

Hotel Workers and Workplace Harassment: A Comparison of South Korea and Japan

Hyo Sun Jung and Hye Hyun Yoon[†]

Dept. of Culinary Arts and Food Service Management, Kyung Hee University

ABSTRACT

This study examined the positive impact of workplace harassment on the employees' counterproductive work behavior at deluxe hotel in Seoul and Tokyo. The study verified a differentiated influence based on the nationality of the employees. The hypothesized relationships in the model were tested simultaneously by using structural equation modelling. First, isolation/exclusion ($\beta=.403$), disrespectful behavior ($\beta=.312$), physical aggression ($\beta=.245$), and verbal aggression ($\beta=.133$) had a positive impact on counterproductive work behavior. However, threats/bribes ($\beta=.091$) did not show a significant impact. Second, no significant moderating effect based on employees' nationality (Korean versus Japanese) was observed in the relationship between the five workplace harassment factors and CWB. This study will investigate workplace harassment perceived by deluxe hotel employees in Korea and Japan, and the obtained data can also be used to help identify realistic plans to reduce workplace harassment between bosses and subordinates at an organizational level.

Keywords: workplace harassment, counterproductive work behavior, Korea, Japan, deluxe hotel workers

INTRODUCTION

The term power harassment was first coined in 2002 by Okada Yasuko, a Japanese researcher (Chosun Ilbo, 2014). A more accurate expression is the abuse of authority or workplace harassment and workplace bullying, which refer to extensive workplace harassment. Workplace harassment is also similar to the abuse of authority in a workplace. In Korea, terms, such as power harassment or harassment within an organization, are associated with this meaning. Japan perceives workplace harassment as a social ill that should be removed, and it is implementing policies to address this problem at a national level. *Rankism* arose as a social problem in the United States, and Europe has been promoting the enactment of policies and regulations that aim to address workplace harassment for about two decades. Sweden established an ordinance regarding workplace harassment for the first time in 1993. Finland established special articles regarding workplace harassment and other improper behavior in the Industrial Safety and Health Act. France introduced the Society Advancement Act in 2002. These countries impose a duty on employers to

prevent workplace harassment, and they regard the annulment of a labor contract resulting from harassment as being valid (Kukmin Daily, 2014).

Workplace harassment is frequently observed in Japan where a culture of a top-to-bottom chain of command and discipline prevails. Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare directly receives reports regarding workplace harassment and investigates these matters. Japan has proposed measures at the governmental level to address workplace harassment. For example, if a person suffers from depression or commits suicide as a result of harassment from a boss or colleague in the workplace, the case can be acknowledged as an industrial accident (Chosun Ilbo, 2014). However, many Korean companies think that their customers are always right, and they treat employees like servants. In developed countries, the problem of workplace harassment is currently being regarded as a social crime (Low, 2012). It is obvious that using insulting words in a workplace diminishes the quality of service to customers, which consequently lowers employee performance and devalues the company (Sims & Sun, 2012). Lopez, Hondson, and Roscigno (2009) reported that work-related harassment

[†] **Corresponding author:** Hye Hyun Yoon, Dept. of Culinary Arts and Food Service Management, Kyung Hee University, 26 Kyungheedaero, Dongdaemoon-gu, Seoul, 02447, Korea, Tel. +82-2-961-9403, Fax. +82-2-964-2537, E-mail. hhyun@khu.ac.kr

occurs much more frequently in the workplace than sexual harassment. In Claybourn, Spinner, and Malcom (2014), 48.4 % of the respondents replied that they had been exposed to harassment in the workplace.

In particular, Mathisen, Einarsen, and Mykletun (2008) argued that workplace harassment and bullying are rampant in the hospitality industry. Poulston (2008) conducted a survey on hotel employees in New Zealand and reported that 24.3% of the respondents indicated that they had experienced harassment in a work-related situation. We believe that the strong intensity of physical work, the poor working environment, the pressure from work-related tasks, and the no-rest working atmosphere of the hotel industry further stimulate the behavior of harassment (Pratten & O'Leary, 2007; Bloisi & Hoel, 2008). Despite this situation, virtually no previous research studies have examined harassment from a boss within an organization or workplace harassment using hotel employees as a sample. Although several studies have focused on the hospitality industry, they were conducted at a very exploratory level (Worsfold & McCann, 2000; Bloisi & Hoel, 2008; Mkono, 2010).

