

A Comparison of Job Satisfaction among Filipino Nurses Employed in the Philippines and Overseas

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Abstract

Background and Objective: The shortage of nurses has led to increasing competition in the recruitment and retention of nurses globally. According to literature, retention of nurses is correlated with job satisfaction, making it an important topic for research. This study compared the level of general, intrinsic, and extrinsic job satisfaction of Filipino nurses employed locally and overseas. It identified the major motivators and problems that affect their job satisfaction.

Methods and Research Participants: Eighty-four nurses were surveyed using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. Fifty-five were locally-employed, while 29 were overseas Filipino nurses. The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to determine the significant difference in the level of satisfaction among the two groups. Answers on the open-ended questions were used to validate the quantitative data.

Results: The results showed that Filipino nurses employed both locally and overseas have an average level of general satisfaction. Both groups also showed a high degree of intrinsic satisfaction and an average degree of extrinsic satisfaction. There is no significant difference found in the level of general, intrinsic, and extrinsic job satisfaction of locally and overseas employed Filipino nurses.

Conclusion: The study found that social service, an intrinsic factor, is the major motivating force of job satisfaction. Workload, an extrinsic factor, is the most common problem encountered for both groups of nurses. Salary serves as one of the factors that keeps Filipino nurses overseas satisfied, while it is one of the factors that causes dissatisfaction among locally-employed nurses.

Keywords: job satisfaction, nurses, overseas Filipino nurses

Introduction

The shortage of nurses has been a major problem worldwide because of its potential effects on healthcare [1]. The attempt to fill the required positions leads to increased competition in the recruitment and retention of nurses globally. The recruitment of international nurses is part of the “policy solutions” employed to address the shortage of nurses and meet increasing demand for healthcare in high-income countries [2,3]. On the other hand, programs that encourage retention and reduction of turnover rates have been the focus of other countries, especially those that are sources of nurses that are employed overseas [4,5].

Considering this increased global competition, it is important to determine and understand the factors that influence recruitment and retention of the nursing workforce. It is especially crucial for a source country like the

Philippines. There have been a total of 155,589 nurses deployed overseas in the last ten years, making the Philippines the largest source of migrant nurses worldwide while leaving local positions vacant crucial [6,7].

Existing literature on the nursing profession has identified and analyzed an array of factors that may affect the recruitment and retention of nurses [8]. One of the major factors identified was job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is “the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values”, and “the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs” [9,10]. Drake found that nurses' job satisfaction and retention are positively correlated [11]. In fact, Ellenbecker *et al.*, found nurses' satisfaction as one of the strongest predictors of their retention [12]. Nurses who feel fulfilled at work will most

likely reduce their turnover intention and retain their jobs [13,14]. This makes job satisfaction an important topic for research.

The range of studies that exist on Filipino nurses' work satisfaction is limited. More so, existing studies on the satisfaction at work of Filipino nurses working overseas mostly focus on the study of their job satisfaction and its correlation with factors such as acculturation [15,16]. This study offers an additional view on job satisfaction by providing a comparative analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of job satisfaction among locally-employed nurses and overseas Filipino nurses.

Herzberg's Two-factor Theory explains the job factors that can affect employees' satisfaction and dissatisfaction. He identified two categories: motivational factors or intrinsic factors, and hygiene factors or extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors are job factors that are based on the employee himself and deal with their internal state of mind [17,18]. They are believed to be needed in order for employees to accomplish their jobs [19]. The presence of these factors contributes to an employee's job satisfaction and could serve as a motivational force. Yet, their absence will not result to dissatisfaction [20]. Extrinsic factors, on the other hand, are external factors derived from the environment outside the individual [17]. These factors help ensure that an employee will not be dissatisfied [21]. The presence of these factors would not necessarily result to job satisfaction among employees. However, their absence will lead to dissatisfaction [19]. The Herzberg's theory considers intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors as non-exclusive, affecting separate aspects of job satisfaction. Hence, employers must ensure that both factors are present to ensure job satisfaction and reduce job dissatisfaction.

