Workers' Perceptions of CSR Practices: Analysis of a Textile Organization in Pakistan

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Abstract
In modern world of business, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has attained a crucial position to achieve sustained competitive advantage and recent outbreak of corona virus pandemic has increased its importance manifold. Ironically, CSR is still overlooked in many developing countries including Pakistan and its internal dimension that relates to the workplace conditions, employees' wellbeing, their health and safety, is largely neglected. To have in-depth analysis of workers' perceptions of CSR practices in Pakistan's industry, a textile organization, as single case study design was explored using qualitative research methodology. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations and documentary evidences. Thematic analysis suggests that workforce has major concerns about their health and safety, wellbeing, living salary, provident fund, subsidized food, recreational facilities, appropriate rest intervals and flexible working hours. Absence of CSR policy and its monitoring system, inadequate firefighting equipment, limited use of masks and unsuitable storage of chemicals, insufficient training and lack of employees' voice depicted an alarming situation as observed by the authors. The study concludes that, organization needs to address these flaws to improve organizational health and focusing on employee related CSR is critical for reintegration of Pakistan's Textile Industry. It also concludes that workers' perceptions are more focused on material aspects of CSR as compared to other areas of human development. The study might be useful for organizations' stakeholders and policy makers.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, qualitative, textile industry, employees' perceptions, employee wellbeing.

Introduction
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has surfaced as one of the most prominent management trends of the 21st century, a state-of-the-art approach of the organizations to meet the challenges of sustainable development (Lesáková et al., 2016). Surveys indicate that 61% of consumers would buy a product from a socially responsible company or would switch retailers if cost and quality were equal (Tai & Chuang, 2014). CSR has become a global movement, gaining vigor

with each passing day, primarily due to increased expectations from business to be more responsible toward the societal concerns of poverty alleviation, hunger and disease, employees' wellbeing, health and safety at workplace, eradication of corruption, environmental decay, pollution and global warming.

Outbreak of corona virus pandemic has increased the importance of CSR manifold and the worldwide situation demands need of being socially responsible greater than before. Several organizations project their social values, vowing that they are much considerate about their employees and other stakeholders but the current pandemic crisis is the actual time for them to fulfil that pledge (Kramer, 2020). World Business Council for Sustainable Development defines CSR as "the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development, while improving quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as the local community and society at large" (Dahlsrud, 2008, p.7).

Despite the rhetoric, living conditions of the employees and their wellbeing i.e. the internal dimension of CSR has been largely neglected (Linda et.al, 2016) and remains one of the least studied areas, (Terrero et al., 2017). In developing countries working conditions in most of the textile and apparel factories are pitiable, health and safety considerations are compromised, wages are low, child labor is practiced, longer working hours are required, and workers confront verbal and physical abuse (Mizener, 2015; Neu, et.al, 2014). Workers are often scared for their own jobs to speak up about problems and factory management may not spend on upgrading building safety standards because there are sufficient buyers who are least pushed, resultantly unsafe working conditions remain unaddressed (Theuws, 2013).

The situation of employee related CSR in Pakistan's textile industry, the mainstay of the country's economy is not satisfactory and the symptoms of negation of CSR are evident. Frequent incidents of textile and garment factories fires are testament to the lack of workplace safety standards (Shaikh, et al., 2019). Studies on work related diseases and safety standards in textile industry reveal unsatisfactory state of occupational health and safety (OHS) and shortage of technical facilities like air checking and biological monitoring, unsatisfactory medical facilities on site, physical hazards and workers' unawareness of quality living is evident (Khan et al. 2014; Zubair et al., 2017). This state of affairs amounts to the denial of CSR and obtaining quality certifications alone are not sufficient to tackle these problems.

Pakistan's textile industry, that contributes largest share in the country's exports, reaching around 52% of the total, employing nearly 40% of the total manufacturing labor force, while contributing 46% to the total manufacturing output of the country and adding value of around 8.5% in GDP (Hussain, et al., 2019) has been in shambles. Although there are signs of improvement in the textile sector during the current financial year, there are plethora of problems yet to be tackled for its recovery (Ali, et al. 2020).

