

ARTICLE

Nurturing Resilient Women: Single Parents from the Perspective of Islamic Education

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ABSTRACT ENGLISH:

The phenomenon of single mothers is on the rise in modern society, bringing complex challenges in economic, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects. This article aims to examine the role and strength of women who live as single parents in educating their children based on Islamic educational principles. This research uses qualitative methods with Critical literature review to highlight the importance of spiritual education, moral strengthening, social skills development, life skills, and support from institutions and communities based on Islamic values. Based on a review of classical and contemporary Islamic educational literature, it was found that Islamic teachings give women a very noble position, especially as the main educators in the family environment, even without the presence of a spouse. Islam not only glorifies the role of mothers, but also emphasizes their pivotal role in shaping the character and personality of their children. The mental toughness, emotional independence, and spiritual intelligence of a single mother are formed through a comprehensive Islamic *tarbiyah* process, covering the spiritual, intellectual, and physical aspects. Through comprehensive education, women are able to raise a quality generation and build a just and civilized society.

Keywords: Single Mother, Resilient Women, Islamic Education.

ABSTRACT INDONESIAN:

Fenomena ibu tunggal (single mother/parent) semakin meningkat di masyarakat modern, membawa tantangan kompleks dalam aspek ekonomi, psikologis, sosial, dan spiritual. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran dan kekuatan perempuan yang hidup sebagai orang tua tunggal dalam mendidik anak-anak mereka berdasarkan prinsip-prinsip pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan tinjauan literatur kritis untuk menyoroti pentingnya pendidikan spiritual, penguatan moral, pengembangan keterampilan sosial, keterampilan hidup, dan dukungan dari lembaga dan komunitas berdasarkan nilai-nilai Islam. Berdasarkan tinjauan kritis terhadap sumber tulisan ilmiah dibidang pendidikan Islam klasik maupun kontemporer, ditemukan bahwa ajaran Islam memberikan posisi yang sangat mulia bagi perempuan, terutama sebagai pendidik utama dalam lingkungan keluarga, bahkan tanpa kehadiran suami. Islam tidak hanya mengagungkan peran ibu, tetapi juga menekankan peran sentral mereka dalam membentuk karakter dan kepribadian anak-anak mereka. Ketahanan mental, kemandirian emosional, dan kecerdasan spiritual seorang ibu tunggal terbentuk melalui proses tarbiyah Islam yang komprehensif, mencakup aspek spiritual, intelektual, dan fisik. Melalui pendidikan yang komprehensif, perempuan mampu mendidik generasi berkualitas dan membangun masyarakat yang adil dan beradab.

Kata Kunci: Ibu Tunggal, Perempuan Tangguh, Pendidikan Islam.

Introduction

Family structures around the world, including Indonesia, have undergone significant changes due to the progression of time and ongoing social dynamics (Puspita et al., 2016). One increasingly common family structure is the single-parent family, also known as a single-parent household (Wahyuni, 2018). Although the existence of single parents is not a new phenomenon in society (Inaku & Arif, 2022), the roles and challenges they face, particularly from an Islamic educational perspective, still require serious attention. When a father or mother does not have a partner, they must bear full responsibility for the care and education of their children (Hidayat, 2021). This situation can arise for various reasons, such as divorce, the death of a spouse, or the absence of one parent due to other factors (Bago, 2022). Single parents, especially women, often face a double burden, serving as both the primary breadwinner and educator for their children.

In the context of culture and religion, women play a crucial role in shaping the personality and character of children (Rizvi et al., 2014). Islam, as a comprehensive religion, pays great attention to education, both formal and informal, and recognizes the pivotal role of women in the domestic and public spheres (Orakzai, 2014). Various verses in the Qur'an and hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW describe mothers as the first educators of their children. This emphasizes the importance of women's contribution in educating the younger generation, including in single-parent families. As stated in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa 'verse 9, Allah SWT says, which means:

"And let those fear [for their own helpless children] who, if they were to leave behind them [a helpless] offspring of their own, would be concerned about their [future]. So, let them fear Allah and speak just words"

A hadith narrated by Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 2983, explains:

"I and a woman who is widowed and patiently raises her children will be like this in Paradise," — and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) gestured with his index and middle fingers, indicating closeness.

