

An Investigation of the Basics and Concepts of Comparative Management

Abstract

Comparative management studies (comparative administration) deal with different countries' management systems and other societies' practical experiences. In some comparative studies, a single variable in the organization, such as motivation, is selected, and the effect of culture and social values on it is examined. However, several variables and factors are selected and examined in the organization in some others. Organizational structure, organizational performance (or function), production system, technology related to dynamics and complexity of bureaucracy, and classification of organizations regarding the type of member control can be used as a model in comparative management studies. Comparative management is defined as an area of study dealing with similarities and differences between management systems and management from various dimensions and aspects. This comparison can be made between different organizations such as governmental and non-governmental, for-profit and not-for-profit, productive and non-productive, large and small, and successful and unsuccessful. In the present study, the concepts and principles, benefits, reasons, and importance of studies dealing with comparative management were taken into account. Several successful examples of this issue in developed countries were discussed.

Keywords: Management, Comparative Management, Research, Organization.

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Introduction

Comparative management studies (comparative administration) deal with different countries' management systems and other societies' practical experiences. In some comparative studies, a single variable in the organization, such as motivation, is selected, and the effect of culture and social values on it is examined. However, several variables and factors are selected and examined in the organization in some others. In principle, multivariate comparative studies are complete and have more valid results due to comparing and analyzing different aspects of the organization. The selection of variables in comparative management studies is done according to the type of comparative study and its purpose, as well as the conditions and facilities of the study. (Morris 1996) Organizational structure, organizational performance (or function), production system, technology related to dynamics and complexity of bureaucracy, and classification of organizations regarding the type of member control can be used as a model in comparative management studies. Some experts have considered the organization's construction a valid criterion for comparative studies. Construction is defined as a particular order to correlate the components of a set for a specific purpose. An organizational structure is an interrelated component and element that needs a set to achieve an organizational goal. Comparative studies are easier when they compare structures that can be easily searched and observed, and their similarities and differences can be easily understood. In some societies, there may be coordination between

construction and function, but this relationship is not always the case. (Alvani et al;2004)

Therefore, this study is hard if functions and tasks are regarded as a comparison criterion model; that is, the actions and activities of the components of construction, which are called tasks, are used in comparative studies. Since functions and tasks are not as recognizable and readable as construction, the likelihood of feeling confused and making an error is higher. Comparing functions makes sense when the functions are compared concerning their constructions.

Definition of Comparative Management Study (Comparative Administration)

Comparative management deals with the similarities and differences between management systems and management from different dimensions and aspects. This comparison can be made between different organizations such as governmental and non-governmental, for-profit and non-profit, productive and non-productive, large and small, and successful and unsuccessful ones. However, the mentioned definition has been stated at the micro-level. Such studies usually focus on philosophy, perspectives, practices, structures, and processes of management as well as organizational policies. On the other hand, in the studies associated with macro-level comparative management, the management systems and methods in different social systems are compared to identify similarities and differences and ultimately measure and evaluate them. This comparison can be made between two or more societies or at different times (Alwani and Arabshahi 2004).

Reasons for Importance of Comparative Management Studies

There are many reasons to study comparative management. First, we live in a world of interdependence. Governments play a major role in this dependency (Gepala 1994). On the other hand, the private sector is subject to government laws and regulations, and its behaviors align with government policy. At the same time, government and private and non-governmental managers must have a global mindset. Second, studying different cultures and systems removes the intellectual limits of national cultural confinement and guides us to recognition beyond that. Third, comparative management analysis raises the foundation and awareness of science by expanding the number of organizational variables in the field of study. Fourth, comparative management analysis helps to broaden our perception of management possibilities by taking us beyond the assumptions that normally constitute our context. Fifth, the most important reason to study comparative management is that it helps one to better understand his environment and culture.

Objectives of Comparative Studies of Management systems

The main purpose of comparative studies of management systems is to provide a broader perspective and to gain a better and more comprehensive understanding of management systems and their functions. The following are examples of minor goals:

- Understanding the theories, ideas, and innovations of other societies in administrative studies
- Recognizing management systems in different periods
- Being aware of different views and perceptions related to the management system
- Understanding the management system of society and how its components are related to gaining a deeper understanding of administrative issues
- Finding a more efficient and cost-effective management system
- Developing a national management system
- Achieving a more favorable management system

Application of Comparative Study in Organizations

A comparative study is a study method that summarizes and analyzes phenomena to find differences and similarities. In comparative management studies, the task becomes more complex when tackling real problems, and various aspects must be considered to make a comprehensive study.

