



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

## CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	<b>CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IN INDIA: TOWARDS INTROSPECTION AND SOLUTIONS</b> ANJANEY PANDEY, MAHESWAR SATPATHY & GOVIND SINGH	1
2.	<b>QUALITY FUNCTION DEPLOYMENT FOR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED PRIVATE COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES</b> MA. TEODORA E. GUTIERREZ	4
3.	<b>CULTURAL APTITUDE &amp; ADJUSTMENT - THE IMPACT OF THE EXPECTED TENURE OF A CROSS CULTURAL PROJECT</b> SHAHZAD GHAFOR & UZAIR FAROOQ KHAN	9
4.	<b>REPORTING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND INFORMATION DISCLOSURES IN FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</b> DR. TAIWO ASAOLU & DR. JOHN A. ENAHORO	15
5.	<b>ISLAMIC MICRO-FINANCE AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION: A CASE OF PAKISTAN</b> DR. WAHEED AKHTER, DR. NADEEM AKHTAR & KHURAM ALI JAFRI	24
6.	<b>AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF CONTEMPORARY OPTION PRICING MODELS</b> DIPTI RANJAN MOHANTY & DR. SUSANTA KUMAR MISHRA	28
7.	<b>E-LEARNING: THE DIGITIZATION STRATEGY</b> RAFI AHMED KHAN & DR. ISHTIAQ HUSSAIN QURESHI	31
8.	<b>FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF MILK UNIONS – A STUDY AT KARNATAKA MILK FEDERATION</b> DR. M. JEYARATHNAM & GEETHA. M. RAJARAM	35
9.	<b>INVESTORS PERCEPTION TOWARDS INVESTMENT IN MUTUAL FUNDS</b> DR. R. NANDAGOPAL, M. SATHISH, K. J. NAVEEN & V. JEEVANANTHAM	40
10.	<b>BUSINESS IN GEMSTONE POLISHING: AN EMERGING INDUSTRIAL TRAINING &amp; ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPTION FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN EASTERN INDIA</b> DR. S. P. RATH, PROF. BISWAJIT DAS, DR. SHIVSHANKAR K. MISHRA & PROF. SATISH JAYARAM	45
11.	<b>A COMPARITIVE STUDY BETWEEN HOTEL GOLD &amp; NIRULA'S – PANIPAT CITY</b> DR. PUJA WALIA MANN & MANISH JHA	49
12.	<b>IMPROVEMENT OF WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS THROUGH SPIRITUAL INCLINATION</b> DR. R. KRISHNAVENI & G. NATARAJAN	54
13.	<b>MEASURING THE SERVICE QUALITY OF SERVICE SECTOR - A CASE OF COMMERCIAL BANK OF ETHIOPIA</b> R. RENJITH KUMAR	59
14.	<b>SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT IN AN AUTOMOBILE COMPANY: A CASE STUDY</b> ARVIND JAYANT & V. PATEL	62
15.	<b>INFORMATION CONTENT OF DIVIDENDS: EMPIRICAL STUDY OF BSE LISTED COMPANIES</b> DR. KARAMJEET KAUR	69
16.	<b>NEED FOR CONVERGING TO IFRS: THE NEW GLOBAL REPORTING LANGUAGE</b> DR. AMARJEET KAUR MALHOTRA	77
17.	<b>ALLEVIATION OF POVERTY THROUGH RURAL DEVELOPMENT- AN ANALYSIS</b> DR. PAWAN KUMAR DHIMAN	81
18.	<b>FORECASTING MONTHLY FOREIGN INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENTS IN BSE AND NSE EQUITY MARKET USING ARIMA MODEL</b> DR. S. SUDALAIMUTHU & ANBUKARASI	86
19.	<b>A STEP FORWARD: FROM FUZZY TO NEURO-FUZZY</b> APOORVI SOOD & SWATI AGGARWAL	92
20.	<b>USAGE OF E-RESOURCES BY ACADEMICS – A STUDY (WITH REFERENCE TO AFFILIATED BHARATHIAR UNIVERISTY COLLEGES, COIMBATORE CITY)</b> DR. M. MEENAKSHI SARATHA & DR. D. MAHESH	96
21.	<b>A STUDY ON IMPACT OF JOB SATISFACTION ON QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AMONG EMPLOYEES IN HOTEL INDUSTRY (WITH REFERENCE TO CATEGORIZED HOTELS IN FARIDABAD REGION)</b> VIJIT CHATURVEDI & DR. D. S. YADAV	101
22.	<b>RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EXPLORING THE OPPORTUNITIES FROM WASTE PRODUCTS OF BANANAS PLANT IN KARNATAKA</b> RASHMI S. B. & V. JYOTHSNA	105
23.	<b>HUMAN RESOURCE ACCOUNTING (HRA) - A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS</b> DR. AJAZ AKBAR MIR & MANMEET SINGH	108
24.	<b>MICROFINANCE USING INFORMATION &amp; COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES</b> S. KUMAR CHANDAR	115
25.	<b>FUNDAMENTAL &amp; TECHNICAL ANALYSIS OF REAL ESTATE SECTOR: AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE</b> PUNEET KUMAR	119
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK</b>	130