This present study examines the causal relationship between the level of workplace harassment perceived by employees at deluxe hotels and the employees' counterproductive work behavior (CWB). The paper verifies the moderating role that the employees' nationality has on the causal relationship between workplace harassment and employees' CWB in the deluxe hotel industry. It also attempts to provide practical implications regarding workplace harassment in the hotel industry. We expect that this will help hotel industry employers and managers understand the characteristics and range of workplace harassment in the workplace, and learn efficient ways to solve and manage the problems related to it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace Harassment and CWB

Reviewing previous studies related to harassment within an organization and employees' CWB, Penny and Spector (2005) reported that conflicts in interpersonal relationships or incivility that takes place in a workplace have a very strong positive relationship with employees' CWB. Mathisen et al. (2008) reported that the damage done by workplace harass-

ment increases the stress level in an organization as it causes unstable interpersonal relationships, which further increases the possibility of a low level of immersion and CWB in employees. In a study that used nurses as research subjects, Lewis and Malecha (2011) argued that workplace harassment induces behavior that diminishes productivity. Berry, Gillespie, Gates, and Schafer (2012) also reported that workplace harassment or bullying have negative effects on productivity, arguing that they decrease the employees' ability to adapt to cognitive demand or to manage their workload. Lian, Ferris, and Brown (2012) reported that harassment from bosses, such as cursing and slander, have positive effects on employees' deviant behavior. Low (2012) argued that workplace harassment has a larger impact on employees' CWB than sexual harassment, Ayko, Cakkab, and Hartel (2003) said that CWB was affected by employees' workplace harassment. Also, Giorgi (2012) asserted that workplace harassment was more closely related with employees' deviating behaviors. To investigate the impact workplace harassment has on employees' CWB, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Workplace harassment positively influences the employees' counterproductive work behavior.

Moderating Effects of The Employees' Nationality

Virtually no previous study has verified the moderating role that nationality has on the causal relationship between workplace harassment and CWB. However, previous studies have shown that cultural difference can be one of the major reasons for harassment or violent incidences within an organization. McMahan (2000) conducted a survey in Southern Iceland and Northern Iceland; they reported that sectarian harassment prevails in the northern section of that country and sexual harassment prevails in the southern section. That paper argued that education level and regional difference determine the level of workplace harassment. Andersen, Aasland, Fridner, and Lövseth (2010) reported that the level of perception that doctors in Northern European countries (Sweden, Norway, and Iceland) had of their exposure to workplace harassment was relatively lower than that of Italian doctors. They argued that workplace harassment can be reduced by the leadership of bosses, superior human resources policies, and positive pro-

ductive work activities.

Based on these results, we can surmise that cultural differences based on nationality can result in different perceptions of workplace harassment. In particular, we believe that nationality plays a moderating role in how Korean and Japanese employees experience workplace harassment, because both groups of employees share a similar cultural background, and both maintain a 10-year cycle prototype relationship. To investigate the moderating impact of nationality on workplace harassment and CWB, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: The employees' nationality moderates the relationship between workplace harassment and counterproductive work behavior.

METHODS

Sample and Data Collection

The research hypotheses were tested with data collected through intercept surveys conducted at deluxe hotels in Seoul, South Korea and Tokyo, Japan in August 2016. It selected the employees with the South Korean nationality who work at a hotel in Seoul area, and the employees with the Japanese nationality who work at a hotel in Tokyo area. We engaged in prior consultation with the person in charge of each hotel's human resources management (HRM) department to discuss the topic of this study and the feedback provisions related to the research performance. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to five regional deluxe hotels in Seoul and 100 questionnaires were distributed to five regional deluxe hotels

in Tokyo. To guarantee the anonymity of the respondents' identities, the respondents placed the completed questionnaire in a sealed envelope and left it in a specified place where it was retrieved after a certain amount of time. Among the 300 questionnaires that were distributed, 241 questionnaires were retrieved and 194 were used for the final analysis.