It is unfortunate that the catalytic role of CSR in enhancing employees' organizational commitment and satisfaction (Simone et al., 2016; Terrero et al., 2017) is seldom recognized by the industry. Energy crisis, expensive raw material, lack of investment, high tariffs, difficult bank loans and tough competition in the international market perhaps may be important variables of the crisis, but disregard of universally accepted CSR principles, particularly its internal dimension relating to the employees might also be a significant variable.

CSR in true spirit can motivate employees to work with zeal and may increase their sense of belonging, which can eventually improve productivity and credibility of organizations. Hence, it is crucial to analyze CSR state of affairs in Pakistan's textile sector and to find out connection between CSR and the present scenario.

Purpose of this research was to assess workers' perceptions and expectations regarding internal dimension of CSR and understand its effects on organizational health through in-depth analysis of the employee related CSR practices. Research questions were:

a. What are the perceptions of workforce over employee focused CSR practices in textile manufacturing and export industry of Pakistan?
b. What are the prevailing employee related CSR practices in textile manufacturing and export industry of Pakistan?

Literature Review

Gone are the days when sole responsibility of the business was considered to make as much money as possible. The school of thought, supported by a considerable number of intellectuals like Nobel Laureate economist Milton Friedman, considering CSR as an unwanted expense, a financial burden and a threat to the freedom of corporate world (Friedman, 1970) has been challenged. Today, the difference of opinion is not on whether an organization should be socially responsible or not but rather to the scale and manner it should be socially responsible (Glavas, 2009).

A growing body of researchers have established a positive co-relation between CSR practices and enhanced organizational performance (Corkery et al., 2017; Lins et al., 2017). Goal of CSR is to embrace responsibility for the company's actions and encourage a positive impact through its activities on the employees, environment, consumers, communities, stakeholders and all other members of public sphere (Fontaine, 2013). If truth to be told this speaks of a sort of paradigm shift from "the business of business is business" towards a social conscience of businesses; a kind of "second renaissance" (Yau & Brutoco, 2012).

CSR is concerned with treating internal as well as external stakeholders in a socially responsible way, acceptable in civilized societies to build higher standards of living, while preserving the profitability of the company (Hopkins, 2003). CSR activities can be divided into four categories i.e. community, environment, marketplace and workplace, however the strongest management performing area is the workplace which covers internal communication, training, awareness, health and safety, wellbeing, workforce diversity (Armstrong, 2014); social justice, equal opportunities, education and working conditions (Legrand, et.al , 2013). Many companies, traditionally sought to minimize cost of "expensive" employee health care coverage or even eliminate health coverage altogether, have learned that because of lost workdays and diminished employee productivity, poor health costs them more (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

Research reveals that employee attitudes and behaviors are profoundly predisposed by how much fair they believe their organization's dealings are (Cropanzano, et al., 2001). Employees' perceptions of CSR generate emotional and attitudinal reaction, which may be positive in outcome resulting from perceived justice but may lead to frustration and retaliation as consequences of injustice (Rupp, et al., 2006). Organization's pledge to socially responsible behavior develops a positive perception among its employees and develops constructive attitudes associated with better performance, thus managers need to have skills of empathy (Ismail, 2009).

Employees' motivational level interacts with their job satisfaction and performance. Research supports that higher-order motivational factors of self-esteem and self-actualization, as suggested by Maslow's theory of needs, can only be achieved when employees' physiological and safety needs are fulfilled (Noltemeyer, et al., 2020; Stefan, et al., 2020). These basic human needs become drivers to reach at self-actualization, the ultimate objective of the needs theory. At this stage, employees reach at their complete potential fully utilizing their talents and capabilities, while trying to achieve personal growth (Farimani & Shahri, 2020) and this also helps in their retention and enhanced organizational performance (Kurdi & Alshurideh, 2020). CSR's research in Pakistan as well broadly accepts its importance for organizational performance (Ali et al., 2017; Farooq et al., 2017; Naseem et al., 2017; Rehman et al., 2017)

but the concept has not yet been examined extensively (Haq, et al., 2017). Findings of the research carried out on CSR in context of Pakistan reveal that the concept is comparatively far from the maturity stage (Ahmed & Ahmad, 2011) and there is a common perception among business community that CSR relates to charitable actions only. Few large organizations have comprehensive CSR policy but SMEs on the other hand remain constrained to conform to codes of conduct set by foreign buyers (Sajjad & Eweje, 2014). Research in textile sector focuses more on machine breakdowns, wastes, improper maintenance, production and quality defects as reasons of the inefficiency (Bilal, 2018). There is scarcity of research addressing in-depth analysis of employee related CSR practices in the industry to find out their foundation in the natural settings (case study approach).