Raising children in an intact family structure is already a challenge in itself, let alone for a single parent (Fitria, 2025). Women who take on the role of single parent face a variety of complex challenges, including social, economic, psychological, and spiritual pressures (Devi & Nashirudin, 2024; Nadirra & Nadilla, 2023; Rahman et al., 2025). They are required to fulfill two roles simultaneously: that of a loving mother and a firm and responsible head of the family (Zulia & Rahman, 2024). This dual role requires extraordinary physical, emotional, and spiritual resilience (Whisenhunt et al., 2019). In the perspective of Islamic education, women are seen as active subjects and pivotal agents in shaping the future generation. Islamic history records the work of strong women such as Khadijah bint Khuwailid, Aisha bint Abu Bakr, and Asma' bint Abu Bakr, who played central roles in their families and communities (Yasin, 2025; Midesia & Nadilla, 2022). They not only educated their children well, but also contributed to the spread of Islamic values.

Educating and empowering single mothers requires a comprehensive approach, considering that this phenomenon in modern society is often related to various social problems,

such as poverty, limited access to education, and the marginalization of women (Rahman et al., 2024). This approach should not only focus on material aspects, but also on spiritual and educational dimensions based on Islamic values of *rahmatan lil'alam*. Islamic education can be an instrument of empowerment for single mothers (Rahman, Ramli & Hamdan, 2022), through the strengthening of the values of *tauhid* (only one God), morals, and knowledge. With a comprehensive education, women can face life's challenges and educate their children to become a pious, independent, and high-quality generation. In addition to that, Islamic education also encourages the formation of a community that cares for and supports single parents so that they do not experience social isolation (Abubakar et al., 2023).

This study emphasizes the pivotal role of single mothers, whose voices are often overlooked. Their experiences in building family resilience and educating children in accordance with Islamic values need to be documented and analyzed scientifically. This will create a deeper understanding of the challenges and potential of single mothers from the perspective of Islamic education. Thus, this article aims to examine how Islamic education views and supports the role of women as single parents, as well as how educational methods can help them perform two roles at once (Azmy et al, 2024). Further, this study also seeks to contribute to the development of an inclusive, gender-equitable concept of Islamic education that is relevant to the social dynamics of modern society.

Method

This study uses a qualitative research approach, or critical literature review (Saunders & Rojon, 2011). The research aims to understand and describe the concept of women's resilience, particularly mothers who are single parents, from the perspective of Islamic education. To achieve this goal, the research thoroughly examines various literature, books, scientific journals, and relevant documents to find Islamic values that serve as the foundation for life and education for women who are single parents. This study focuses on the Islamic perspective on the role of single mothers in educating children, recommended educational methods, and how Islamic education instills values such as faith, patience, and perseverance (Pallathadka et al., 2023). The researcher seeks to gain a comprehensive theoretical understanding of the role and contribution of single mothers in shaping a generation of noble character by examining the writings of Islamic scholars, Islamic educational theories, and the concept of resilience found in Islamic literature. This research does not explore the direct experiences of specific subjects; instead, it analyzes written sources that support our understanding of resilience and the role of single-parent women in Islamic education.

Result and Discussion

Single (Parent) Mother

A single parent mother is a woman who raises her children alone without active assistance from a partner, whether it be a husband or the father of her children (John & Shimfe, 2020). The Language Dictionary defines a single parent as a parent who raises their children alone due to divorce, the death of a spouse, or other reasons, or because they have never been married. In family sociology studies, the term “single mother” refers to a woman who bears

dual responsibilities in the family due to the absence of a father's role (Randolph, 1995). These responsibilities include caring for and educating children, earning a living, making decisions within the family, and fulfilling the emotional needs of children (Jannah, 2018). Single mothers often face various challenges, such as economic pressure, social stigma, and the responsibility of being both the breadwinner and educator for their children. It is pivotal to distinguish between permanent and temporary single parents. Permanent single parents are individuals who no longer have a partner in their family life, whether due to divorce, death, or the decision to become a single mother, such as through adoption or out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Meanwhile, temporary single parenthood may occur when a partner must work outside the city or abroad for a certain period of time.