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## IMPROVEMENT OF WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS THROUGH SPIRITUAL INCLINATION

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## ABSTRACT

Human resource is the most important resource for any organization or they are the biggest asset for any firm. Day in and day out recruitment and poaching of good employees are on the rise. This clearly shows that organizations are looking for good and quality man power. Moreover today the corporate companies have grown leaps and bounds like empires and looking for responsible people to run it. Many companies also look inside the organization and conduct lot of training programs to improve the skill sets of the people. Not only skill sets, ethics and human values across all cadres pose a serious challenge. Spiritual inclination adds a new dimension to the today's corporate culture. Organizations look spirituality as a means to face the challenges in this modern world. Today many employees join spiritual institutions and practice yoga and even organizations have started to have meditation room in the workplace and conduct free spiritual retreats for the employees and their families. This study tries to bring out the impacts of spiritual inclination over the improvement of various workplace characteristics. The outcome of this study will help the organizations to understand the impacts and to implement spirituality in organization as an intervention tool or as a human resource development tool.

## KEYWORDS

Development, Improvement, Spirituality, Spiritual Inclination, Workplace Characteristics, Yoga.

## INTRODUCTION

The term 'Spirituality' is gaining momentum in the corporate world. Organizations and individual working people are looking at spirituality as a development tool. Spirituality adds a new dimension in organization culture and in managing the human resource. Spirituality has also shown positive correlation with some of the workplace characteristics.

Komala. K & Ganesh. LS, (2007) has established that there is a positive correlation between spirituality and job satisfaction and also establishes a negative correlation between burnout and spirituality, where burnout is one of the outcomes of stress.

Alexander et al.,(1993) claims that spirituality improves the relationship with the colleagues. Hence organizations can look at spirituality to improve inter personal relationships between their work force.

It is also claimed that spiritual persons develop confidence level and face the critical times boldly. When faced with an injury, spirituality oriented people seem to respond better to remedial intervention, better handle trauma and have lower depression rates (MacDonald et al, 2002) Ellison's (1983) existential well being subscale was positively correlated with self esteem and social skills.

Trott (1996) studied 184 workers in a Fortune 100 company, finding a positive correlation between spiritual well being and general self efficacy.

This study is conducted to further explore the benefits of spiritual inclination to find out the other workplace characteristics improvement and also to confirm the workplace characteristics where the relationships have been already established.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

## SPIRITUALITY

Human is made of three parts. They are the physical body, mind and the innermost soul. Spirituality is being with the soul. In other words it is not the physical body or tangible material which can be seen through ordinary eyes.

Here are few definitions given by spiritual persons and researchers.