Herzberg's theory has been used in many studies on work satisfaction among health care professionals. It is helpful in making managers more aware of the importance of motivation among employees in the health care industry [22]. For instance, the theory has been useful in understanding what motivates medical and nursing staff in a public general hospital, and the difference in motivation among healthcare professionals in private and public health care centers [23,24]. In the nursing profession, Herzberg's theory was used in understanding work satisfaction among nurses, such as the hygienic and motivational factors of nurses working in a cardiology ward [25].

Following the Herzberg's Two-factor Theory, this study

aims (1) to determine the level of general job satisfaction, intrinsic job satisfaction, and extrinsic job satisfaction of locally-employed Filipino nurses and overseas Filipino nurses; (2) to determine if there are significant differences in the general job satisfaction, intrinsic job satisfaction, and extrinsic job satisfaction of locally-employed Filipino nurses and overseas Filipino nurses; (3) to compare how locally-employed Filipino nurses and overseas Filipino nurses rank each of the subscale of job satisfaction; (4) and to describe factors that influence job satisfaction as perceived by the nurses. Considering these objectives, the following hypotheses was developed: There is a significant difference in the level of general job satisfaction, intrinsic job satisfaction, and extrinsic job satisfaction between locally-employed Filipino nurses and overseas Filipino nurses.

Methodology

Study Participants

The researcher used the purposive sampling method in selecting participants for the study. The participants were chosen using the following criteria: must be (a) a Filipino registered nurse; and (b) currently employed as nurse. The survey questionnaires were distributed online. A web link for the questionnaire was sent to target participants through email and posted in social media on a Facebook group exclusive for Filipino registered nurses with a total of 159,106 members.

Survey

The researcher used a survey questionnaire to gather data for this study. It was divided into three parts. The first part asked about the demographic profile of the respondents with details such as gender, age, length of service, highest educational attainment, present job, and country where they are currently working. This part was used to filter respondents and ensure that only qualified respondents will be included in the study.

The second part of the survey questionnaire was the Short-Form Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire or MSQ. This questionnaire was developed in 1967 by Weiss et al. and can be freely accessed through Vocational Psychology Research, University of Minnesota [26]. The MSQ through its subscales not only provided a measurement of the general satisfaction of the nurses but also measured two aspects of their job satisfaction following the Two-Factor Theory of Herzberg: the intrinsic job satisfaction and the extrinsic job satisfaction.

Furthermore, a recent study of Hora et al., showed MSQ as the second most widely-used instrument by researchers measuring work satisfaction worldwide following the Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey [27]. It has also been tested by its developers to have excellent reliability coefficient alpha, and was validated by previous studies which affirm that the instrument and its subscales were sufficiently internally consistent [26,27,29]. Similarly, a recent study conducted a psychometric testing validating the MSQ as a reliable scale for the measurement of job satisfaction among nurses and other health workers [28, 31]. In the field of nursing profession, the MSQ has been used by many researchers studying work satisfaction among nurses [30,31,32,33]. In this study, a pretest of the survey questionnaire was also conducted prior to data gathering among 10 nurses who were not included in the study. The Cronbach's alpha for the 20-item Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was found to be .773, suggesting that the items in the questionnaire have relatively acceptable internal consistency confirming the results of earlier studies.

The MSQ measures employee's job satisfaction using 20 subscales of job satisfaction. Among the subscales, intrinsic satisfaction was measured by the following scales: activity, independence, variety, advancement, recognition, moral values, achievement, social service, authority, ability utilization, creativity, and responsibility [20,26]. On the other hand, extrinsic satisfaction was measured by the following scales: company policies, social status, compensation, supervision-technical, supervision-human relations, working conditions, co-workers, and security [20, 26]. To determine the level of job satisfaction for each of the subscales such as achievement or "the feeling of accomplishment from the job", respondents were asked to rate how they feel about their present job using a 5-point Likert scale where 5 is "very satisfied"; 4 as "satisfied"; 3 as "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied"; 2 as "dissatisfied"; and 1 as "very dissatisfied". The sums of the individual answers for each scale were calculated to generate the individual general satisfaction with maximum score of 100 [26]. The mean score for all the respondents was determined to get the overall general satisfaction. The level of satisfaction of locally-employed nurses and overseas Filipino nurses were also derived separately for comparison. Table 3 and 4 presents the summary of interpretation of the scores.