Measurement Development

Workplace harassment, which is an exogenous variable in this study, was defined as an employees' continuous exposure to offensive remarks and/or behavior and mistreatment from colleagues, bosses, or subordinates within an organization (Einarsen, 2000). Based on Rospenda, Fujishiro, Shannon, and Richmana (2008), and Rospenda, Richman, and Shannon (2006), workplace harassment was measured using 15 items that correspond to five factors: physical aggression, verbal aggression, disrespectful behavior, threats/bribes, and isolation/exclusion. In particular, this study measured workplace harassment as the extent to which a person who is directly involved in the matter perceives it. This is because previous literature has commonly argued that harassment becomes harassment when the person directly involved feels harassed (Rayner, 1997; Claybourn, 2011). The endogenous variable of CWB was defined as the employees' negative discretionary behavior that harms an organization (2000). Based on studies by Fox, Spector, and Miles (2001) and Marcus and Schuler (2004), measurement was implemented using four items. The Likert 7-score scale was applied to all the measured variables.

Data Analysis

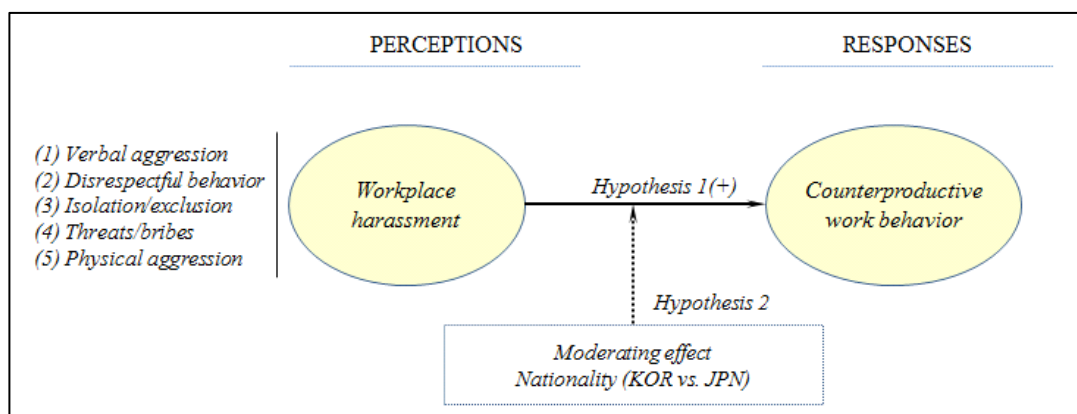


Fig. 1. A proposed model of workplace harassment and CWB.

We analyzed the collected data using SPSS and AMOS software. Frequency analysis was conducted to examine the characteristics of the sample. Distribution according to nationality was examined using cross analysis. The validity and reliability of the measurement items were examined by testing convergent validity, discriminant validity, and fitness of the model. We tested the hypotheses using structural equation modelling (SEM) and multi-group comparison analysis.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics of The Samples

The general characteristics of the respondents according to nationality are presented in Table 1. The sample consisted of a total of 194 deluxe hotel employees. Of those, 133 were Korean hotel employees and 61 were Japanese hotel employees. Among the Korean hotel employees, 70.7% were men and 29.3% were women. In terms of the age of the Korean respondents, 47.4% were in their 30s. In all, 43.6% of the Korean respondents had worked in the hotel industry from 6 to 10 years. The distribution of the Japanese employee sample was similar to the Korean sample. In Japanese sample, 65.6% of the respondents were men and 34.4% were women. The percentages of the Japanese respondents who were in their 30s and who had been working in the hotel industry for 6 to 10 years were 45.9% and 40.9%, respectively.