"Spirituality means the part of you that survives when you eliminate your flesh and bones – the part you can't point to, but can feel, the part you might describe to someone else as your essential being, your soul. Soul is what connects you to everyone and everything else" (Chappell, 1994)

"A connecting experience with God" (Fort, 1997)

"Spirituality means knowing the consciousness within and connecting with the divine force". (Swami Prem Nirantar, 2009)

Swami Sri Aurobindo (1914 / 2006) has described Spirituality as given below "Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter into contact with the greater Reality beyond and pervading the universe which inhabits also our own being, to be in communion with It and union with It, and a turning, a conversion, a transformation of our whole being as a result of the aspiration, the contact, the union, a growth or waking into a new becoming or new being, a new self, a new nature."

By reading these definitions or explanations given, one can understand that spirituality is realizing that one is soul, not the body or material and get connected to the outer Greater Soul with the help of the inner soul. With that realization and connection, one begins to live his/her life. It is a conscious connection with the Divine Force.

## SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

Spirituality and religion are not same. Religion is mere mental conditioning. Religion has specific god and certain rituals to be followed. But spirituality does not have any particular god to be worshiped. It is a state of higher consciousness and a person belonging to any religion can practice spirituality. Religion cannot lay boundaries to spirituality. Spirituality is common for everyone.

In many articles, spirituality has been described as reading spiritual books, going to church or temple, physically and mentally being good, doing service to the society, a state of harmlessness, finding a purpose or meaning in life and so on. Spirituality is not to be confused with wellbeing or general happiness. Further striving to get one or connected with the soul and in that process one read spiritual books, attend discourses, do some practice and strives to live according to the principles is all spiritual inclination and not spirituality.



**SPIRITUAL INCLINATION**

Spiritual inclination means one aspires and tries to attain spirituality or that state of consciousness which is called as higher or eternal consciousness. In that process one starts to gaze at the nature and its marvelous existence and starts to ask questions, which is called as existential thinking, and strives to understand the truth by reading spiritual books and attending discourses. Then he looks for a systematic way of practice and searches a Guru to achieve the goal. Finally one settles with a Guru and starts to do the practice.

People who have consciously taken up a systematic way of practice, under the guidance of a self-realized Guru towards spirituality are called as spiritually inclined people.

Systematic way to attain spirituality is called as yoga. Hence a person practicing a systematic way through various forms of yoga is taken as spiritually inclined person.

**YOGA**

This systematic way to attain spirituality is called as yoga. Yoga is not a set of exercises alone. Yoga means a Way of Life (Path) to unite with the Higher Force. Sri Paramahansa Yoganada, (1946) describes yoga as following. The meaning is derived from Sanskrit, 'Yug' means "Union" or "Join" meaning is uniting the atman (internal spirit) with Paramatman or Brahman (universal spirit), or in other words, uniting of the individual self and the Absolute self. It is the union of mind, body and soul with the Universal Soul.

**OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this study is to find out the perception of spiritually inclined people on the improvement level of the twenty identified workplace characteristics after spiritual inclination.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

It is a cross sectional descriptive study of working people who regularly practice yoga for a minimum period of six months under the four spiritual institutions in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu of India. In Coimbatore district there are about five spiritual institutions having a permanent centre to teach and practice yoga and also the members participating in these institutions are also high. Among the five institutions, permission to do the study was obtained from the following four institutions. The four institutes are SKY (Simplified Kundalini Yoga founded by Sri Vethathiri Maharishi), IYI (Integral Yoga Institute established by Swami Satchidananda), YSS (Yogoda Satsanga Society instituted by Sri Paramahansa Yogananda), AOL (Art Of Living founded Sri Sri Ravishankar).

Regular practice of yoga is very important because the changes or impact cannot happen overnight. Hence people practicing yoga for 6 months are taken for this study. In all the selected institutions a common practice found is all practicing people (members) must attend the weekly retreats or weekly group meditations in the centre, which is used as an opportunity by the researcher to collect the data.

