

*Case Study*

**The Power of Word of Mouth to Establish Brand Positioning  
(A Case Study of the House of Raminten as a Modern Style of  
*Angkringan* Traditional in Yogyakarta, Indonesia)**

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**ABSTRACT**

Cities across Indonesia attract tourists for several reasons. Yogyakarta is among the main tourism destinations, known primarily for its culinary tourism. One of the famous *angkringan* cuisines in Yogyakarta is found in the House of Raminten. *Angkringan* is a Javanese traditional rice, side dishes, and beverages with definitely inexpensive price, and it is mostly familiar as street food. The House of Raminten is well-known for its eccentric *angkringan*. Recognizing the importance of the brand in the customer's mind, the management of the House of Raminten continuously to develop the restaurant's brand positioning namely modern style of *angkringan* traditional. For tourists, the House of Raminten is known through information from an individual to another or from an individual to groups. The information widely spreads because the restaurant management applies *gethok tular* or 'word of mouth' as a marketing strategy. This research aims to investigate the power of word of mouth as a strategy to establish brand positioning in the House of Raminten. The theoretical framework employs in this research is AIDA model consisting of

Attention (Awareness), Interest, Desire, and Action. This research employs qualitative method and case study approach. The results reveal that *gethok tular* or 'word of mouth' has an absolutely strong impact. The rapid consumer increase of the House of Raminten is caused by not only 'word of mouth', but also e-word of mouth and the establishment of brand positioning. Furthermore, this is also proven that the

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House of Raminten's consumers are mostly middle-class who use social media in their daily activities.

*Keywords:* *Angkringan*, brand positioning, culinary, the House Raminten, word of mouth

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

The culinary sector is one of the most promising business sectors across the world; its global pervasiveness of is not a momentary phenomenon. Since 2014, the government of Indonesia has seized such a phenomenon as an opportunity to make Indonesia as the world's favourite culinary destination for tourists. To encourage this program, the government establishes various schemes and organisations, and one of them is the Indonesian Creative Economy Agency or Badan Ekonomi Kreatif (BEKRAF) which focuses and optimizes Indonesian culinary industry. As a result, Indonesian culinary business significantly increases (Primadhyta, 2017).

Cuisine is one of attractions for tourists in several Indonesian cities, such as Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta Tourism Office in 2017 reported that Yogyakarta, known as a *Gudeg* city, has increased its tourist footfall. Yogyakarta's tourist footfall increased for 15-20% from the previous year. Tourists visit Yogyakarta for multiple purposes such as experiencing traditional cuisine of Yogyakarta. Since eating is an integral part of travelling, it is common that the tourists expect pleasurable experiences of

culinary. Culinary business in Yogyakarta grows rapidly, and it frequently encourages small street food stall to establish culinary restaurants. A street food stall or *angkringan*, in Javanese, is a particular characteristic of Yogyakarta. *Angkringan* is a food stall selling rice, side dishes and beverages with definitely inexpensive price. There are approximately 2000 *angkringans* in Yogyakarta (Utomo, 2015). *Angkringan* is a major tourist attraction in Yogyakarta. One of the most famous *angkringans* in Yogyakarta is the House of Raminten. This restaurant is known as a "*Nyentrik*" *angkringan* of Yogyakarta which means an eccentric food stall. Its traditional-modern concept (presenting a strong local ambience and shades of Javanese culture to the visitors) that distinguishes it from other *angkringans* around Yogyakarta.

The House of Raminten has been established for almost 9 years and has experienced a rapid increase in its number of visitors. Hamzah (HA), the founder of the House of Raminten, speaks about his growing business and says that since he opens this *angkringan*, he never significantly change the restaurant's concept. However, for market segmentation, the House of Raminten has become a symbol of restaurant with a traditional-modern concept that offers unique, antique and elegant ambience and cuisine with Javanese nuance. Afterwards, this concept becomes the House of Raminten's "brand" for its consumers. Strengthening brand positioning is one of efforts to continuously establish the House of Raminten's existence because the brand

distinguishes it from other restaurants. Consequently, the restaurant can compete in culinary business in Yogyakarta.