On the third and last part of the survey questionnaire are two open ended questions. These questions seek to get insights from the respondents regarding internal and external factors that influence their job satisfaction based on their experience.

Data Analysis

One of the objectives of this study was to determine the level of general, intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction among locally-employed and overseas Filipino nurses. The researcher used the mean of the individual sum of scores to measure and compare each level of satisfaction. The study used the Mann-Whitney U Test to determine if there was a significant difference in the level of their satisfaction, since the measurement for the dependent variable satisfaction was at the ordinal level. The level of significance for the hypothesis testing was set at 0.05. On the other hand, the sum of scores was used to rank each subscale of job satisfaction while thematic analysis was used to understand the answers of the respondents on the open ended questions of the questionnaire.

Results

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

A total of 95 responses were received after sending the survey questionnaire web link to possible participants. However, upon screening, only 84 of the respondents qualified and met the criteria to become part of the study. A summary of the respondents' demographic profiles is shown in Table 1 and 2. Among the 84 respondents, 65.47% were locally-employed nurses, while 34.52% were overseas Filipino nurses. Among the overseas Filipino workers, 51.72% were currently working in Saudi Arabia, 10.34% in United Arab Emirates, 10.34% in United States of America, 6.9% in Oman, 6.9% in Kuwait, and the remaining 13.8% were from United Kingdom, New Zealand, Singapore and Qatar.

Age-wise, 51.19% of the respondents belonged to the 20 – 30 years old age group, 38% were from the 31 to 40 years old age group, and 10.71% were from the 41 to 50 years old age group. Majority, or 75% of the respondents were female. 45.23% have been working as nurses for 6 to 10 years, followed by 35.71% who have been working as nurses for 2 to 5 years. The rest of the respondents have been working as nurses either for less than a year or for more than 11 years. In terms of educational attainment, 82.14% were Bachelor's degree holders, 15.47% were Master's degree holders, and 2.3% have postgraduate degrees.

Difference in the Job Satisfaction

Results show that the mean score for general satisfaction of all respondents was 73.58, denoting an average level of satisfaction. When grouped comparison is obtained, locally-

Table 1. Demographic data of respondents

Demographic Profile	General (n=84)	Locally Employed Nurses (n=55)	Overseas Filipino Nurses (n=29)
Age (years)			
20 - 30 years old	43	28	15
31 - 40 years old	32	21	11
41 - 50 years old	9	6	3
Gender			
Male	21	15	6
Female	63	40	23
Length of Service (years)			
1 year and below	5	4	1
2 years to 5 years	30	22	8
6 years to 10 years	38	22	16
11 years to 15 years	6	4	2
16 years to 20 years	1	0	1
More than 20 years	4	3	1
Highest Educational Attainment			
Bachelor's Degree	69	43	26
Master's Degree	13	12	1
Postgraduate Degree	2	0	2

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents According to the Country where they work

Country Where They Work	Frequency
Philippines	55
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	15
United Arab Emirates	3
Kuwait	2
United States of America	3
Oman	2
7 - United Kingdom	1
New Zealand	1
Singapore	1
Qatar	1
TOTAL	84

Table 3. Interpretation of Scores for Each Aspect of Job Satisfaction

Aspect of Job Satisfaction	Level of Satisfaction		
	High	Average	Low
General Satisfaction	75 and above	26 to 74	25 or lower
Intrinsic Satisfaction	45 and above	16 to 44	15 or lower
Extrinsic Satisfaction	30 and above	11 to 29	10 or lower

Table 4. Interpretation of Subscales' Scores for Each Nursing Group

Nursing Group	Level of Satisfaction		
	High	Average	Low
Locally-employed Nurses	206 and above	70 to 205	69 or lower
Overseas Filipino Nurses	109 and above	37 to 108	36 or lower
Overall	315 and above	106 to 314	105 or lower