This study endeavors to address this gap by in-depth analyzes of a medium sized textile manufacturing and export organization of Pakistan through case study method. The research is motivated by the seemingly neglect of CSR in Pakistan's textile industry, as evident from recurrent factory fires, poor health and safety measures, inadequate wellbeing measures and deplorable living standards of the workers, and focuses on its recovery through the catalytic role of universally accepted CSR principles.

Literature review suggests a vast range of employee related CSR practices, including equal opportunities, health and safety, fair compensation and benefits, employees' wellbeing, work life balance, training and development, employees' voice and respect and dignity at workplace (Ball, 2017; BMF, 2018; Brusendorff, 2014; CIPD, 2018; GRI, 2016; ISO, 2018; Mizener, 2015; SAI, 2018; SECP, 2013; Slaper & Hall, 2011). These dimensions have been put together for the purpose of this study (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Proposed Model of Employee Related CSR

The study was steered by two theoretical propositions for the guidance in data collection and analysis (Yin, 2014):

    a. Workforce has serious concerns over employee focused CSR practices.
    b. Universally accepted CSR principles are flouted in textile industry of Pakistan.

Research Methodology
Method
The study employed a single case study research design to carry out rigorous analysis of a textile manufacturing and export organization, the best method to give an exhaustive analysis of the situation (Yin, 2014). The fundamental goal of case study research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of an issue, within its context with a view to understand the issue from the perspective of participants (Yin, 2009). Like other forms of qualitative research, the researcher seeks to explore, understand and present the participants' perspectives while getting close to them in their natural setting (Creswell, 2013).

Sampling
Criteria for Case Selection
Purposive Sampling Technique was adopted to select the case study organization through a systematic process. List of all registered textile organizations in Lahore district were obtained from All Pakistan Textile Association (APTMA). From their official web sites ten oldest organizations were marked keeping in view two purposes: firstly, to get rich data for analysis and secondly their involvement in export business. Focal persons of these organizations were contacted through telephone and emails were sent seeking permission for the research while explaining the objectives of the study. The positive response came from "Innovative Textiles" (name has been changed for purpose of confidentiality). The CEO acknowledged the importance of the research and granted permission for factory visits, interviews and access to the archival records.

The Case
The case study organization - "Innovative Textiles", a Lahore based medium enterprise in the business of textile manufacturing and export since 1978 is a registered member of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industries. The organization's products are exported to EU countries, USA, Middle East, Australia and New Zealand. The organization vows to have an innovative and quality-conscious approach, a leading manufacturer and exporter of a wide collection of products mostly made using 100% cotton and the latest technology, ensuring excellent design and quality. It participates in international exhibitions as well to attract the customers. It is an ISO 9001:2008 certified company and claims to be credited by the international buyers as one of the most compliant supplier of Pakistan made textiles.

Criteria for Respondents' Selection
Workers lists were obtained and according to the length of service in the organization, one individual each from Weaving, Dyeing, Stitching and Packing Department were selected. From Stitching Department, in addition to the male worker, senior female worker was also selected because women are employed only in that department. Senior security guard was also selected as participant. In this way, representation of all departments was ensured. Length of service criterion was kept to get a realistic feedback from the participants as they have seen the organization through its thick and thin. Previous research establishes that fundamental information for themes are comprehensible even after six interviews (Guest et.al. 2006).