Gunawan (2013) stated that brand positioning functioned to build trust and customer's loyalty through excellence, uniqueness and brand differentiation. In order to reinforce the brand position in the consumer's mind, the marketers require (1) brilliant marketing communication strategies that can include all communication channels and (2) integration to facilitate management in disseminating these concepts.

The House of Raminten applies *gethok tular* or word of mouth as a marketing strategy. *Gethok tular* is an informal communication form, and it is usually interwoven through conversations of personal relationship. A message brought by the word of mouth is more easily trusted.

Sernoviz (2012) posited that there were five basic elements of word of mouth, and one of them was talkers. Talkers are communicators who are enthusiastic as well as connected with other individuals (such as friends, family, and co-workers). Afterwards, the House of Raminten uses to apply *gethok tular* as its strategy by accident.

### Formulation of the Problem

This research attempts to investigate the significance of word of mouth in the establishment of brand positioning the House of Raminten.

### The Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to explore the potential of informal communication for marketing and brand positioning.

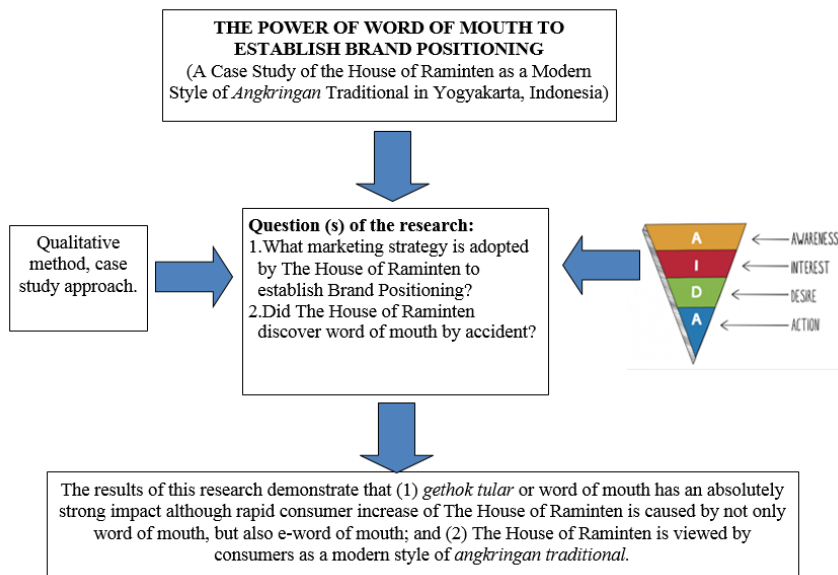


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

## RESEARCH METHOD

Denzin and Lincoln in 1998 stated that qualitative research emphasized accurately untested and unmeasured process and meaning in terms of quantity, numbers, intensity or frequency (as cited in Ahmadi, 2014). A qualitative researcher emphasizes the nature of reality in social construction, intimate relations between researchers and subject learnt, and situational obstacles that form inquiry. Case studies are analysis of persons, groups, events, decisions, periods, policies, institutions or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods (Ahmadi, 2014).

### Data Collection Technique

This research employed three ways collection techniques: in-depth interview, documentation, and data validity. The three techniques enabled the researchers to gain comprehensive information and necessary data to analyse the significance of word of mouth the techniques were classified.

Based on the acquisition's method, this research classified data into:

#### 1. Primary Data

Umar (2011) defined primary data as data collected in the first source. Primary data include data collected from in-depth interview or questionnaire. In this research, the data or direct information were collected by employing a set of technique. This technique includes:

##### a. In-Depth Interview

Primary data were collected through in-depth interview. An in-depth interview is a data collection technique through

direct and face-to-face question-answers. The researchers interviewed Hamzah (HA) as the owner of the House of Raminten, Lisa (LI) as a Manager of the House of Raminten and three customers of the House of Raminten, namely Dienni, Nur, and Satria. The researchers only selected three customers because they already represented the interview's results.

##### b. Observation

Observation is interpreted as an activity to observe directly without any mediators and object, to investigate closely an object's activity. This technique requires researchers to observe an object directly or indirectly, as stated directly or indirectly (Kriyantono, 2008). The researchers conducted field observation on July 7-9 2017. The researchers focused the field observation in the House of Raminten, Kotabaru, Yogyakarta.