Table 5. Level of Job Satisfaction for each Subscale

Subscale	Locally-Employed Nurses (N=55)	Overseas Filipino Nurses (N=29)	Overall Mean (N=84)
Activity	218	115	333
Independence	211	107	318
Variety	210	111	321
Social Status	216	114	330
Supervision-Human Relation	177	86	263
Supervision-Technical	186	93	279
Moral Values	210	105	315
Security	199	110	309
Social Service	239	127	366
Authority	223	115	338
Ability Utilization	227	116	343
Company Policies & Practices	176	93	269
Compensation	160	102	262
Advancement	179	97	276
Responsibility	214	107	321
Creativity	215	103	318
Working Conditions	197	96	293
Co-workers	212	99	311
Recognition	193	98	291
Achievement	219	106	325
MEAN	74.2	72.41	73.58

Table 6. Level of Satisfaction for each Aspect of Job Satisfaction

Aspect of Job Satisfaction	Locally-Employed Nurses (N=55)	Overseas Filipino Nurses (N=29)	Overall Mean (N=84)
Intrinsic Satisfaction	46.51	45.08	46.01
Extrinsic Satisfaction	27.69	27.35	27.57
General Satisfaction	74.20	72.41	73.58
MEAN	74.2	72.41	73.58

Table 7. Factors that influence job satisfaction

		Locally-Employed Nurses	Overseas Filipino Nurses
Themes	Things They Like about their Job	Being able to provide care to patients Relationship with co-workers	Salary / Benefits Career growth Learning new things Being able to provide care to patients
	Common Problems Encountered	Workload Security of Tenure Salary	Workload Communication Attitudes of patients (discrimination)

employed nurses have a slightly higher mean score of 74.20 as against the mean score of 72.41 of overseas Filipino nurses. This indicates that locally-employed nurses have a high degree of job satisfaction while overseas Filipino nurses have an average level. However, further statistical analysis using the Mann Whitney U test revealed no significant difference between locally-employed nurses and overseas Filipino nurses in terms of their general job satisfaction level ($p=.588>.05$). The interpretation of scores are shown in Table 3 and 4 while table 5 presents the summary of metrics in general satisfaction and subscales.

Findings on the intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction of respondents show that they obtained an over-all mean score of 46.01 for intrinsic motivation indicating high degree of satisfaction, while a mean score of 27.57 was recorded for extrinsic motivation that indicates average level. Group comparison between locally-employed nurses and overseas Filipino nurses show that the latter has slightly higher scores on both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of job satisfaction compared to the later. Locally-employed nurses registered a mean score of 46.51 for intrinsic satisfaction and 27.69 for extrinsic satisfaction while overseas Filipino nurses obtained a mean score of 45.08 for intrinsic aspect and 27.35 for extrinsic motivation. However, using Mann Whitney U statistical analysis, no significant difference was obtained between locally-employed nurses and overseas Filipino nurses in their intrinsic job satisfaction ($p=.944>.05$) and extrinsic job satisfaction ($p=.854>.05$). Table 6 presents the respondents scores on intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction.

Ranking the Subscales of Job Satisfaction

In terms of subscales of job satisfaction, scores indicate that both groups of respondents have high degree of satisfaction on the following top three subscales: (1) social service, or "the chance for the nurses to do things for other people"; (2) ability utilization, or "the chance to do something that makes use of their abilities"; and (3) authority, "the chance to tell people what to do". All of these top three subscales fall into the category of intrinsic satisfaction, which is consistent with their high scores on this aspect of job satisfaction. On the contrary, group differences were found when lowest ranking subscales were obtained. Locally-employed nurses ranked the following as lowest in their job satisfaction: (1) compensation; (2) company policies and practices; and (3) supervision—human relation, or "the way their boss handles employees". On the other hand, overseas Filipino

nurses obtained the lowest scores on the following: (1) supervision—human relation; (2) supervision—technical, or "the competence of their supervisor in making decisions", and company policies and practices; and (3) working conditions. All of these lowest ranking subscales are extrinsic aspects of job satisfaction. Nonetheless, scores of both groups of respondents in these lowest ranking subscales indicate an average level of job satisfaction.

