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Review Article

THE EFFECT OF GLORIFICATION OF BODY REPRESENTATION ON WOMEN BY INSTAGRAM INFLUENCE

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ABSTRACT

This study attempted to examine the “Effects of Body Representation on women by Instagram Influencers” and aimed at testing the social comparison and the relation between the glorified images on Instagram by Influencers and the self-esteem of the female users. The key focus of the study was women's body image, while their expectations and experiences with Instagram posts. Research study has been conducted by method of “Online Survey”. A questionnaire was conducted on Google forms. The link of the survey was sent to respondents via Instagram and WhatsApp. Participants were selectively selected on basis of the research purpose, women who use Instagram daily, from the age group of 18-35 years old. Total 100 respondents filled the form. Based on the findings of the survey, it was observed that 84% of them thinks that body representation on Instagram does affect their Mental Health whereas, 42% of female respondents feels Negative about their body most of the time and out of 100, 76% thinks that Influencers makes them think a certain way about the “Perfect Body” representation. This finding would also state that the physical appearance of Influencers and celebrities influence the picture form on self-esteem on common women resulting in comparison with other women which is effecting their mental health.

Key words:

Body Representation, Body Image, self-esteem, mental health, Influencers

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays people have a wide range of social media sites and networks at their hands. It is a social media application that allows to click, edit and share visual content and follow other people's visual content as well. Instagram was launched in 2010 and since then it has gained the most active users on it. 815m users were detected in 2019 and the recent forecast suggests that it might reach up to 1.2 Billion in 2023. In January 2020 it had 1 billion active users. (Ad espresso 2020). More than 500 million active users use the app throughout the day. Instagram has now been ranked the world's most popular social networking app.

Why Instagram?

Instagram is a product of information technology as well as a platform to influence. Influence can be known as the power of an individual which affects the purchasing decisions. Those influential people are called "Influencers". They post daily posts on a specific topic for the audience which follows them to help them out in decision making. Influencers basically are categorized based on their niche and build their audience specifically. Few Major Categories consist of Fashion, Food, Beauty and fitness. Once the audience is built, the reputation and the relationship with the audience also builds. Celebrities are also used as Influencers due to their high following.

The main element, in this case, is GLORIFICATION. Edited images display glorified self-image which can influence everyday life. Moreover, influencers are paid for their work. Their work has to be appealing so that their posts work much better than usual.

Body Image is known as the feelings, thoughts or perceptions one has of their own body. These types of feelings can be Positive, Negative or both. People may feel bad about their appearances or mainly unhappy about how they look.

The purpose was to explore the link between the influence of Instagram and women's body image concerns by looking at the parameters of the length of other women looks, clothes, and body on Instagram. How Traditional media norms and stereotypes have been created on social media over beauty standards. It focuses on how one perceives their body and how social media is affecting their thoughts on how a "perfect body" should look like. Moreover, to examine the glorification of body representation by influencers through edited images which has imposed so called beauty standards in the society.

Problem Statement

As social media is growing rapidly, the effects it leaves on people's mind is also increasing. The thoughts are being influenced in a glorified way which leads to negative thinking which results in affecting mental health. People tend to judge everyone based on their physical appearance (i.e. height, weight, complexion etc.) This study was designed to know about body image and to identify the effects of body representation so called "beauty standards by Instagram influencers among Pakistani women.

Literature Review

Treitel (2020) According to former research by Yael Treitel 2020, he summed up the findings of the study. Many individuals share their whole lives on Instagram for others. This eventually leads to judgments, posting, and also attempts to imitate someone they idealize which further lead to psychological problems. He also compared social media and social factors, being more of a staple in the lives of people, the main emphasis of his study was to determine the impact on people's mental health.

Bagautdinova (2018) According to the research of Diliara Bagautdinova he studied the theory of social comparison through Instagram selfies and evaluate its effects on women's appearance satisfaction. Reveal the redefined worth of an acceptable body image by the exposure to selfies of celebrities and models. The significance of this study was to identify the social comparison in women.