Several factors can cause a woman to become a single parent. One of the main causes is divorce. After divorce, most mothers tend to raise their children on their own without active involvement from their former partners. Divorce can be caused by various reasons, such as disharmony in the household, infidelity, domestic violence (DV), incompatibility of values and life goals, or other legal reasons (Hutasoit & Brahmana, 2021).

Apart from divorce, single parenthood can also arise due to the death of a spouse. When a husband dies, a woman automatically takes over all family responsibilities, including raising children and earning a living. This condition requires a mother to take on the dual role of breadwinner and primary caregiver for her children (Hutasoit & Brahmana, 2021).

Pregnancy outside of marriage is also one of the causes of single parenthood. Some women have children as a result of pregnancy outside of marriage without ever marrying the biological father of the child. This decision is usually influenced by social, cultural, or moral factors. In this situation, women choose to raise their children alone, either voluntarily or because they have no other choice (Hutasoit & Brahmana, 2021). Another cause is the conscious decision to adopt a child without getting married. With the changing times, more women are choosing to become single mothers through adoption. The reasons behind this decision may include the desire to form their own family, compassion, or biological reasons such as the inability to conceive (Hutasoit & Brahmana, 2021). Single mothers face various complex responsibilities, one of which is economic responsibility. Without a partner to help financially, single mothers often experience financial difficulties. This problem is exacerbated by the wage gap between men and women, time constraints due to childcare responsibilities, and limited access to decent work (Hutasoit & Brahmana, 2021).

In addition to economic responsibilities, single mothers also bear a heavy emotional and psychological burden. They often feel lonely, stressed, guilty, and face social pressure. The dilemma between accompanying their children and working is a challenge in itself, compounded by concerns about their children's future (Hutasoit & Brahmana, 2021).

Another equally pivotal responsibility is social responsibility and children's education. Single mothers often face negative stigma from society due to their status as a family without a father. They have a role to maintain the family's image and ensure that their children maintain social integrity. On the other hand, children's education is entirely in the hands of the mother, both in formal and informal aspects. In families without a father figure,

discipline issues often arise, especially when the mother must set rules and enforce them alone, which can lead to conflicts, particularly during the children's teenage years (Hutasoit & Brahmana, 2021).

Traditional social structures in many societies around the world are generally patriarchal, meaning that men are at the centre of power in family, political, religious, and economic institutions (Zulia & Rahman, 2024). This patriarchal system produces norms and values that often limit women's freedom, including women who become single parents due to divorce, the death of a spouse, or the decision not to marry. In societies that still adhere to patriarchal thinking, single mothers are often looked down upon and considered a “social anomaly” because they are seen as deviating from the ideal family standard of a complete family with both a father and a mother (Prager, 2012). The phenomenon of social judgment against single mothers is rooted in a culture and history that values the perfection of the traditional household. As a result, women who raise children alone often face negative stigma, are seen as failing in their role as wives, and are even viewed as a moral threat in their social environment. Single mothers are often the target of suspicion in social circles, with the assumption that their presence could undermine the “security” of others' households. Such narratives are clearly unfair and hurtful, as they reduce a woman's identity to her marital status without acknowledging her struggles and capabilities.

However, as social transformations continue to unfold, perceptions toward single mothers are beginning to shift (Van Gasse & Mortelmans, 2020). Society is gradually coming to understand that the concept of family no longer needs to be confined to the formal framework of a married couple with children. Family structures are now more diverse, such as families consisting of a mother and child, a father and child, or supportive communities. Modern sociologists emphasize that the essence of a family is the existence of love, responsibility, and commitment, not merely a formal structure that requires the presence of two parents. Therefore, single mothers are also entitled to equal respect and recognition as part of a healthy and emotionally and socially intact family.

The Teaching of Islam About Mother

In Islamic teachings, mothers occupy a very noble and special position (Yasin, 2025). This is clearly illustrated in various verses of the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. One of the most famous hadiths is when a companion asked the Prophet about who was most deserving of good treatment, and the Prophet replied, “Your mother,” repeating it three times before mentioning “your father.” This emphasis highlights the great respect accorded to mothers in Islam, as well as the high status and responsibilities of a mother within the family. The role of a mother is crucial, especially in educating children. From birth, children receive their first education from their mother, both through verbal and non-verbal communication. Intensive interaction between mother and child from an early age has a significant impact on the child's mental, emotional, and spiritual development.