First, if two phenomena that will be compared are two organizations, the chosen organizations (two phenomena) should be comparable and adaptable. They should not be completely different or similar and should possess at least one thing in common (Moghimi et al., 2015). The comparison

makes sense when there are similarities between the phenomena being compared (at least one commonality). Second, the factors or variables of the two organizations that need to be compared should be determined. The comparison must be based on criteria (variables) that do not affect the study's validity. In fact, to form the basis for comparison, one or more variables common to the two organizations and not necessarily similar need to be selected. Thus, the right selection of variables guarantees the validity of the comparative study. In a comparative study, you select at least two phenomena to study, scrutinize all aspects of them, compare them in terms of variables, and recognize their similarities and differences. Therefore, comparative studies can be defined as contrasting two phenomena with at least one thing in common, using comparable variables or criteria to scrutinize and compare them, and identifying their similarities and differences.

Comparative Studies of Management Systems in Different Societies and Periods and their Benefits

Comparative studies of management systems in different societies or periods, such as comparative studies at the micro-level (within a country), seek to compare and contrast the management systems of societies and find the similarities and differences between them. Since the external environment strongly influences management systems, the main focus is to comprehensively examine the organizations and external environments. The open system approach is a method that assists researchers in this area and enables a comprehensive analysis of the organization.

Benefits of Comparative Management Studies in Different Societies or Periods

1. Management development is impossible without comparative studies, organizational studies, and how to guide them in other societies and cultures. As a result, a limited number of one-dimensional researchers cannot fully understand the management system.
2. The experience and practice of some countries can be useful and constructive for others. This does not apply to just one country. In one context, developed countries can learn from developing countries; in another, the opposite may be true. Many organizational innovations have emerged in small countries, and large ones have benefited from learning and applying them.
3. Comparative studies play an important role in organizational management. The strengths and weaknesses of hypotheses and theories become apparent when they are tested in real-world situations. Comparative studies to achieve this goal compare practical examples of the theory with each other and refine the actual management theory.

4. Comparative studies simplify the understanding of management theories by giving practical examples.
5. Comparative studies of the administration of different societies and periods inform people of new information and ideas, prevent the adoption of exclusive methods in absolutist tendencies and organizational issues, and contribute to human mental development.

Systematic Approach (based on open systems) in Comparative Management Studies

Theorists in comparative management studies consider the organization a game system that interacts with different environments and believes it is wrong to pay attention to the organization independent of external factors and environments. In a closed system, only the effect of inter-organizational variables on organizational structure, behavioral patterns, and effectiveness is emphasized. In the open system approach, one of the main approaches in comparative management studies, the effect of environmental factors on the organization is also taken into account (Chen 1997). The open system approach provides a suitable framework for comparative management analysis at the macro level. In this framework, there are two interacting systems: the environmental system and the management and business system, each of which is affected by the other. Theorists have also divided each of the two environmental and management systems into several interacting subsystems. Ultimately, the organization is the result of the interaction of these factors (In this interaction, energy is constantly exchanged between the organization and the environment). Therefore, cultural, social, political, legal, technological, and economic environments are all effective in the organization and are also influenced by the organization and should be considered in comparative studies. In other words, the organization's ecology or environmental effects play an important role in comparative studies. Comparative management studies not only compare organizations but also consider all factors that affect them, especially because of their roots in social culture and values and their relationship to other environments.

Importance of Model in Comparative Management Studies

While recognizing the necessity and importance of comparative management studies is very simple, it is not easy to conduct them. Therefore, various principles must be considered; in this regard, the main question is how to compare the organizations. Should an organization, a set of components, be completely compared to another? For example, is it true to compare Organization A with Organization B and report the results? Does it make sense if one or several common features between two organizations are precisely chosen and compared? To answer this question, it should be noted that since the context of comparing and achieving all the

similarities and differences is almost impossible, classification should be used. One classification that can be a model for comparative organizational studies is the classification of different organizational variables (Min, 1995).