Factors Influencing their Job Satisfaction

Aside from the data derived from the MSQ, the study also asked the respondents to state things that they liked about their job and common problems they encounter that may affect their job satisfaction. Table 7 showed the common themes that emerged from the respondents' answers. Locally-employed nurses answered "being able to provide care to patients" and "relationship with their co-workers" as things they like about their job while "salary and benefits" is the most common answer of overseas Filipino nurses, followed by "career growth", "learning new things" and "being able to provide care to patients".

Additionally, when asked about common problems they encountered in their jobs, most of the respondents for both locally-employed nurses and overseas Filipino nurses answered "workload". However, for locally-employed nurses, other problems encountered were "security of tenure", and "salary". For overseas Filipino nurses, "communication" and "attitude of patients" specifically discrimination were also problems encountered.

Discussion

Results of the study showed that Filipino nurses employed locally and overseas both have average level of general job satisfaction and no significant difference was found between the two groups. This is consistent with the study of Ea *et al.*, which found Filipino nurses overseas have moderate level of job satisfaction [15]. However, it differed with the study of Rosales *et al.*, which found locally-employed nurses to be slightly unsatisfied with their jobs [34]. Furthermore, results indicate that satisfaction is higher in intrinsic aspect compared to extrinsic motivation for all respondents, but no statistical difference was found between the two aspects of satisfaction and between the two groups of respondents. Scores in each subscale also showed average to high levels of job satisfaction, consistent with the findings in previous studies on job satisfaction of nurses that also utilized the MSQ as measurement tool.

Moreover, no statistical difference was found between their level of intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic satisfaction. Yet, results of the study showed that for both groups, respondents have higher degree of satisfaction for intrinsic factors compared to their degree of satisfaction for extrinsic factors. Ranking each subscale of job satisfaction showed a high to average job satisfaction and no factor was found to have a score of low level of satisfaction, which is consistent with the results of previous studies on nurses also using the same measurement tool [36].

Among the subscales of job satisfaction, three intrinsic factors got the top three highest scores for both groups: social service, ability utilization, and authority. This is in accordance with the results of previous studies that also found intrinsic factors as the motivating force for health care professionals [23,31]. These results support Herzberg's Theory that intrinsic factors influence an individual's attitude towards work and serve as a motivational force [17,20]. Thus, the high level of satisfaction among these factors may imply that they are major factors serving as a motivational force for the nurses in this study.

Data obtained from responses in the open-ended questionnaire were consistent with the findings of the survey. For instance, when asked about things they liked in their job that affect their job satisfaction, "being able to provide care to patients" is a common theme that emerged in the responses. This is consistent with highest ranked subscale social service or "the chance to do things for other people" as an intrinsic motivation. This affirms that this intrinsic factor is a motivating force that leads to job satisfaction for Filipino nurses employed both locally and overseas. These results were consistent with previous studies which also found having an opportunity to help others is a motivating factor that gives nurses job satisfaction [36,37]. Furthermore, results were also consistent with the study of Juliff *et al.*, which found that nurses' altruism or "the essence of helping" inspired their decision to enter the nursing profession [38].

Other intrinsic factors that emerged for Filipino nurses overseas were "career growth" and "learning new things". In an earlier study, researchers presented push and pull factors that cause Filipino nurses to leave the country [40]. The lack of opportunities for these intrinsic factors urged Filipino nurses to work overseas. Herzberg theory considers advancement or "career growth" as a factor that, when present, results to high employee motivation, which in the study of Egcas served as a predictor of employee's high

motivation [39]. Further, the availability of options in working hours and access to more advanced technology provide nurses working overseas with opportunities to upgrade their skills [40].

Some extrinsic factors which affect the job satisfaction of the respondents were also mentioned. For Filipino nurses overseas, "salary" was their top answer, while locally-employed nurses answered "co-workers". Some of the respondents used the term "sense of pakikisama" and their co-workers being considered as friends to describe their relationship with them. Previous studies showed that a healthy relationship in the workplace helps reduce job stress and enhance commitment among nurses, and support from co-workers contributes to their overall job satisfaction [41,42].