To collect the primary data, questionnaire was used. A questionnaire was developed with 20 questions to bring out their perception on the improvement of twenty workplace characteristics compared to before spiritual inclination in a 5 point Likert scale consisting of excellent improvement, good improvement, average improvement, low improvement and no improvement. Apart from the twenty questions which are common to all people across various professions, five questions have been posed only to the entrepreneurs, which are related to workplace characteristics of an entrepreneur.

Stratified random sampling method is used to select the sample. Each institution is considered as a stratum. The total number of valid questionnaires including all the four institution was 606 after data cleaning. Outliers were removed.

**Validity and Reliability:** The workplace characteristics are selected from the concepts and the writings of the Gurus belonging to these four spiritual institutions and have been validated by expert people belonging to the selected four institutions. A pilot study with a sample size of 30 has been done and reliability analysis is carried out. With the help of the final data another reliability test is done using Cronbach's Alpha and the results are shown in table no. 4.1.

**TABLE 4.1: RELIABILITY STATISTICS**

Particulars	Pilot Sample	Final Sample
No of Items (N)	20	20
Sample Size	30	606
Cronbach's Alpha	.921	.929

In both cases the Cronbach's Alpha is above 0.92, which shows the high reliability of the questionnaire.

**ANALYSIS****OVERALL WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS IMPROVEMENT SCORE**

Each rating is scored from 1 to 5, 1 being no improvement and 5 means excellent improvement. The twenty workplace characteristics score of a respondent are summed up to get the overall workplace characteristics improvement score. Then this overall score of all the respondents are summed up to get the total overall workplace characteristics improvement score. Then the mean for that score is calculated.

Out of the maximum mean score of 100 for this study, the mean value was **82.904**, which can be considered as good improvement score. Hence spiritually inclined people perceive that their workplace characteristics have been improved after joining spirituality.

The next calculation is done for the improvement score of individual workplace characteristics and the mean values are placed below in table no 5.1.1.

TABLE NO. 5.1.1 MEAN SCORE FOR WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS IMPROVEMENT	
Workplace Characteristics	Improvement – Mean
Stress management	4.24
Humble to people	4.17
Empathy towards colleagues & people	4.13
Leadership qualities	3.97
Peacefulness	4.26
Happiness	4.32
Taking responsibility in work	4.19
Ability to work in teams	4.07
Managing anger	3.94
Workplace accepting criticism	3.94
Confidence level	4.33
Handling materials & etc	3.99
Readiness to change & betterment	4.20
Listening to others point of view	4.23
Acceptance of losses & failures	4.06
Fair & ethical way in dealing with people	4.19
Overall job satisfaction	4.19
Interpersonal relationship	4.15
Productivity	4.02
Clarity in thinking	4.28

The mean value for the twenty workplace characteristics improvement score ranges from 3.94 to 4.33 for a scale value ranging between zero to five. Hence all the workplace characteristics are perceived to be improved and improvement level ranges from average to excellent improvement.

#### IMPROVEMENT OF VARIOUS WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS

Twenty workplace characteristics have been studied for its improvement when compared before spiritual inclination. From the above table no. 5.1.1, it is evident that all the workplace characteristics have shown improvement. Now these improvement scores for the various workplace characteristics are checked for their level of improvement based on the mean ranks as shown in table no. 5.2.1.

TABLE NO. 5.2.1 LEVEL OF IMPROVEMENT OF WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS			
Workplace characteristics	Mean Rank	Rank	Level of Improvement
Confidence level	12.05	1	High Improvement
Happiness	11.96	2	
Clarity in thinking	11.56	3	
Peacefulness	11.41	4	
Stress management	11.23	5	
Listening to others point of view	11.16	6	
Readiness to change & betterment	10.93	7	Average Improvement
Fair & ethical way in dealing with people	10.92	8	
Overall job satisfaction	10.92	9	
Taking responsibility in work	10.74	10	
Interpersonal relationship	10.65	11	
Humble to people	10.59	12	
Empathy towards colleagues & people	10.40	13	Low Improvement
Acceptance of losses & failures	9.94	14	
Ability to work in teams	9.93	15	
Productivity	9.45	16	
Handling materials & etc	9.19	17	
Leadership qualities	9.09	18	
Accepting criticism	8.97	19	
Managing anger	8.92	20	

Those characteristics which have a high mean rank, that is mean rank above 11, are clubbed together and marked as high improvement level. Likewise the characteristics which have scored mean rank above 10 and below 11 are grouped as average improvement and characteristics below 10 are grouped as low improvement.