Validity and Reliability Test

Table 1. General characteristics of samples N(%)

Classification	Nationality		Total (N=194)	
	South Korea (N=133)	Japan (N=61)		
Gender	Male	94(70.7)	40(65.6)	134(69.1)
	Female	39(29.3)	21(34.4)	60(30.9)
Age (yr)	20~29	48(36.1)	10(16.4)	58(29.9)
	30~39	63(47.4)	28(45.9)	91(46.9)
	40~	22(16.5)	23(37.7)	45(23.2)
Job- tenure	~5	37(27.8)	21(34.6)	58(29.9)
	6~10	58(43.6)	25(40.9)	83(42.7)
	11~	38(28.6)	15(24.5)	53(27.3)

Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis were conducted to verify the validity and reliability of the measurement items in this study (Table 2). In the analysis results, the standardized factor loading value was smaller than 0.7 in a total of 19 measurement items, and the *t*-value also indicated significance. The composite construct reliability of the six factors that were derived from the confirmative factor analysis was over 0.7. The average variance extracted and Cronbach's alpha were also over 0.7 and 0.8, respectively, implying that the goodness of fit of the model satisfies the requirement (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The goodness of fit of the model showed a reliable level with $\chi^2=282.223$, $\chi^2/df=2.060$, GFI=.857, NFI=.917, IFI=.956, CFI=.955, and RMSEA=.074. We compared the square of the correlation coefficient and the square of the average variance extracted to examine the discriminant validity (Table 3). The range of the square of the correlation coefficient was 0.093~0.288, which was relatively smaller than the range of the square of the average variance extracted (0.722~0.860). This confirms the discriminant validity of the derived factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Structural Equation Modeling

Prior to verification of the hypotheses were investigated whether the directivity of each factor coincided with the hypotheses of this study through correlation analysis (Table 3). All five of the workplace harassment factors and CWB showed a positive (+) directivity, indicating that they coincide with the hypotheses of this study. Next, we verified the hypothesis using a structural equation (Table 4). To verify hypothesis, the final model was elicited by using the modification index. In the results, the goodness of fit of the study model was $\chi^2=459.817$ ($df=143$), GFI=.800, IFI=.903, and CFI=.902. Considering that no modification index was reflected, we can say that this is an acceptable level. The specific results of the testing are described below.

Hypothesis 1, which assumed that workplace harassment of deluxe hotel employees would have a significantly positive impact on CWB, was adopted. Among the five workplace harassment factors, isolation/exclusion ($\beta=.349$, $t=4.670$, $p<.001$), disrespectful behavior ($\beta=.316$, $t=4.390$, $p<.001$), physical aggression ($\beta=.224$, $t=2.778$, $p<.001$), and verbal aggression ($\beta=.142$, $t=2.202$, $p<.05$) had a positive impact on CWB.

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis results

	Items	M±S.D.	Standardized estimate	t value	Cronbach's α CCR AVE
Physical aggression	WH ₁ Push you or grabbed you?	3.99±1.67	.909	fixed	.937
	WH ₂ Hit you physically?	3.96±1.89	.934	21.402***	.822
	WH ₃ Threw something at you?	4.10±1.94	.902	19.747***	.837
Verbal aggression	WH ₄ Gossiped about you and/or spread rumors about you behind your back?	4.42±1.73	.828	fixed	.893
	WH ₅ Made hostile or offensive gestures at you?	4.25±1.70	.912	15.056***	.744
	WH ₆ Yelled or screamed at you?	4.56±1.63	.828	13.440***	.733
Disrespectful behavior	WH ₇ Expected less of you than others in your position?	4.18±1.56	.895	fixed	.897
	WH ₈ Talk down to you (e.g., treated you like a child or as inferior to them)?	4.10±1.66	.891	16.462***	.787
	WH ₉ Humiliated or belittled you in front of others?	3.94±1.46	.803	14.117***	.746
Threats/bribes	WH ₁₀ Pressured you to change your beliefs of opinions at work?	4.10±1.45	.872	fixed	.930
	WH ₁₁ Offered you a subtle or obvious bribe to do something that you did not agree with?	4.17±1.43	.918	18.195***	.860
	WH ₁₂ Threatened that they would “get back at you” if you resisted doing something that you though was wrong, or if you challenged things about the workplace?	4.18±1.43	.920	18.259***	.816
Isolation/exclusion	WH ₁₃ Ignored you or your work contribution?	4.09±1.70	.735	fixed	.879
	WH ₁₄ Excluded you from important work activities or meeting?	4.57±1.71	.917	12.405***	.722
	WH ₁₅ Turned others in your work environment against you?	4.45±1.66	.887	12.186***	.722
Counterproductive work behavior	CWB ₁ Came to work late without permission	5.04±1.51	.886	fixed	.921
	CWB ₂ Started an argument with a coworker	5.28±1.62	.897	18.578***	.845
	CWB ₃ Put in to be paid for more hours than you worked	4.96±1.57	.947	20.951***	.783
	CWB ₄ Purposely wasted company materials/supplies	4.39±1.70	.803	14.807***	