#### 2. Secondary Data

Secondary data is data collected from books, written material or results of relevant previous studies. Secondary data possibly collected through literary analysis of documents and documentation. The researchers mostly gained secondary data from e-journals related to word of mouth and brand positioning. The researchers gained all previous studies from [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu), Google Scholar, and e-journals related to the researchers' topic.

### Data Analysis

Patton defines data analysis a process to arrange data sequence some patterns, categorize and discuss data (Moleong,

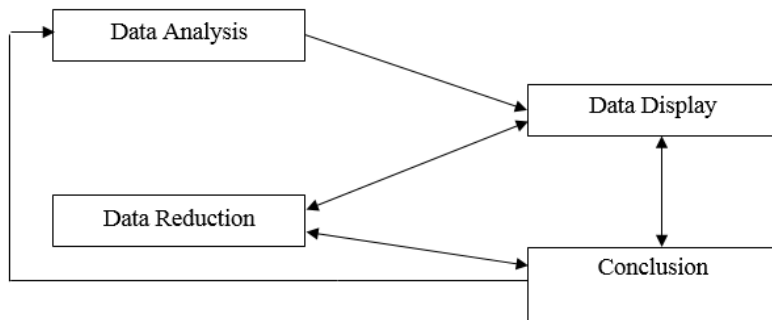


Figure 2. Interactive model of Miles and Huberman

2004). Patton Data analysis process starts from all existing data of collected by various techniques, such as in-depth interview, field observation, and literary study. In qualitative method, data can be collected from various sources by using various data collection techniques (triangulation data). According to Miles and Huberman (1984), Figure 2 states that data analysis consists of three steps data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Sugiyono, 2008).

## RESULTS

### The House of Raminten as a Modern Style of *Angkringan* Traditional

In early 2008, the House of Raminten discovered a transformative concept. This concept largely based on the current's market behaviour. In the first year, the Restaurant appeared as a simple *angkringan* with general *angkringan* frequenters as its target audience. However, in 2009, The restaurant focused its target audiences on 17-35 year-old consumers by introducing herbs as a healthy beverages consumed by women but also by others facing health

problems. Hamzah, the owner and founder of the House of Raminten, positioned herbs not only as a healthy beverage but also a delicious beverage that was possibly consumed and enjoyed by family. Unfortunately, the business of traditional herbs did not last long, as pra conducted by a team of the House of Raminten indicated, Yogyakarta's tourism grew rapidly, and thus in 2010 the House of Raminten introduces a traditional-modern concept expanded its market segmentation, not only for the teenager customers but also for all target audience.

Traditional-modern concept implemented in interior design or atmosphere landscape of the House of Raminten refers to three keywords: uniqueness, antique, and elegance. These three words can represent the House of Raminten's atmosphere. It is likely that the customers are presented with strong local ambiance and shades of Javanese culture starting from exterior design to interior design. The front part of the House of Raminten's building I decorated by a picture of a woman wearing

Javanese-traditional dress with hair bun. Meanwhile, the interior design is traditional, in which the building is designed with unique and traditional architecture with *kereta kencana*, *dokar*, and statue. Furthermore, *alunan gamelan* (Javanese traditional music) is played to give more senses of Javanese. Javanese nuance is reflected by not only the restaurants decoration, but also staff's uniforms. They wear *kemben* (Javanese cloth), vest, and *jarik* (Javanese shawl). These elements add more uniqueness of the House of Raminten.

The uniqueness is also highlighted on the House of Raminten's menu which is considered *nyentrik* (eccentric). The restaurant's special menu is '*Sego Kucing*', a small portion of rice, similar to a cat's eating portion, with some dishes like *tempe*, *teri*, or *sauce*. In general, the House of Raminten uses *angkringan* in a modern and elegant concept. Finally, all the applied concepts enable the restaurant to compete in culinary business. This statement is in line with Aaker who states that brand positioning is a part of identity and value proposition (as cited in Saggar et al., 2011). In building the House of Raminten, Hamzah never uses commercial media to announce and introduce the House of Raminten to public. He argues that the House of Raminten's promotion is conducted by customer's experiences after visit the restaurant in Yogyakarta. In other word, each customer is a potential promoter who powerfully convinces others to visit.