However, although the extrinsic factor "salary" was said to be a factor that Filipino nurses overseas liked about their job, it appeared as one of the common problems encountered by locally-employed nurses. Moreover, "compensation" or "my pay and the amount of work I do", the equivalent of salary in the MSQ, was also the lowest ranked subscale for them [26]. These results are not surprising, since the salary of nurses in the Philippines is not at par with the salary of nurses abroad. Currently, salaries of entry level nurses in the country is said to be around P8,000 – P13,500 per month while entry level nurses in the government or those with Nurse 1 item are under salary grade 11, receiving P20,754 per month [43,44,45]. Furthermore, some locally-employed nurses are also facing other problems such as the lack of security of tenure or government items to safeguard their jobs [46]. In fact, this problem also appeared in the answers of the respondents. On the other hand, nurses abroad such as those in Saudi Arabia and the United States are receiving salaries averaging around P58,000 and P255,370 per month respectively, while also receiving other benefits such as housing allowance and hazard pay [46,47]. The glaring difference in the financial aspect of the nursing profession is often the reason why locally-employed nurses are pushed to work in other countries despite the need for their services locally [40].

Furthermore, despite getting a satisfactory rating for all subscales of job satisfaction, the study presented other problems that are extrinsic in nature. For instance, "workload", considered to be an extrinsic factor by previous studies, emerged as the most common problem for both groups [48]. Respondents shared that they are often faced with problem of "low nurse and large patient ratio"

resulting to longer working hours. The results of the study confirm the existence of the problem of nursing shortage worldwide. International standards set the ideal ratio of nurse to patients to be 1:4, yet recent reports showed some hospitals in the Philippines having a 2:59 or 2:64 ratio [49]. The worldwide nursing shortage also resulted to an increasing nurse-to-patient ratio in other countries, which may affect the quality of services received by patients. In the United States alone, around 1.1 million nurses are needed to address the shortage while in the United Kingdom, around 40,000 nursing posts are vacant [50,51]. Previous studies have found that nurses' workload is the predominant source of work-related stress, and they are found to be more dissatisfied when there is inadequate staffing [52, 53].

Filipino nurses overseas also find “communication” and “attitudes of patients”, particularly “discrimination”, as common problems they encounter. Reports show that some Filipino nurses overseas encounter discrimination from their patients because of their racial background. Further, using their own language has been the subject or reason for their workplace discrimination, with cases reporting Filipino nurses being denied of promotion or terminated in their jobs because of using their native language [54,55]. Previous studies have found that discrimination is a factor for nurses' turnover intention. Fair treatment of nurses regardless of racial background is essential for an organization's performance overall quality of patient care [41, 56].

Conclusion

The results of this study found that Filipino nurses both locally and overseas have an average level of general job satisfaction. Higher satisfaction was found with intrinsic factors, suggesting that both groups of nurses are motivated. Although no job satisfaction subscale got a low level satisfaction score, nurses cited some extrinsic factors as common problems encountered in their jobs. According to Herzberg's theory, extrinsic factors can cause job dissatisfaction when absent or not managed. Thus, nurse administrators as well as the government should develop strategies and formulate policies considering those extrinsic factors that would help improve nurses' work environment. For instance, problems with nurses' workload due to unideal nurse-patient ratio can be addressed by encouraging more nurses to work locally. However, this will only be possible if job satisfaction factors that can motivate nurses to stay are present. For example, having better

salaries and fringe benefits packages, and opportunities for advancement that are comparable with what they can get overseas. These strategies may not only encourage nurses to stay and work locally but can also encourage the return migration of Filipino nurses overseas.

It can be gleaned from this study that nurses' job satisfaction is an important aspect of nursing management that needs to be given attention. Their satisfaction is important to ensure that they are able to give their best in providing nursing care. Moreover, studies have found that work satisfaction is correlated with other factors, such as professional commitment that are necessary in their efforts to reduce turnover rates, ultimately addressing the problem of nursing shortage [57,58]. Intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence nurses' job satisfaction, so making strategies that consider both types of factors are essential.

Considering the current number of nurses in our country and the importance of work satisfaction among nurses, the study also suggests that further research on nurses' job satisfaction should be done. For instance, research on the comparison of job satisfaction among nurses working in public and private hospitals and its relation to other factors such as organizational commitment, turnover intention, and retention can be undertaken.

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