Note: CCR=composite construct reliability; AVE=average variance extracted; $\chi^2=282.223(df=137)$; $p<0.001$; $\chi^2/df=2.060$; GFI=.857; NFI=.917; IFI=.956; CFI=.955; RMSEA=.074; *** $p<0.001$.

Table 3. Correlation analysis

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Physical aggression	1	.288 ^a	.093	.243	.202	.182
2. Verbal aggression	.537**	1	.108	.173	.232	.183
3. Disrespectful behavior	.306**	.330**	1	.116	.115	.106
4. Threats/bribes	.493**	.417**	.342**	1	.103	.102
5. Isolation/exclusion	.450**	.482**	.341**	.321**	1	.093
6. CWB	.427**	.428**	.327**	.320**	.306**	1

Note: CWB=Counterproductive work behavior, ** $p<.01$ (2-tailed), ^a r^2 .

However, threats/bribes ($\beta=.081$, $t=1.052$, $p>.05$) did not show a significant impact. This implies that isolation or exclusion at work and improper behavior in the workplace are the major causes of employees' CWB. It is conjectured that this kind of negative behavior, which is expressed to people outside the organization, makes employees more likely to engage in actions that harm an organization. These results are consistent with the findings reported by Lian et al. (2012) and Low (2012).

To verify the moderating effects that nationality has on the relationship between workplace harassment and CWB, we set an alternative model that is in a nested relationship with the study model, and we investigated the Chi-square difference that considers the degree of freedom between the two models (Table 5). The goodness of fit of the study model was $\chi^2=706.148$ ($df=286$), $\chi^2/df=2.469$; IFI=.877, and CFI=.894. As the analysis results found that nationality had no significant moderating effect on the relationship between workplace harassment and CWB, Hypothesis 2 was rejected. Although

Korean employees showed a significant causal relationship in a channel of verbal aggression \rightarrow CWB, a significant causal relationship in this channel was not found in the Japanese employees. Specifically, the impact of verbal aggression on CWB was significantly higher in the Korean respondents ($\beta=.176$) than in the Japanese respondents ($\beta=-.052$). However, the difference of chi-square was not statistically significant. In other words, even though verbal harassment can increase the possibility of counterproductive behavior among Korean deluxe hotel employees, verbal harassment did not increase that possibility in the Japanese employees.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the positive impact of workplace harassment on CWB using a sample of deluxe hotel employees in Seoul, Korea and Tokyo, Japan. The study verified a differentiated influence based on the nationality of the employees. The following section summarizes the main results of this study and presents the conclusion.

First, among the five workplace harassment factors perceived by deluxe hotel employees, isolation/exclusion ($\beta=.403$) was proven to have the most significant impact on the employees' CWB, followed by disrespectful behavior ($\beta=.312$), physical aggression ($\beta=.245$), and verbal aggression ($\beta=.133$). All these workplace harassment factors, except for threats/bribes ($\beta=.091$), had a positive impact on CWB, which is a representative negative behavior of employees at work. These results imply that behaviors, such as contempt and disrespect and isolation and exclusion from work, are the types of workplace

Table 4. Structural equation modelling

Hypothesis	Standardized estimate	t value	p value
H1 ^a Physical aggression \rightarrow CWB	.224	2.778	.005**
H1 ^b Verbal aggression \rightarrow CWB	.142	2.202	.028*
H1 ^c Disrespectful behavior \rightarrow CWB	.316	4.390	.000***
H1 ^d Threats/bribes \rightarrow CWB	.081	1.052	.293
H1 ^e Isolation/exclusion \rightarrow CWB	.349	4.670	.000***

Note: $\chi^2=459.817$ ($df=143$); $p<0.001$; GFI=.800; IFI=.903; CFI=.902; * $p<.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$; CWB=Counter productive work behavior.

