who aren’t qualified to train social workers and child protection professionals.”
- “Visit reports are issued but there is no follow up of recommendations.”
- “You cannot separate kids according to offense that is alleged with the current system.”
- “Some of the agencies who were doing physical violence were refusing to take juveniles, because they’re criminals.”
- “The overlapping of functions between relevant authorities is a major issue.”

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

There are many factors which have led to the problem of juvenile delinquency in Qatar, ranging from family problems and peer pressure to learning disinvestment and traditional social standards, as well as financial insecurities. Tackling these determinants will need coherent approaches adapted to social context. There are five primary causes of juvenile delinquency: Young people themselves; Families, Schools, Peers & neighborhoods. Family variables such as poor relationships, poor supervision by parents could facilitate as well as deter delinquency. School variables, such as low academic achievement, negative relationship with teachers and strict rules can attenuate social conformity. Peer groups, that act as role models can also influence delinquency. These latter factors would discourage investments in social conformity and raise the likelihood of deviance.

Delinquency is motivated and constrained by personal traits, coercive practices, associational exposure to deviant models and pressures. They have coerced have mastered and have been domesticated into conformity with outside limit as well as within limits. Motivations drive toward delinquency and constraints away from it. Differential obstructive formal support also factors in an individual's potential for delinquency.

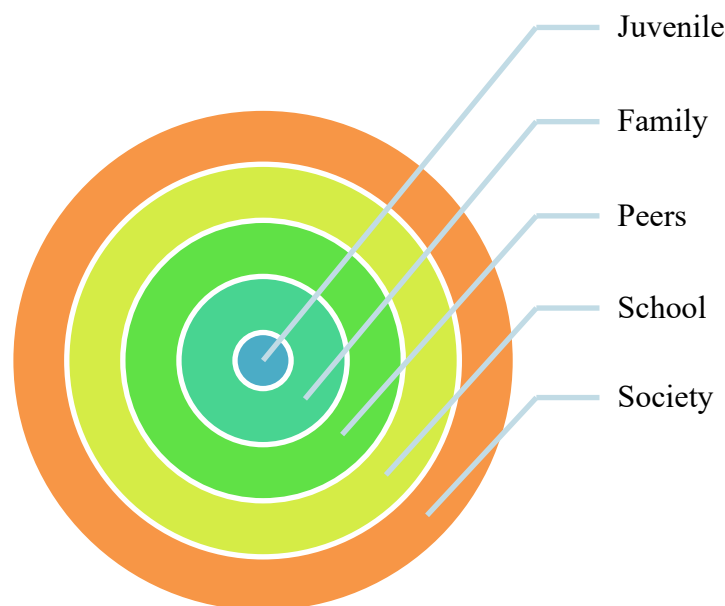


Figure 2 causes of juvenile delinquency

Qatar's vision and related policies and laws concentrate on how to deal with juvenile delinquency, covering family and school impact factors, the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention levels of child protection procedures, the best interest principle. A new juvenile law compatible with international treaties is being developed. Juveniles are tried in a separate court, and they do so with the child's best interest in mind. Programs address prevention, intervention and aftercare focusing on awareness raising, counseling, behavior change, education support and community involvement. Regular monitoring of prevention and aftercare relevance reduces the risk profile.

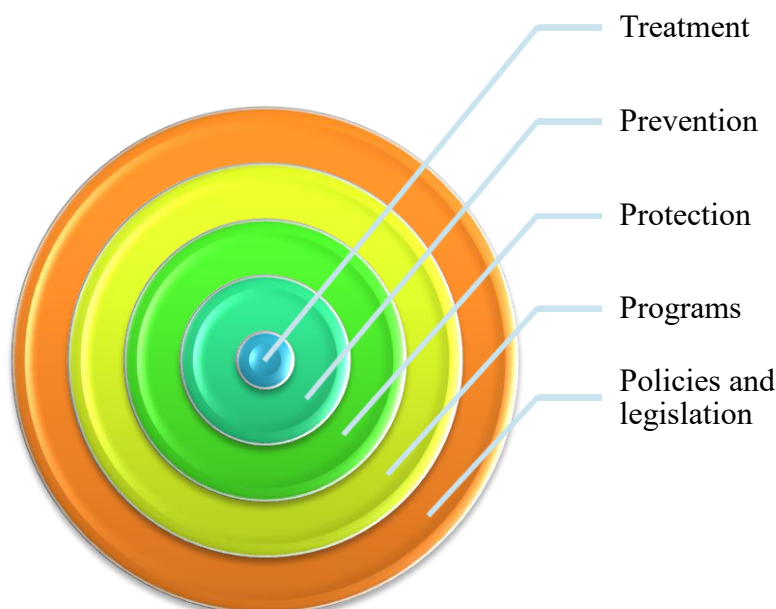


Figure 2: Prevention Strategies

Addressing juvenile delinquency requires a multi-faceted approach involving various societal agencies, including the justice system, social services, educational institutions, and community organizations. Prevention strategies emphasized by stakeholders include family interventions, youth engagement programs, and community awareness campaigns (Al-Khulaifi et al., 2022).

Effective prevention relies on multi-disciplinary approaches involving the justice system, social services, and educational institutions. Stakeholders emphasize culturally sensitive programs that involve family and community engagement to mitigate risk factors (Al-Khulaifi et al., 2022). However, the current state of coordination among entities remains fragmented. Discussions in focus groups highlight the need for improved collaboration and resource sharing to achieve more effective outcomes (Majid & Al-Muammar, 2023). Emphasis is placed on creating integrated programs that address the holistic needs of at-risk youth.

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