Table 1: Participants' Profile

Designation & Department	Gender	Age	Qualification	Length of Service
Checker, Dying Department	Male	48 years	Matriculation	20 years
Weaver, Weaving Department	Male	40 years	Matriculation	15 years
Skilled Stitcher, Stitching Department	Male	35 years	Matriculation	10 years
Stitcher, Stitching Department	Female	31 years	Middle	4 years
Helper, Packing Department	Male	38 years	Primary	8 years
Security Guard	Male	47 years	Middle	7 years

Procedure

Data was collected through face to face semi structured interviews to address the research questions. A set of questions was formulated for non-managerial workforce to address the research questions, incorporating different dimensions of employee related CSR practices as guideline. Question format was tailored by benefitting various sources (Stanford, 2018; Theuws, 2013; Weiss, 1994) and experts' opinions were obtained on the questions guideline. Data was also drawn through direct observations, organizational documents and archival records, being sources of evidence in doing case studies (Yin, 2014). The factory was visited for several times. Interviews were conducted, observations made and company's documents checked. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, field notes prepared to record the observations and thus authenticity, reliability and validity of the data ensured through triangulation.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed through Content Analysis - an analytical technique that codes and categorizes qualitative data, which is grouped according to themes thus making sense of the data, and then linking these categories and themes is done in ways that provide answers to the research questions (Saunders et al., 2015). Data analysis was carried out using NVivo ® a Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to draw results. The software performs auto coding based on the words or phrases contained in the sources. Identifying themes through coding involves the researcher looking repetitions of keywords to identify meaning which are then reviewed within their context (Denzin et al. 2005).

Ethical Considerations

The case study researchers are barred from disclosing confidential and personally identifiable information concerning the research participants (APA, 2010). Anonymity of the organization and participants' identification was kept and confidentiality of the data ensured. Findings and recommendations of the study will be shared with the participants.

Results

Workers' Perception of Employee Focused CSR

To address the research question on workforce's perception of employee focused CSR practices in textile manufacturing and export industry of Pakistan, the interviewees were questioned for their awareness of the CSR concept and probing their perceptions and expectations from the management over employee focused CSR practices. The findings are very thoughtful. Following themes were emerged:

CSR as Workers' Needs

The perceptions of 100% respondents over employee focused CSR were based on their expected fulfillment of all needs by the management. It is obvious from the verbatim text below. Weaver from Weaving Department said:

> "CSR is in fact taking care of workers. Management must take care of workers' health and if they are sick, their medical treatment should be arranged".

Skilled Stitcher from Stitching Department said:

> "Employees' focused CSR is actually taking care of all needs of the workers. They should be made satisfied. They should be given good salary".

Effective Health and Safety Management

All workers considered taking care of their health and safety as the foremost social responsibility of the management. This is obvious from the below verbatim text. Checker from Dyeing Department said:

> "According to my point of the most important employees' focused social responsibility of the management is the provision of safety to the workers. Workers must be provided with the safety shoes, gloves, and masks during the work otherwise they may be harmed".

Living Pay and Comprehensive Benefits

All workers considered timely disbursement of living pay and distribution of comprehensive benefits to the workers as a major social responsibility of the management. This was found in the following excerpts from the interviews. Security guard said:

> "……secondly, our salary should also be reasonable. Presently, I am getting Rs. 15000 which is a very meager amount. Thirdly, there should be at least four leaves in a month".

Woman worker from Stitching Department said:

> "According to my point of view prime social responsibility of management towards the workers is timely disbursement of their salary. Their all kind of basic needs must be fulfilled…….".

Welfare Cultivates Workers' Satisfaction

All of the workers measured workers' satisfaction as an indispensable part of employee focused CSR. This is evident from the following excerpt of the Checker from Dyeing Department, who said:

> "Any organization's success is dependent on its workers. Therefore, workers must be cared. Their welfare is important. Timely disbursement of workers' salary must be ensured. Their other basic needs must also be satisfied. If the workers are not satisfied how can the organization achieve success?"

Childcare Services for Women Employees

A married woman worker's biggest worry is the care of her children and she expects from the organization's management to support her in that. Woman Stitcher from Stitching Department said:

> "…...All kind of basic needs of workers must be fulfilled. Being a woman worker and a mother also, I remain worried about my minor children and if possible there should be some kind of child care arrangement in the factory".