The role of mothers becomes even more difficult when a woman has to live as a single parent (Goldscheider et al., 2015). Not only do they have to fulfill their biological role as the primary caregiver, but they also have to take on psychological, social, and spiritual

responsibilities without the help of a partner (Sadiq & Ali, 2014). In this context, single mothers not only act as educators, but also as protectors and breadwinners for their children. Islam provides moral guidance for mothers to always have patience (*ash-shabr*), trust in God (*tawakal*), and steadfastness (*istiqamah*) in carrying out their roles. The example of a strong woman in the Qur'an, such as Maryam binti Imran—the mother of Prophet Isa AS—who lived as a single mother without ever marrying, serves as a real-life example of the steadfastness and spirituality of a mother in facing life's challenges. This story inspires single mothers to remain resilient and sincere in educating and raising their children according to Islamic values.

Nurturing Single Mothers Within the Framework of Islamic Education

First, spiritual guidance, or *tarbiyah ruhiyah*, plays a pivotal role in Islamic teachings for single mothers, especially when facing complex emotional, social, and economic challenges. Spiritual education aims to strengthen a person's relationship with Allah SWT, so that every step in life is based on the principles of monotheism, sincerity, and piety. Women who bear the dual responsibility of being both a mother and the head of the household greatly need spiritual strength to navigate their lives with patience and resilience. This guidance process begins with getting used to performing obligatory worship, such as the five daily prayers, regularly and solemnly (Mardhiah, 2016). In addition, single mothers are also encouraged to perform sunnah worship such as night prayers (*qiyamullail*), because night-time is the best time for supplication and calming the soul. These spiritual activities not only strengthen the vertical relationship with Allah SWT, but also provide inner peace and motivation in facing various difficulties in life. Reading and contemplating the Qur'an regularly is also a pivotal part of *tarbiyah ruhiyah*, because the Qur'an is a guide for every Muslim who is able to bring peace and spiritual enlightenment.

Second, moral education or *tarbiyah akhlakiyah* is a pivotal aspect of Islamic education, especially for women who are single mothers (Zaini et al., 2024). The primary method in moral education is setting a good example (*uswah hasanah*), where single mothers are expected to serve as role models in terms of honesty, patience, responsibility, and social ethics (Mustofa, 2019). Children easily mimic their parents' behaviour, so a mother's good behaviour will shape positive character traits in her children. For example, children will learn about honesty through real examples from their mothers in their daily words and actions. In addition, the mother's attitude of responsibility and patience in facing life's challenges will teach children about perseverance and maturity. Open dialogue and deliberation are also effective approaches in shaping children's character, so that children feel valued and grow with self-confidence. The habit of Islamic morals, such as being polite to neighbours, being honest in transactions, and maintaining trust in the surrounding environment, is also an integral part of moral guidance. Thus, moral education not only shapes the character of righteous children, but also strengthens the mentality of single mothers in carrying out their dual roles.

Third, the *tarbiyah ijtimaiyah* or social education approach is also very necessary to build a strong personality. Islam teaches a balance between the relationship with Allah

(*hablum minallah*) and the relationship with fellow human beings (*hablum minannas*). For single mothers, awareness of their social role is pivotal so that they continue to feel part of the wider social community. One of the efforts that can be made is to actively participate in *majelis taklim* (teaching forum) activities, which serve not only as a means of strengthening religious knowledge, but also as a place to share experiences and build emotional support (Rahmat, 2024). Involvement in religious organizations such as women's recitation groups, mosque social activities, or special Islamic-based single mother groups can increase self-confidence and togetherness, so that they do not feel isolated.

Furthermore, life skill development is an essential aspect of Islamic education for single mothers (Aziz et al., 2024). These skills include family financial management, enhancing economic independence, and effective Islamic parenting. Islam provides space for women to work as long as it is in accordance with Sharia law. Therefore, single mothers are encouraged to develop Sharia entrepreneurship skills, good financial management, and productive use of technology, such as running a halal online business. In addition to economic aspects, time and emotional management skills are also very important so that they can balance their roles as breadwinners and educators of their children. By relying on spiritual strength through remembrance of God, prayer, and patience, single mothers can form harmonious and loving families. This comprehensive approach to Islamic education not only supports the spiritual, moral, social, and economic growth of single mothers, but also helps them live their lives with optimism and peace of mind.