Now to check whether these twenty workplace characteristics improvement level are statistically significant Friedman test is run and the results are presented below in table no. 5.2.2.



TABLE NO.5.2.2 FRIEDMAN TEST FOR STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS IMPROVEMENT SCORE	
Particulars	Values
N	606
Chi-Square	252.480
Degrees of Freedom	19
Asymptotic Significance	.000

The calculated asymptotic significance value is less than 0.05; hence there is a statistically significant difference between the improvement scores of the twenty workplace characteristics when compared before spiritual inclination of the working people.

To find out the effect size of the significant difference level between the 20 workplace characteristics Wilcoxon Signed Rank test has been used. Each workplace characteristics was compared with the least improved character of Anger management, which has got the twentieth rank. . Post hoc test has been conducted to get the 'r' value. The 'r' values and the grading based on 'r' value is presented below in table no 5.2.3.

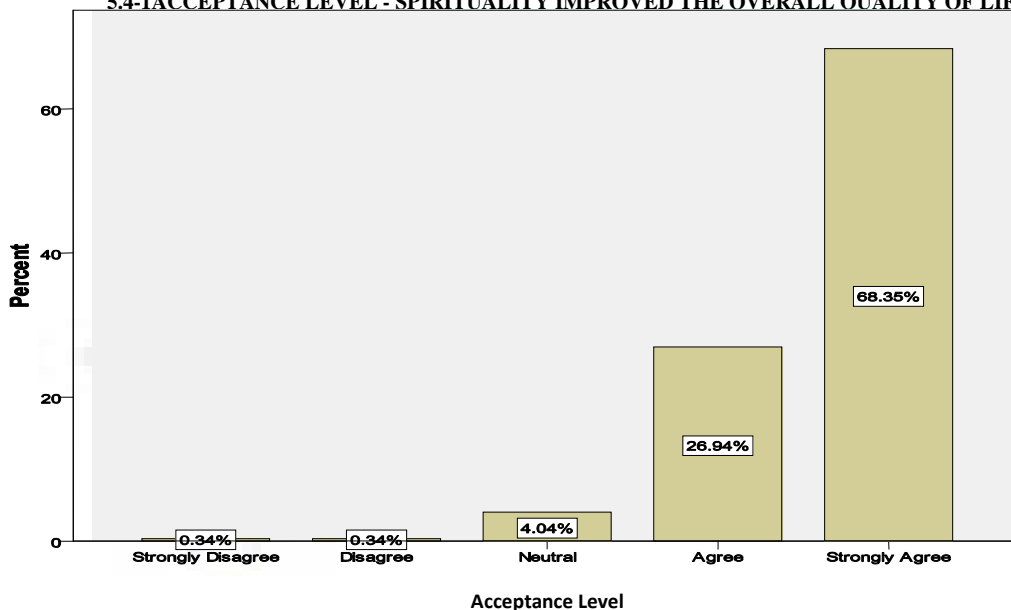
TABLE NO. 5.2.3 EFFECT SIZE OF THE WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS IMPROVEMENT SCORE			
S.No	Workplace Characteristics	'r' Score	Effect Size
1	Confidence level	0.410621	Medium Effect
2	Happiness	0.416269	
3	Clarity in thinking	0.378112	
4	Peacefulness	0.383245	
5	Stress management	0.353039	
6	Listening to others point of view	0.334191	
7	Readiness to change & betterment	0.278569	Small Effect
8	Fair & ethical way in dealing with people	0.273151	
9	Overall job satisfaction	0.259664	
10	Taking responsibility in work	0.275342	
11	Interpersonal relationship	0.247444	
12	Humble to people	0.274189	
13	Empathy towards colleagues & people	0.216723	
14	Acceptance of losses & failures	0.123809	
15	Ability to work in teams	0.145539	
16	Productivity	0.07055	No Effect
17	Handling materials & etc	0.046054	
18	Leadership qualities	0.016658	
19	Accepting criticism	0.009165	
20	Managing anger	0	