Prolonged Work Hours

The workers' normal duty hours in the factory consist of 8 hours. However, security guard's major concern was 12 hours' duty at a stretch on daily basis, which is humanly difficult and violation of the labor laws. The security guard's perception of the employee focused CSR is as under:

> "CSR is about caring your employees. The foremost thing is that duty must not exceed 8 hours. At the moment security personnel of the factory perform 12 hours' continuous duty which is quite cumbersome…...".
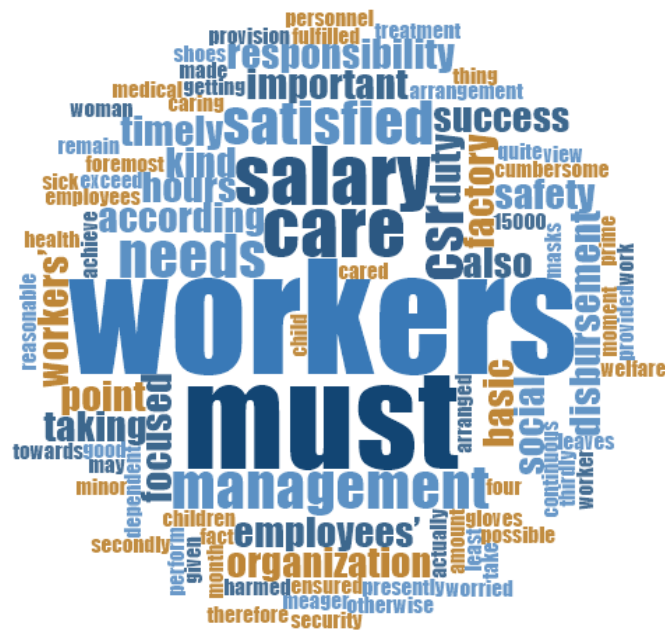

Figure 2: Word Cloud – Workers' Perceptions

Prevailing Employee Related CSR Practices

To find out the prevailing employee related CSR practices in the organization, all interviewees were questioned about daily activities keeping in view different dimensions of employee related CSR. To have a broader picture of the state of affairs and to ensure validity and reliability of the data through triangulation, information was also obtained through direct observations and consulting company documents. Field notes were made and photographs were taken. The findings are an eye opener.

Equal Opportunities

Findings suggested a state of low morale and depression amongst workers. Checker from Dyeing Department once asked about the provision of equal opportunities replied as under:

> "A worker always remains a worker. Even if he becomes senior worker, he remains a worker. I could not improve my education though I had wished to do so".

Security guard said:

> "A guard always remains a guard. I will never be promoted as a supervisor. We feel discriminated because other workers perform 8 hours' duty whereas the security guards have to perform 12 hours' continuous duty."

Health and Safety

It was found that there are no standard operating procedures for emergency response. There was no record of firefighting drill practices and the firefighting extinguishers were insufficient in numbers and expired as well. There was no dedicated transport or ambulance for the evacuation of injured or sick person. The workers during their work were found without proper protective measures like safety gloves, shoes and masks. There was no system of routine medical checkups.

Fair Compensation and Benefits

All interviewed workers were found dissatisfied with the existing salary system of the organization. Existing salary structure was below the average living earning. Further, delays with disbursement of salary in installments was an added unrest amongst the employees. There was no concept of provident fund, gratuity and bonuses.

Employees' Wellbeing

Checker from Dyeing Department said:

> "There is no arrangement of conveyance therefore, we reach the factory at our own arrangements. We should be given conveyance allowance and our salaries should also be increased. You can see the present condition of inflation".

The workers were found thankful on providing them clean drinking water but there was no cafeteria arrangement and workers had to bring food from their homes. However, there was small tea bar for the managerial staff only. There were no recreational or exercise facilities.

Work Life Balance

There was no concept of flexible timings and woman workers were not satisfied because of the absence of childcare arrangements. Most of the workers expected family accommodation within the factory premises which included a vast vacant area.

Training and Development

It was found that there was no formalized training carried out in the organization. Mostly, on-job-training (OJT) was unstructured. The management was reluctant to spend for their employees' formal training.

Employees' Voice

There was no system of complaints recording. There was no representation of employees in the decision making process. This state of affairs was another cause of unrest among the workers.

Respect and Dignity at Workplace

All participants agreed that there was a culture of respect and dignity in the organization.