Sharifi et al (2016) has defined body image as a multidimensional self-attitude toward one's body, particularly its size, shape, and aesthetics (Holt & Lyness, 2007). The study investigates the phenomenal

approach of body image issues particularly on female students of Iran. Body image is recognized as a pervasive issue faced by women. The findings of this study showed three key themes (a) changes in body appearance (b) Health and Beauty (c) Instagram effects.

Chang (2019) conducted a study in which His findings show that exposure to media especially thin-ideal representations has repeatedly shown that self-perception is negatively affected. Given the increase on the dependence on social media, the proposed study inquiries into the effect on how women feel about her own appearance. Participants exposed to celebrity photos have low self-esteem than others. Moreover, the impact of the form of image is assumed to be influenced by the contrast of physical appearance. The objective of this research is to investigate the possible effects of celebrity photographs. Study provides an exploratory inquiry into the influence of social media on women's perceptions about themselves and their bodies, mainly Instagram.

Mustikasari & Rahayu (2020) This study is designed to see the use of Instagram practices, such as uploading, sharing, enjoying, and commenting on images or videos or everyday activities. His study shows that an Instagram account for adolescent body image from the findings of hypothesis testing, it was found that adolescent body image was not influenced by the practice of using Instagram. This is seen in the participant's characteristics, where the body mass. The index is on average, which means that the subject in the usual category is the average subject. They pay no attention to the contrast of form and weight in social terms. The task of using Instagram is directed toward other operations. In general, they prefer not to equate one's body. The purpose was to establish the relationship between Instagram and adolescent body image.

Klein (2013) The study of Kendyl Klein states the role of social media in the growth of body dissatisfaction. College women are particularly sensitive to the effect on their body image that social media may have. This paper showed the relationship between the increase in social media use and having eating disorder too.

Tiggemann (2006) According to the study he predicted the change in body dissatisfaction due to media exposure. The study was based upon the body image disturbance due to high media exposure. It was a quantitative research consisting of questionnaire. A total of 214 high school female participants completed the questionnaire. It was concluded that media exposure and body image co-occur for this age group.

Roberts & Good (2010) The study focused on the 5-Factor personality traits by which the effects of exposure to idealized images on body dissatisfaction in women can be examined. College women were randomly exposed to images of thin fashion models or plus-sized models. Few showed larger shifts in body esteem than some due to neuroticism. They felt discontented by their own body and felt happy after seeing heavier bodies.

Vartanian & Dey (2013) This study focused on body dissatisfaction among women and the link between comparisons and dissatisfaction. The findings showed that due to low clarity of self-concept it might increase women's vulnerability to social comparison tendencies. Self-concept clarity was negatively correlated with the comparisons.

Fitzsimmons-Craft et al (2015) This study examined the relationships among social comparisons and body dissatisfaction. 232 college women were the participants who responded to the online surveys for 2 weeks. When participants were questioned in a single model, results indicated that comparing one's body to others was associated with elevated body dissatisfaction. Moreover, higher levels of body dissatisfaction can be experienced in individuals with high trait-like engagement in body comparisons.

Carter & Vartanian (2022) The purpose of this study was to examine that some individuals compare themselves to images of thin models and experience body dissatisfaction who has little clarity of self-concept. 489 females were exposed to images featuring idealized bodies. The findings suggested that low self-concept clarity might increase vulnerability to negative effects.

Grabe et al (2008) This Research suggests that thin-ideal body representation on mass media might associate to body image disturbance in women. This study studied the correlation between media exposure to women's body dissatisfaction, internalization of the thin ideal, and eating behaviors and beliefs. The findings concluded that the exposure to social media images showcasing the thin-ideal body is related to body image concerns for women.

Lee & Lee (2021) In this study, they examined the objectification of the ideal body and comparison between appearance-related through a photo activity. 385 females from South Korea who use social media aged between 20–30 years completed an online questionnaire. The results confirmed that the level of appearance-related photo activity on social media is associated with increased comparison, which can result in excessive body dissatisfaction.

Piccoli et al (2021) The research showed that social sites are associated with body image concerns. The study analyzed this relationship by looking into the appearance-related comparisons and the internalizing beauty standards. Female participants who participated in this activity expressed greater concerns about their bodies.