According to Andy Field (2005) in the post hoc analysis to find out the effect size, if  $r = 0.10$  it is a small effect, when  $r = 0.30$  it is a medium effect and when  $r = 0.50$  the effect size is large. Based on the effect size, the twenty workplace characteristics improvement scores are graded as medium, small and no effect.

#### SPIRITUALITY AND IMPROVEMENT OF OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE

The respondent's level of acceptance to the fact that spirituality has improved their overall quality of life is displayed in the figure no. 5.4.1. More than 95 % of the respondents have accepted that spirituality has improved their overall quality of life.

5.4-1ACCEPTANCE LEVEL - SPIRITUALITY IMPROVED THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE



#### RESULTS & DISCUSSION

From the analysis it is evident that spirituality improves the overall workplace characteristics and all the twenty workplace characteristics which have tested have shown improvement when compared before joining spiritual practices.

Among the twenty workplace characteristics improvement score, the top seven characteristics which have scored high are as follows. Confidence level tops the list; followed by happiness, clarity in thinking, peacefulness, stress management, listening to others point of view respectively.

The five entrepreneur workplace characteristics have also shown improvement. Among the five characteristics these three characteristics, i.e., Importance to customer satisfaction, fairway of doing business, fair treatment of employees tops the list respectively.

When checked for the influence of demographic variables, like age, gender, profession, cadre, experience and income, none of them have shown any significant difference.

Spiritual institution and number of years of spiritual practice were also checked for relationship with workplace characteristics improvement, which have not shown any significance difference or relationship.

More than 95% of the respondents have agreed that because of spirituality their quality of life has improved. Hence the workplace characteristics are improved after being spiritually inclined irrespective of the age, profession, experience, spiritual institution and number of years of spiritual practice.

Further to look how spirituality makes this difference, it may be because of the certain good principles prescribed by the institutions. As discussed in the introduction part, yoga is a systematic way of life to spirituality which focuses on the development and fitness of physical, mental and Soul. Hence spiritual inclination would have impacted the various dimensions of life and as a result the quality of life would have improved. In that process these twenty workplace characteristics would have also improved.

### SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Yoga is way of life or a systematic way of spiritual inclination. Hence it would impact on the various dimensions of life and would have also impacted more number of workplace characteristics. Hence it calls for further research to check for the improvement of workplace characteristics in an exhaustive manner and the impact on the various facets of life. At this juncture another obvious area to research is to find out the common principles in these spiritual institutions which might have impacted or impressed the people to change, because in today's scenario it is very difficult to change the behavior or attitude of the people and these principles of spirituality can be used as change management tool.

The results of this study are from the above said four spiritual institutions in Coimbatore district. Hence the scope for conducting broader studies pertaining to other spiritual institutions and other geographical locations is needed in order to generalize the results.

### CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that spiritual inclination or a systematic spiritual practice improves the workplace characteristics irrespective of age, gender, qualification, profession, income, experience, spiritual institution and number of years of spiritual practice. Hence organization can see spirituality as a means to improve the workplace characteristics.

Organizations can create opportunity and motivate the employees to be spiritually inclined under any institution of their choice without compulsion, because spiritual inclination is individual's right. Hence the organizations have to cut it fine. They can only motivate and give importance but not to compel them.

Organization can build a meditation room in the working place to facilitate the spiritual practice and can conduct spiritual retreats of various spiritual institutions for the employees and their family members. They also need to create some space in the organizational culture to accommodate the various spiritual practices.

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