Summary

The findings suggest that workforce considers spending on welfare of the employees leads to their satisfaction and happiness that eventually enhances organizational performance. Workers' perceptions were based on their expectations from their employers concerning their health and safety, timely disbursement of adequate living salary and benefits like bonuses, provident fund, subsidized food, and meeting their needs of recreational facilities, appropriate rest intervals and flexible working hours. The prevailing employee related CSR practices in the organization are below satisfactory level and there is absence of any monitoring mechanism.

Discussion

The findings validate the research carried out on CSR in Pakistan's context concerning maturity of the concept (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2011). In the present study it was found that neither the CSR policy existed in the organization nor there was any monitoring and implementation system. This validates the findings that in Pakistan only a few large corporations have comprehensive CSR policy (Sajjad & Eweje, 2014). It also validates the research carried out on Pakistan's textile sector, highlighting compromised health and safety conditions of the workers at workplace (Khan et al., 2014; Zubair et al., 2017).

The qualitative case study design adopted in the present study proved to be very effective in exhaustive analysis of the employees' perception and prevailing state of employee related CSR. It provided an opportunity for the researchers to see things in their real context and obtaining firsthand information in discovering present state of affairs. It was noted that workers' frustration of physiological and safety needs does not allow them to go up on the higher level of the hierarchy of needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization as described by Maslow in 1943 (Huitt, 2007). The findings validate results of the research conducted by Noltemeyer, et al. (2020) and Stefan, et al. (2020) on the importance of high-order motivational levels in the employees which are directly connected with their job satisfaction and the organizational performance. Through providing basic needs to employees like health care, workplace safety and financial security, the organization can increase their sense of belongingness to the organization and can drive them to reach at self-actualization stage, so as to bring them at their full potential.

Findings establish that organization's pledge to socially responsible behavior develops a positive perception among its employees and develops constructive attitudes associated with better performance (Ismail, 2009). The findings confirm that CSR is essential ingredient of the recipe for any organization's employee engagement which is one of the most vital concepts underlying workforce motivation and productivity (Gubman, 2004). The findings suggest that the major critical issues of the workplace in developing economies like Pakistan are proper living wages, health and safety, work life balance and training and development. Additionally, equal opportunities, childcare and recreational facilities and general wellbeing of employees also need to be addressed.

Implications

It is evident that the universally accepted CSR practices are in weak shape in the case study organization. There is a need of hour that managers and workers be properly educated on the concept through formalized training conducted by the professional trainers. Formulation of comprehensive CSR policy should be monitored and implemented by dedicated management team. The study may be useful for the managers, organizational stakeholders and policy makers.

Conclusion

The study concludes that workers have strong perceptions of CSR practices that their employers should take care of their overall wellbeing. The prevailing CSR practices have indicated that the employees feel frustrated due to living conditions at workplace, inadequate compensation and benefits, inflexible timings, lack of health and safety measures, training and development, career growth, child care, transport and accommodation. The study has clearly indicated that the CSR practices are being flouted in the studied organization.

Recommendations

Awareness training conducted by professionals should be organized by the organization to enhance sense of responsibility and greater understanding of employee focused CSR, considering it an opportunity to increase organization's internal strength. CSR monitoring and implementation team should be formulated to ensure employees' health and safety, provision of comprehensive compensation and benefits. Workers' families must be looked after so that they may concentrate on their job. Arrangements like flexible duty hours will create a culture of work life balance and welfare measures like subsidized food, canteen, pick and drop facility particularly for women workers will boost workers' morale. If the organization expects the best from the employees, it must care their developmental needs, improve organizational communications and provide counseling programs.

To acknowledge and appreciate CSR adhering organizations, incentives like tax relief should be given by the government to such organizations. Moreover, there should be some kind of recognition and appreciation by APTMA and Chambers of Commerce and Industry for the organizations following CSR practices in letter and spirit with full media projection.

Limitations of the Study and Future Direction

This is a single case study analyzing a medium sized textile organization in Pakistan. There is a need to carry out in-depth analysis of CSR practices in all types of organizations. The relation between socially responsible behavior towards employees and the organizational health needs to be continuously and rigorously studied in all private and public sector organizations for socio-economic uplift of the country.

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