Davis's Comparative Model

Regarding the models of social relations in different societies and their use in comparative studies, Davis has listed five social relations: 1. Family relations: They play a decisive role in shaping the personality of individuals in comparative management studies, and they are very important. In industrial societies, the impact of this role is small, but in traditional societies, its role is clear and important, and these relationships largely dominate organizational behavior. 2. Group relations: People accept group membership due to these relations and gain advantages in return for being loyal to them. Informal groups in organizations are examples of these groups that affect organizational and administrative relationships differently. 3. Social relations: It may seem that class relations do not make much sense today, but in some Eastern societies such as India, these relations are still surviving, and there are other forms of them in Western societies. Regarding the effect of these relations in the organization, class relations in employment should be considered. Hence, special jobs are assigned to special classes of society, and this type of relation emphasizes stable vertical relations. 4. Contractual relations refer to the relations in which the parties are related to each other based on a contract. The legal system in society guarantees this type of relationship in society. 5. Organizational relations: Organizational relations are the main model in recognizing organizations, and while being influenced by other relations mentioned above, they play an important role in the organization's formation. These relationships are written to be formal and legal and represent the official form of the organization (Calori, 1997).

Types of Comparative Studies of Management Systems

Comparative management studies can be classified into different types:

A. Applied Classification

1. Comparative management studies of different countries, societies, and cultures: These studies may be by comparing two countries or two groups of countries, each of which has an almost similar management system. Considering the management system with cultural and social infrastructure and values in the society, these studies can identify many differences and similarities in the structure according to their infrastructure.
2. The study of management systems in different periods of history: All societies have had special forms in different periods that change and develop over time. This way, organizations can be studied

comparatively in somewhat different courses. Thus, it is important to determine the effect of the passage of time and the changes and developments of society on the organizations.

3. The study of management systems within a society or a group of similar countries: In this type of study, the organizations of the society are compared to each other.
4. Different perceptions of the management system in a society or a period: The purpose of this method (studying phenomena with different perceptions) is to extend the comparison method, which is more likely to progress in the social sciences. In this method, instead of comparing many similar phenomena, such as classical comparisons, the study focuses only on one phenomenon. This study is conducted using a variety of perceptions and methods, and the results obtained are compared (Aliyah 1992).

B. Classification regarding similarities or differences between two phenomena

It is divided into two near and far comparisons:

1. Near comparison: Near comparison replaces the experimental method in the social sciences. This comparison applies to similar types of structures, and the comparison is generally institutional and rarely functional. The goal of near comparison is, above all, accuracy. Hence it goes into detail. Its main purpose is to look for differences because it operates by definition in a framework where similarities are as large as possible.
2. Far comparisons: Far comparison is the opposite of a near comparison. This comparison compares structures and institutions with different cultural texts, sizes, and meanings.

C. Classification regarding the Level of Study

Comparative studies are classified into two micro and macro levels: In a comparative study on the macro-level, which is the study of organizations in different societies or cultures, the organization is considered an open system and in dynamic interaction with the environment. In a comparative study at the micro-level, the organization itself and its constituent factors, whether structural or behavioral, are examined; for example, management style, attitudes, organizational structure, organizational performance process, and policies are comparatively studied. Micro-level studies are usually conducted in one country or a group of neighboring countries (in terms of administrative structure).

Problems of Comparative Management Studies

Since research methods need to be used in comparative studies, all the problems that arise in research work are also discussed in these studies. However, the comparative nature of these

studies raises other issues. One of these issues is the selection of units under investigation and their degree of uniformity. Comparative studies are sometimes criticized for being inconsistent with the two entities under study; therefore, the studies conducted lack scientific validity. If the objection is accepted and resolved, the desired state is finally reached when two completely identical units are found for the research. Then a comparison is made, which is the negation of the condition (Barasut and Lawrence 1992).

Determining the variables and criteria for comparison and their degree of comparison is another matter of comparative studies. The practicality and applicability of variables, as opposed to their completeness and comprehensiveness, is an issue that researchers of such studies often grapple with.

Another problem that researchers face in comparative management studies: incorporating personal theories into these studies. In the social sciences, this conflict is exacerbated. The researchers' mindsets and values influence their perceptions and sometimes lead to false prejudices.

Another problem with comparative studies is the difficulty of comparing with a neutral and realistic view.