Table 5. Moderating effect of the employees' nationality

	Nationality				Baseline model χ^2 ($df=286$)	Nested model χ^2 ($df=287$)	$\Delta\chi^2$ ($\Delta df=1$)
	South Korea (n=133)		Japan (n=61)				
	Standardized estimate	t-value	Standardized estimate	t-value			
H2 ^a	.251	2.704**	.208	1.341		706.152	.004
H2 ^b	.176	2.293*	-.052	-.466		707.516	1.368
H2 ^c	.271	3.092**	.338	2.755**	706.148	706.169	.021
H2 ^d	.123	1.342	.032	.216		706.525	.377
H2 ^e	.304	3.452***	.449	3.477***		706.186	.038

Note: $\chi^2/df=2.469$; IFI=.877, CFI=.894; * $p<.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

harassment that most often occur, and these cause an increase in employees' CWB (Mathisen et al., 2008; Lewis & Malecha, 2011; Low, 2012). The results also indicate that intention to leave an organization can also be increased by these types of workplace harassments.

Second, no significant moderating effect based on employees' nationality (Korean versus Japanese) was observed in the relationship between the five workplace harassment factors and CWB. The findings for the Korean employees showed that four of the five factors had a significant impact on CWB; only threats/bribes did not. The findings for the Japanese employees showed that verbal aggression and threats/bribes did not have a significant influence on CWB. Thus, the Japanese employees differed from their Korean counterparts in that verbal harassment did not have an impact on counterproductive behavior.

Based on the results of this study, the following implications can be drawn. Although a number of international studies have examined workplace harassment using diverse sample groups, no domestic study has been conducted thus far. This can be attributed to the organizational culture of a country that regards an individual's ability to bear and endure unjustifiable behavior as a virtue. Consequently, there are difficulties in conducting a fact-finding investigation or verifying the effect of the relationship. In particular, in deluxe hotels, a military-like organizational culture with a top-to-bottom chain of command and discipline still exists. In deluxe hotels, burnout and stress prevail due to the strong physical workload and poor working environment that requires employees to work on weekends and holidays. Thus, deluxe hotel employees are more likely to be exposed to workplace harassment, in comparison to employees in other industries. Thus, this study is significant in that it examined workplace harassment as perceived by hotel employees, and it verified its positive causal relationship with the representative negative behavior of CWB. Additionally, Japan experienced diverse social problems caused by workplace harassment earlier than Korea; hence, Japan is currently implementing more realistic solutions and responses. Consequently, a comparison analysis of employees at a Korean deluxe hotel and employees at a Japanese deluxe hotel can have highly meaningful implications. In the study results, exclusion from work and the disrespectful behavior of bosses

were found to have a particularly large influence among the five workplace harassment factors that affect the employees' CWB. It will be necessary to develop a plan to decrease the employees' counterproductive behavior by identifying the responses to this type of harassment at an organizational level. Additionally, considering that the culture or behavior that encourages harassment within an organization diminishes the employees' work efficiency and damages a company's corporate image, the level of punishment will have to be increased by applying stricter measures. Moreover, we believe that systematic management of employees who are exposed to workplace harassment will be necessary at an organizational level. This can be accomplished by using counseling programs or a coaching program, or by establishing a mentoring system. Considering that smooth communication and interactions among employees can reduce workplace harassment, diverse methods, such as leisure programs or club activities, can be used to unite employees.

This study has several limitations. In the process of selecting the sample of deluxe hotel employees in Seoul and Tokyo, extraction of the sample was based on the convenience of the study's researcher. Hence, cautions are in order when interpreting the results of study as being representative of a broader population of employees. Moreover, the sample size of the Japanese employees was relatively smaller than that of the Korean employees due to the difficulties of conducting an overseas survey. In light of a characteristic of a questionnaire survey that needs to be conducted abroad, more demographic information and samples failed to be collected. Consequently, sufficient verification of the moderating role could have been limited. Additionally, in this study only CWB was selected as a resulting variable due to workplace harassment. In future studies, the use of additional variables, such as stress, burnout, and turnover intention, should be considered to verify the negative attitudes of employees. Also, a future research can be said to be needed even a comparative analysis with the Western cultural area, not the same Eastern cultural area.

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