Islamic education for single mothers is a highly effective strategy through communities and institutions. Communities and institutions such as mosques and training centres can be places where single mothers can gain religious understanding and life skills. Islamic economic training in mosques can help single mothers become more financially independent, give them an understanding of halal businesses, and teach them how to manage household finances in accordance with sharia law. Islamic boarding schools and other Islamic educational institutions can also contribute greatly to helping single mothers. These organizations can offer special programs that help single mothers improve themselves, such as life skills training, which includes entrepreneurial skills, household management, effective communication with children, and self-development.

Islamic education is pivotal in building a spiritually and morally strong individual, especially for women who work as single mothers. In this situation, Islamic education methods not only build children's character but also provide strength, power, and inner peace for single mothers who have to shoulder the responsibilities of caregiver, educator, and breadwinner. Islamic education, which includes nurturing faith, worship, and moral values, as well as social and emotional education, can be highly beneficial. Islamic education has the ability to enhance the faith and resilience of women who are still single parents. Women tend to experience inner crises, stress, and psychological pressure in difficult situations, such as the loss of a partner or divorce (Dharani & Balamurugan, 2024).

Through the teachings of *tawhid*, *tawakal*, and patience, Islamic education provides a strong spiritual foundation. Single mothers can view trials as Allah's destiny and a way to draw closer to Him by studying Islamic teachings. Worship, such as prayer, recitation of the

Quran, and remembrance of Allah, can help calm the soul and strengthen the heart to continue striving to raise children with optimism and hope. Islamic education can give single mothers a sense of self-confidence and self-worth. Many of them face negative stigma and social pressure, which can harm mental health. With its teachings emphasizing the nobility of deeds and the importance of intentions, Islamic education offers women the opportunity to rise up and fulfill their maternal responsibilities with dignity. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) linked a mother's satisfaction with Paradise, indicating that motherhood is a noble task promised great rewards. Therefore, women who only have a father will be better able to see themselves as valuable individuals and make significant contributions to the formation of righteous generations by having a deep understanding of Islamic values.

Children raised by single parents often face social issues such as psychological stress, low self-esteem, or even lack of attention. However, mothers can effectively instill Islamic values in their children through an Islamic education system that emphasizes exemplary behaviour (*uswah hasanah*), compassionate nurturing (*rahmah*), and good communication and education (*mau'izhah hasanah*). Children will grow up with moral awareness, social empathy, and mental resilience that shape their Islamic personality from an early age. Not only will they have the ability to face life's challenges, but they will also become children who are able to live in society with integrity.

Islamic education will create a more inclusive and supportive Muslim community if it is widely implemented in the community. Social solidarity in helping one another in goodness and upholding the value of *ukhuwwah Islamiyah* is one of the characteristics of an ideal Islamic society. Ulama have a moral obligation to convey the correct Islamic teachings about the role of women, family, and the importance of supporting fellow Muslims in all situations (Abideen & Abbas, 2021). Through sermons, recitations, and fatwas that are soothing and defend the value of justice, they can be pioneers in changing the way society views single parents. Community leaders must also actively participate in building a safe and supportive social environment, such as building support communities for single parents, providing access to religious education, and offering skills training to earn their own money (Soules & Jafralie, 2021).

The Twofold Duties of Single Mother in the Family: Nurturing Resilience

Single mothers have a very complex dual role in household life. Not only do they function as mothers who care for, educate, and raise children, but they also have to act as heads of households who meet the financial needs of their families (Sadiq & Ali, 2014; Nadirra & Nadilla, 2023). In a patriarchal cultural context, this dual role is often seen as a heavy burden, given that traditionally economic responsibilities have been placed on men. However, in reality, many women are able to fulfill their role as single parents with strength, independence, and the ability to guide their children toward a quality life and good character (Saiin, Macsudov & Amsalu, 2024).