Word of mouth communication plays an

important role in the success of the House of Raminten. Word of mouth, is supported by frequency of utilization, number of people, the sender of information, and number of information (Casielles et al, 2013). Zeithain stated that word of mouth was a source of information before growing interest in buying (as cited in Vignilia & Buhalis, 2016). Customers possibly inform their friend, peers, relatives and or other about the existence and concept of the House of Raminten in Yogyakarta, such us through a message. When the message is received it creates more expectation for the House of Raminten. This statement has been proven by the researchers by interviewing the House of Raminten's customers. Most of the House of Raminten's customers are local and foreign tourists who schedule their visit to the House of Raminten. They obtained information about the House of Raminten from recommendation of their friends, peers, or relative or from the internet.

The customers argue that the House of Raminten new brand of traditional-modern restaurant. It indicates that the House of Raminten has created a new in the customer's' mind even before they visit it. They recognize the House of Raminten as a representative of Javanese culture combined with shades of modernity. This concept is the main attraction for the customer. Through this concept, the researchers can assume that the word of mouth strategy is definitely suitable because the House of Raminten has successfully built a marketing brand focusing on the image of the brand in customer's mind through communication

process. This statement agrees with Bhat and Reddy (1998) who stated that positioning was not about what was done for a product but how to position in consumers' mind through communication process (Sehrawala, 2015).

### **The Power of Word of Mouth to Establish Brand Positioning**

Word of mouth is one of strategies informally used by marketers. In this system, a marketer is not the central point of information about products. Word of mouth involves customers or visitors as promoters to attract other customers or visitors, by creating reviews or recommendations to friends, peers, relatives, or other acquaintances either face-to-face or virtually. This indirect intervention means that the marketers cannot control the message which might be either negative or positive.

Since word of mouth message is uncontrollable by marketers, they must be able to use word of mouth as beneficial phenomenon to prepare a unique concept, qualified product, and excellent services. Positive word of mouth on a brand is created brand for a product is definitely important; because it can represent the quality of a product. Furthermore, brand enables customers to compare the difference it from its competitors. Brand or labelling should get a position in customer's mind. That means when a product is mentioned quickly, customers can recognize or identify the characteristics it. Brand Positioning in customers' mind means making inherent, and creating meaning. Meanwhile, brand's

concepts offer pledge and benefits for consumers. Thereby creating customers high expectations and position and the essence summary of the brand are available.

A strengthening of brand positioning through word of mouth particularly for the House of Raminten has effected for a long time. Word of mouth plays a significant role in brand positioning of the House of Raminten in Yogyakarta. Many visitors who come based on of their friends' testimony. This means that consumers' perception is formed through the word of mouth.

Sernoviz (2012) argued the effectiveness of word of mouth could be represented through this research, talkers were visitors who delivered value or concept that offered by the House of Raminten through the word of mouth. Recommendations from previous visitors can persuade other potential customers. They can only experience services of the House of Raminten directly visiting. After visiting the House of Raminten, these potential customers will become a promoter for other new consumers. This phenomenon acts like a never-ending chain in which visitors are potential promoters.

To retain the brand position in visitor's mind, the House of Raminten needs to continuously evaluate customers' perception of its *angkringan's* concept. Moreover, in more competitive culinary businesses, consumers are encouraged and treated to try new products. The House of Raminten's traditional-modern concept represented in its atmosphere is promoted to public through word of mouth technique. This result agrees with the statement of Kotler and Kevin

(2012). Word of mouth communication can provide input for visitors to visit *angkringan* in the House of Raminten based on the communicator's suggestion. The success of word of mouth technique in establishing the House of Raminten's brand positioning cannot be separated from the maturity of the House of Raminten's strategy.

A major role of word of mouth in creating brand positioning in the consumer's mind in the House of Raminten is encountered from their characteristic's contribution. Word of mouth is the passing of information from one person to another through oral communication, which could be as simple as telling someone the time of day.