Characteristics of the Management System in Developing Countries

1. Being imitative and lack of originality in the management system

The basic models of government management in developing societies are largely imitations of Western societies' management systems rather than derived from the context of their social systems. All these countries, including those that were never colonized, have attempted to use some form of the foreign model in their management systems regardless of the appropriateness and coordination of the Western management model with the cultural, social, climatic, and indigenous conditions of their country. The incompatibility of the imported management system with the specific cultural conditions of developing countries has caused not only the management system of these countries to fail to realize their native and main needs but also to face many problems and inadequacies that require a lot of time and effort to get rid of them.

2. Low efficiency and inefficiency of the management system

Comparatively, the effectiveness and efficiency of management systems in developing countries are lower than in developed countries, which is considered a problem. One reason is the incompatibility of the Western management system with the cultural and value conditions of developing societies which have led to the weakness of the management system in realizing organizational goals. The other reason is the lack of expertise or lack of effective use of specialists. In these countries, the number of professional workers is very

small, and the available professional workers are not used correctly and in the right places. Chronic unemployment and underemployment are common in government offices.

3. Replacing individual goals with general goals (concentration of power in the hands of bureaucrats)

In most management organizations in developing countries, maintaining the concept and employment and achieving personal and social goals are among the top concerns of every manager. In communication and operations, the manager puts his best efforts into achieving these goals, and in his view, the organization's problems and goals are important in the next levels. Tasks such as planning, organizing, controlling, and supervising have a formal aspect, and the effort is to maintain the management position. Organizational affairs have a political aspect, and less attention is paid to technical issues. The change in managers' personal and organizational goals sometimes manifests as a sense of ownership of the organization and its tasks (Black Boyd 1999).

4. Incompetency system in manpower management

According to the organization's rules and regulations, the competency system's goals are to employ capable individuals to serve the organization, accurately assess them based on their competencies, and get promotions regarding their merits. However, in the incompetency system, organizations do not follow the rules and regulations in appointment and promotion, and factors such as kinship and acquaintance, the recommendation of influential officials, dependence on the highest levels of the organization, and dependence on political officials are the basis of employment. In that condition, the management of human resources in the organization depends on individual tastes, and there is no rule for that.

5. Political Bureaucracy

On the characteristics of bureaucracy in developing countries, Vogel referred to Political Bureaucracy which describes the pattern of relations between politics and governance in some developing countries. She argued that political bureaucracy negatively affects the performance of government employees. Following the judgment and criticism of politicians, management system bureaucrats in developing countries show little interest in creativity and initiatives. In addition, bureaucrats seldom take action before consulting with their superiors. Therefore, they tend to meet the demands and wishes of their superiors, especially in cases where the rules and regulations are not clear for the performance of administrative tasks. Vogel concluded that in such a system, bureaucrats become obedient tools and try to perform administrative tasks in a way that is desirable to their superiors (Murray 2000).

6. Corruption and irresponsible organization

Corruption is generally an act that deviates from legal practice, and the use of positions is illegal and manifests in many different forms, including bribery. There are various reasons

for emerging bribery and corruption in society, including complexity, inadequacy, out-of-date laws, long and irresponsible bureaucracies, public ignorance of humans' rights, lack of access to information, lack of faith, material poverty, and lack of alignment of salaries of low-ranking employees with costs, individualism and following the simple and quick solutions.

7. Controlling bureaucracies (lack of ways to control and monitor bureaucracies)

Bureaucracies exclusively devote the forces, resources, and facilities of the society to themselves and emerge as powerful units in the society. These organizations show their power by using technical expertise, government laws and regulations, relying on their essential goals and using political levers. Thus, the organizations that should serve society are enslaved and serve society. In developing countries, there is often no power to control the bureaucracies and curb them if necessary. In such conditions and the absence of power, organizations gain more influence and make the administrative system sick. In most non-industrialized countries, controlling agents are not well developed. When there is no free and competitive election, no independent influence group, and also no free press, authoritarian regimes are quite prone to inefficiency and bureaucratic conservatism.

8. Domination of culture of speech instead of action

In developing countries, there is much talk about ideas and aspirations, but not about action. Therein, various comprehensive plans are designed that are never implemented, and rules and regulations are set that they are never operationalized.