In such circumstances, Islamic education serves as the primary foundation that strengthens the mental and spiritual resilience of a single mother. Islamic education instills

the values of *tawhid* (monotheism), sincerity, patience, and teaches the concepts of *tawakal* (trust in God's decision) and gratitude as fundamental principles in living life. This spiritual strength becomes the primary shield for single mothers in facing life's challenges, such as economic pressure, social stigma, and the immense responsibility of childcare (Horak, 2021; Sihag, 2025).

Spiritual education or spiritual development becomes the top priority (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008). Through the practice of worship such as the five daily prayers, reading the Quran, increasing remembrance of Allah, and supplication, a single mother can attain inner peace and spiritual strength. The belief that every trial is part of Allah's destiny, as explained in the Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 286, strengthens their hearts with the knowledge that no burden in life is given by Allah that exceeds the capacity of His servants. The attitudes of *tawakal* (trust in Allah's decision), patience, gratitude, and effort become the main pillars that must be instilled in a single mother.

More than just surviving, the resilience of a single mother is also measured by her ability to maintain the integrity of her faith and morals in the face of trials. Moral education in Islam teaches the values of honesty, patience, responsibility, and manners in social interactions. Children learn through example; therefore, a single mother is required to be a good moral figure for her children. Daily behaviour, gentle words, honesty in actions, and patience in facing trials will shape children's characters positively.

In addition to spiritual and moral guidance, social education is also a pivotal aspect that cannot be ignored. Islam not only teaches vertical relationships with Allah (*hablum minallah*), but also horizontal relationships with fellow human beings (*hablum minannas*). A single mother is encouraged to remain active in social life, such as joining religious study groups, Islamic communities, or single-mother groups based at mosques. Healthy social interaction helps reduce feelings of loneliness, negative stigma, and expands emotional and spiritual support networks (Khan & Sultan, 2023; Girma et al., 2024; Nasab et al. 2025).

In economic terms, Islam teaches the principles of independence and wise financial management. For single mothers, the ability to manage family finances is pivotal. Creating a household budget, recording income and expenses, and planning savings and investments are strategic steps to achieve financial stability. In Islam, working is part of worship as long as it is in accordance with Sharia law. Therefore, single mothers are encouraged to develop life skills such as sharia entrepreneurship, home business management, or the use of technology through halal online businesses.

The role of Islamic education is also very central in the context of parenting (Nurhuda, 2023). The Prophet Muhammad SAW said that "a mother is the first madrasah for her children." This shows how great the influence of mothers is in shaping the character and personality of children. A single mother is not only a single parent administratively, but also the main madrasah in the family. The concepts of *tarbiyah* (character education), *ta'dib* (instilling manners), and *ta'lim* (learning knowledge) can be the main guidelines for single mothers in raising their children to grow up to be people of faith, good character, and knowledge (Renvoize, 2023).

On the psychological side, single mothers must also pay attention to their mental health and that of their children. Challenges such as guilt, loneliness, and anxiety often lurk in single mothers. Therefore, maintaining mental stability by maintaining worship, strengthening communication with children, and following a healthy lifestyle is a must. Openness in communication with children, giving them space to express their feelings, and building a sense of security are part of a very pivotal emotional education.

Conclusion

Women who do not have parents play a pivotal role in shaping the Islamic generation amid social, economic, and cultural difficulties. Islam pays attention to the role of mothers in education, making them the primary educators of their children. For a single mother, this role becomes even more challenging as she must balance maternal responsibilities with personal freedom. Islamic education offers various methods to support single mothers, including spiritual education (*tarbiyah ruhiyah*), moral education (*tarbiyah akhlakiyah*), social education (*tarbiyah ijtimai'iyah*), and life skills education. Single mothers can rise above social stigma and face life with confidence, optimism, and integrity through the development of faith, worship habits, moral exemplarity, strengthening social networks, and Islamic economic and parenting education. In addition, strengthening the resilience of Islamic educational institutions and communities and building a supportive and discrimination-free environment is pivotal. Women who are single mothers are not symbols of failure; rather, they are warriors of life worthy of respect. They can educate their children to become resilient individuals of noble character, ready to face the challenges of the times based on Islamic values.

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