Yu and Tang said that word of mouth's characteristics namely attractiveness and usefulness can also affect consumers (Virvialite et al., 2015). A message of attractiveness and usefulness applied by the House of Raminten can increase the role of word of mouth. An interesting scene of diverse messages, the role of messages strongly determines consumer's perception of a product. Attractiveness is found in nonverbal messages representing the House of Raminten's position in consumer's mind. The messages include atmosphere and services depicting traditional and unforgettable-modern concepts. Meanwhile, usefulness is presented infrequency, the number of costumers, information receivers, and information.

The word of mouth's characteristics can persuade people to buy and strengthen brand positioning in consumer's mind as long as the marketers understand or meet the

expectations. More in discussing concerning the characteristic of the interesting message, marketers in this situation called as the House of Raminten's management represented by services and atmosphere transmitted by communicator as recommendations with a clear's message that the concept of the House of Raminten described as traditional modern's concept. Another strong characteristic of word of mouth is frequency of users. In this case, users as consumers become communicators (talkers) giving the recommendation (topic). Therefore, customers who visit the House of Raminten frequently more likely give recommendation to others. It is also important to consider whether of the House of Raminten is informed through individual-to-individual or individual-to-group, face-to-face, or media-use-communication (tools). *Gethok tular* or word of mouth has a very strong impact through rapid visitor increase.

Modern marketing theory can be shown in AIDA model or called as an innovative marketing model based on AIDA (Li & Yu, 2013, Table 1). It is a basic movement of marketing and advertisement resulted from the perception of customers. It was initially developed by Elmo Lewis in 1898. AIDA refers to Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action respectively. Li and Yu (2013, Table 1) define AIDA as an acronym used in marketing and advertising that describes a common list of events that possibly occur when a consumer engages with an advertisement.



Table 1  
*State of The Art (SOTA)*

No	The Researcher(s)	The Title of Research	The Result of Research
1	Li and Yu (2013)	An innovative marketing model based on AIDA : A Case from E-Bank Campus Marketing by China Construction Bank	This research shows a new model that greatly improves marketing efficiency of e-bank services from CCB at university market, and it also unfolds a new perspective in marketing of the enterprises.
2	Trusov et al. (2008)	Effects of word of mouth versus traditional marketing: finding from an internet social networking site	The research VAR model shows that word of mouth referrals have substantially longer carryover effects than traditional marketing actions.
3	Jalilvand et al. (2011)	Electronic word of mouth: challenges and opportunities	The advantages of information technology and the emergence of online social network site have changed the way information is transmitted, and they have transcended the traditional limitation of Word of Mouth.
4	Wijaya et al. (2016)	Exploration of Culinary Tourism of Indonesia: What do The International Visitors Expect?	The results reveal seven new emerging factors expected as relating to staff quality, sensory attributes, food uniqueness, local services-capes, food authenticity, food familiarity, and food variety.
5	Kozinets et al. (2010)	Networked Narratives: Understanding WOM Marketing in Online Communities.	This new narrative model shows that communal word of mouth does not simply increase or amplify marketing messages.

**(1) A - Attention (Awareness):** attracting customers' attention, the House of Raminten persuades customers and potential customers by offering uniqueness of atmosphere and dishes. Strong ambience in the House of Raminten can attract consumers to visit.

**(2) I - Interest:** raising customers' interest by focusing and demonstrating advantages and benefits (instead of focusing on features, as in traditional advertising). The concept of the House of Raminten as a traditional-modern *angkringan* successfully encourages potential customers to come. This is proven by length of the queues of people who want to eat in this restaurant.

**(3) D - Desire:** convincing customers of their desire to satisfying products or services

The House of Raminten continuously improves all aspects including food variety, and atmosphere. The House of Raminten never uses commercial media to announce and introduce itself to public. Based on the needs of AIDA model, the aim of marketing is to attract the attention of potential customers arise their interest and desire, and finally buy the products.

**(4) D - Desire:** convincing customers of their desire to satisfying products or services

The House of Raminten continuously improves all aspects including food variety, and atmosphere.

**(5) A - Action:** leading customers towards taking an action and/or purchasing the House of Raminten never uses commercial media to announce and introduce itself to public. Based on the needs of AIDA model, the aim of marketing is to

attract the attention of potential customers arise their interest and desire, and finally buy the products.