9. Informal communities in the organization

In the management systems of developing countries, informal relationships between different groups within an organization often become discordant and hinder the achievement of formal organizational goals and effectiveness. Having the same religion, language, citizenship, and profession, individuals and members of organizations forget their official positions, communicate informally, and make an unforeseen and distinct organization with a formal organization (Bahdehvar 2000).

10. Fatalism Belief

One of the cultural characteristics of some developing countries is fatalism and the belief that events are determined by fate. It is a passive belief and creates difficulties in performing various management tasks. For example, when a person believes that whatever his fate is, it will happen, he does not try or make any effort to change his fate and waits for it. With such a view of the future, the motivation for excellence and perfectionism also stagnates, and people are satisfied with whatever happens. Fatalism with such demonstrations in some developing countries has created obstacles to doing research, development, innovation, technology transfer, and ultimately

the management system's success, and has made it difficult to achieve the development goals of these countries (Battery and Lang 1998).

Characteristics of Industrial Management in Japan and Comparing the United States with Europe

Strategies of Institutions

1. Designing and producing new products for the existing market
2. Increasing the share of the institution in the existing market
3. Designing and producing existing products in new markets
4. Creating and developing new markets for existing products

Characteristics of Japanese Organizations and their Role in the Evolution and Development of Japan

1. Promotion of position and salary based on seniority: The seniority system is an important feature of Japanese organizations, and employees are regularly promoted to higher ranks. Observing competency and seniority systems to promote the position and salary in terms of motivation and strength of the management system can lead to the improvement and growth of organizations.
2. Lifelong employment: The mobility and shift of human resources in the management system are very low, and those employed by a ministry or institution stay in the same organization until they retire. Therefore, the sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization is very strong and helps to gain experience and skills, raise professional awareness and reduce training costs.
3. Retirement conditions: Retirement is not mandatory, and the related laws differ in each ministry. Japan's retirement age is around 50, and early retirement provides the necessary posts to promote young employees. However, if you have an alternative, you will be agreed to retire.
4. Playing a role in social innovation: The issue of the separation of politics from the administration, which was once raised in the West, does not exist in the Japanese management system. Managers have a political and executive role at the highest administrative levels in Japanese organizations. Due to this feature, administrative organizations have played an active role in social reform and innovation in recent years.
5. The power to adapt to conditions: Japan's management system and bureaucracy have adapted to change despite severe political fluctuations. Administrative bureaucracy in the past authoritarian conditions under the pressure of martial law in the period when the Allies occupied the country and now survives in the government of parliamentary democracy. This is not due to the neutrality of the bureaucracy, but it is related to the power to adapt it to the political context.

6. Non-recourse to the judiciary: Judicial control over the management system in Japan has been reduced to a minimum, and there is no special court for administrative organizations. The country's judicial system also extends to matters related to administrative organizations and can hold government employees accountable when necessary.

7. Playing a role in the transformation and development of the country: The power and cohesion of bureaucratic organizations in Japan have been partly due to the active role of these organizations in the modernization and development of the country. The ruling class and the bureaucracy have guided the country towards development and transformation, and society and the people have accepted and praised their role.

The Cultural Dimension of Japanese Organizations from Hofstede's Views

The Japanese value collectivism more than individualism, and its hallmarks include an emphasis on a sense of organizational belonging, group loyalty, collective inclination, and consideration. Regarding the power distance dimension, they use both dimensions by maintaining a large power distance, such as recognizing hierarchical construction and allowing low power distances, such as implementing consensual decision-making. The Japanese have a strong tendency to avoid uncertainty. Conflict and rivalry are avoided in this society, and group agreement and collective compromise are emphasized. For the Japanese, conservatism means law and order. As for the patriarchal dimension versus Japanese feminism, they are influential in both directions. They strongly believe in a patriarchal culture by equating gender roles. Employment benefits, such as lifelong employment, are only for male employees.