The House of Raminten's consumers know the restaurant from not only word of mouth but also from e-word of mouth. It is proven as the House of Raminten's consumers are medium-class who use the social media in their daily activities. Today, people are organized in social networks and can take action together. They can discuss isolated instances of bad customers' experience and place them in context. Thus, they express concerns and dissatisfaction more loudly than they could. Moreover, they can challenge business activities and people in power (taking parts). In a digital environment, the voice of few people can inspire and reach many. The facilitated (and constant) flow of information among different social networks makes the voice of each customer stronger. This triggers customers to be critical. In fact, people who share positive emotion tend to have more followers (tracking).

It is important to note that brand positioning in consumers' mind appears through expectations of visitor's recommendation. Brand positioning can be strengthened when many people are talking about that brand. Communicators recommend that the House of Raminten as a culinary icon in Yogyakarta represent Javanese culture and indirectly persuade consumers to try this culinary restaurant in Yogyakarta.

Pre-observation reveals that the House of Raminten conducts several steps before

applying word of mouth strategy as its medium promotion. The first step is deciding traditional-modern concept of the brand. The restaurant management selects AIDA Model. The traditional-modern concept as well carrying several factors and these extracted factors similar with research's result by Wijaya et al. (2016, Table 1). There are seven expected factors by international visitors to explore Indonesian culinary tourism. The first factor is staff quality which contains five items of: communicative staff, knowledgeable staff, responsive staff, friendly staff, and good description of dishes. The second factor is sensory appeal that articulates five items related to: food smells appealing, clean dining place, the use of fresh ingredients, food tastes good, and a pleasant ambience. The third factor is food uniqueness that connects this factor to unique way of cooking the food, unique way of eating the food, and unique way of presenting the food. The fourth factor is local service aspects that consist of three items: dining place represented of local culture, unique local décor, and dining place providing a welcoming sense of local culture. The fifth factor is food authenticity that emerges from the correlations of three items: authentic taste, authentically spicy, and exotic food, and demonstrates a close link with the authenticity aspect. The sixth factor is food familiarity I which there are two items contributing to the emergence of this factor: flavour modified for taste and the use of familiar ingredients. The seventh factor is food variety that emerges from the correlation of two items: local beverages in the destination and wide range of available food.

After determining the House of Raminten's brand, the next stage is finding a concept distinguished from its competitors. The role of word of mouth occurs after marketers apply that stage; the content of message from communicator can represent the concept set by the marketers. On the result of interviews and observations shows that *gethok tular* or word of mouth has a very strong impact although rapidly increase of the House of Raminten's consumers is caused by not only word of mouth but also by e-word of mouth. This statement is proven by the fact that the House of Raminten's customers are middle-class society who uses social media in their daily activities.

## DISCUSSION

Public trust word of mouth more than commercial advertising on television, radio, newspaper, and magazine because word of mouth comes from personal experience that is free from any company's interest. Zeithaml et al. stated that word of mouth or oral communication was one of factors influencing consumers' expectations (Shi et al., 2016). Yu and Tang stated that the characteristics of word of mouth communication were vividness, usefulness, and ability to affect consumers' intention to acquire goods (Virvialite et al., 2015). This research recommends that next researchers who are interested in investigating Javanese culture or cuisine can explore word of mouth in a conventional way. In fact, the House of Raminten becomes more popular because of e-word of mouth usually called as electronic word of mouth, such as Facebook,

Instagram, website, and BlogSpot. This fact is similar to a research's result of Jalilvand et al. (2011, Table 1). The next researchers will extend the focus the investigation in this area.

## CONCLUSION

In Indonesia's culinary industry, word of mouth concept is not something new. High competition puts pressure for marketers to create creative strategies starting from planning to proper use of media with the purpose of creating awareness. Many culinary industries implement word of mouth to establish brand positioning. It can be seen in various areas; culinary industry uses customer's experience as material recommendation.

This condition is not openly delivered by business owners. However, the best services and excellent interior design all can encourage customers to tell about their experiences to other potential customers. It can be concluded that *gethok tular* or word of mouth significantly impacts on the business of the House of Raminten although its rapid consumer increase is caused by not only word of mouth but also e-word of mouth. Furthermore, it is proven that the House of Raminten's consumers come from medium-class society who daily accesses social media.

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