Comparison of Socio-Political Environment Aspects

There are two dominant political parties in the United States, while one has ruled in Japan for years after World War II. There is only one ruling party in China, yet socialism in China is a deliberate combination of Marxism, Leninism, and Confucianism. In Africa, tribal affiliation and the resulting power are important in the political arena. Some countries use some degree of centralized planning except the United States. Japan, on the other hand, has its unique system. The Government of Japan has provided the necessary administrative guidance for achieving national unity and solidarity through the Ministry of Commerce and International Industries. In China and parts of Africa, state capitalism prevails. In Japan, popular business plays a major role. In the United States, the public and private sectors are separate and independent, but in Japan, public and private sector employees are very closely related. Most retired public sector employees join the private sector. In this way, they create a vital link between the public and private sectors. The distinction between policymakers and decision-makers is quite significant

in China and Africa. The first group is the ruling arm of the political party and sets the policies, and the second group implements the policies. So in China and Africa, companies have a dual power structure. Another characteristic of China and some African countries is their ideology and a specific party to implement it. Japan has a unique socio-political environment. Like the United States, it has a liberal political system and a free-market ideology. However, unlike the United States, Japan benefits from a well-integrated administrative and organizational structure at the community level, making a very close relationship between the government and the private sector. This structure has helped Japan properly realize national unity and solidarity.

Various Aspects of Organizations

Organizational structure: Formal organizational structure is important in countries other than Japan. In the developing countries of Africa, the organizational structure is task-oriented, hierarchical, authoritarian, and centralized. China has a two-pronged structure, including political and technical. In Japan, the formal structure takes the second place of importance, and there is a close working relationship between the groups. **Decision-making process:** In other countries, it is mostly top-down and a function of the school of the reason that requires a short-term horizon, while in Japan, decisions are made by consensus. This tendency is due to the cultural nature of the Japanese. **Communication process:** In Japan, it is based on the observance of customs, according to which all opinions and views are considered. The communication process in Africa, China, and North America is vertical and top-down. There is a dual chain of command in China. In Africa, fear is a hallmark of the communication process. **Orientation in the group process:** It moves towards duty in North America. Japan has a strong orientation toward retaining employees. The structure is more important in the United States, while the process is more important in China and Japan. Africa is characterized by weak motivation and alienation. **Human resource management:** Underdeveloped human resource management, low wages, and poor performance control are the characteristics of Africa.

Since there are many job seekers in China, government agencies are actively recruiting. The decision to upgrade in this country is based on dual political and technical criteria. Employment and appointments are emphasized in the United States. Japan's payroll and promotion system are based on seniority, and human resources are valuable. **Union-Management Relations and Unions:** In the United States, relations between management and unions have traditionally been contentious. In Japan, on the other hand, unions tend to compromise and agree due to social pressures. In Africa, anti-labor laws imposed by the ruling elites have severely restricted union activity. Chinese government-run cooperatives have

required unions to work with labor councils. Industrial unions are nationally organized in the United States, and trade unions are organized locally. Industrial unions are affiliated with corporations in Japan and China, with major political parties. **Stakeholders:** In North America, consumer unions, environmentalists, and agencies are important. In Japan, banks and commercial companies are the beneficiaries of the large commercial sector. However, in developing African countries, foreign influencers are the main beneficiaries of large corporations.

Conclusion

Some researchers consider technology and technical knowledge a characteristic that can be used as a benchmark for comparative management studies and to find similarities and differences between organizations. In one of the classical researches in this field, the production system of organizations has been considered in three forms: 1) Unit or Job type of production, 2) Mass Production or Flow production, and 3) Continuous production or Process. Besides, its effects on organizational structure, organization size, and human relations have been examined. According to some researchers, bureaucracy is also an ideal example that may be the basis and criterion for comparison study. Regarding Weber's ideal bureaucracy, he is not interested in providing empirical models or examples of categories; he provides models that are not 100% real but are inspired by existing facts to compare organizations. Weber has used empirical information and data to design a bureaucratic model, but his use is selective. He has found characteristics in some organizations and has magnified them in an ideal example. For example, organizational communications in any institution are not completely impersonal, but in Weber's model, it is presented as completely impersonal. Another point justifying the bureaucracy used in comparative studies is implementing this organizational model in all countries. Nowadays, all countries use some bureaucracy with characteristics such as hierarchy, division of labor, conditions of achievement, written registration, and a logical system of rights and benefits, which are present in all management systems. However, it does not mean that all of these organizations are unified, but that there are many differences in their functions and performance. Regarding the functions in the bureaucracy construction, it can be considered a practical and simple tool in comparative studies.

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