Chen et al (2022) This study consists A total of 4 studies. 103 participants took part in Study 1 and found that individual differences in self-objectification correlated positively with approval motivation. There were 94 participants in Study 2 and found that women willing to modify their social media profile pictures unrealistically who reported higher self-objectification. Whereas, In Study 3 100 participants took part and the result showed that women were willing to unrealistically modification even exceeded normative levels, which was repeated in Study 4 which consisted of 199 participants. These results suggest that desire for approval results in modifying self-presentation

Theoretical Framework:

Two theories have been found which serves the basis of this study;

Social Learning Theory contributes to a person's behavior and the learning that occurs within a social context. This study was founded by Albert Bandura in 1977. This theory plays a huge role in this research as this study is also examining the behaviors of the Instagram users and what they learn from it.

Cultivation Theory: (George Gerbner 1960s) The cultivation theory basically says that people who are exposed to media over longer periods of time perceive the content as presented on media which indirectly affects their behavior. Cultivation theory is still relevant for new media as its narratives affect people.

Research Gap:

Although many studies have been conducted in this area, particular university females or unmarried women were mostly conducted in previous studies. Because of no study found in this area of what reasons that women are influenced by Instagram Influencers further, a gap exists for additional research. The current research studies about whether Instagram images of women are heavily idealized and influence women's body image.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The overall aim of describing the data collected in a way that recorded participants' personal experiences with their exposure to Instagram images and their body image rather than using predefined steps. The key focus of the study was women's body image, while their expectations and experiences with Instagram posts.

The study quantitatively examined “The effect of glorifying Body Representation on women by Instagram Influencers”. Research study has been conducted by method of “Online Survey”. A questionnaire was conducted on Google forms. A time of 10 days has been decided to collect the responses. The link of the

survey was sent to respondents via Instagram and WhatsApp. Participants were selectively selected on basis of the research purpose, women who use Instagram daily, from the age group of 18-35 years old.

Variables

Instagram Influencers = Independent Variable

Women's body image = Dependent Variable

Population

The selected people are women from Pakistan for the online survey.

Sample

For this research, targeted audience were females from colleges, universities, working women and house wife's who use Instagram on daily basis.

Sample size

The total sample size consisted of 100 females; their age ranged from 18-35 years old who use Instagram on daily basis.

Data collection tool

As stated before, data collection was done by using questionnaire as a tool. The questionnaire consisted of multiple questions (). A total number of 10 Questions were used for online questionnaire survey to collect accurate and relevant information related to research purpose.

Findings

The survey is designed for the Instagram App, only those females who use Instagram app were asked to fill out the survey questionnaire.

The first question of the survey was based upon the age group of the female participants. Below are the provided age groups for this survey and the percentage of the female participants according to their age group.

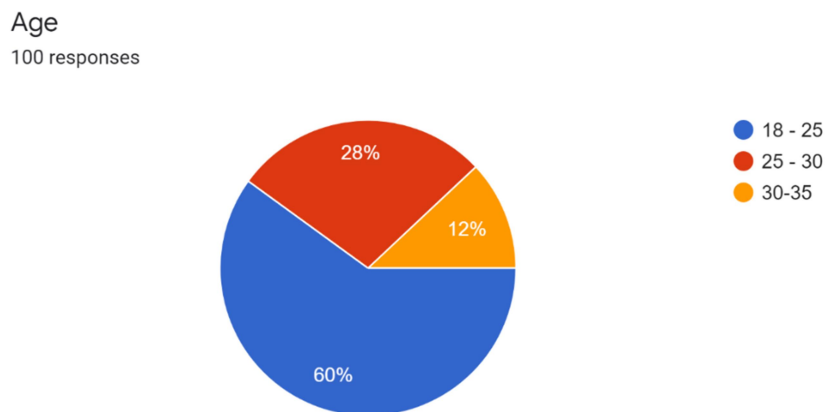


Figure 1. Age distribution.

- **18 to 25 years old**
Majority of this age group females participated to fill this survey form which were 60%.
- **25 to 30 years old .**
28% responses were collected from the females of this age group.

- **30 to 35 years old**

The lowest 12% female users participated in this survey from this age group

The second question proves that the participants participated in this survey are the users of Instagram app. The answer choices in table 2 were Yes or NO.

What is an average time you spend using Instagram?

100 responses

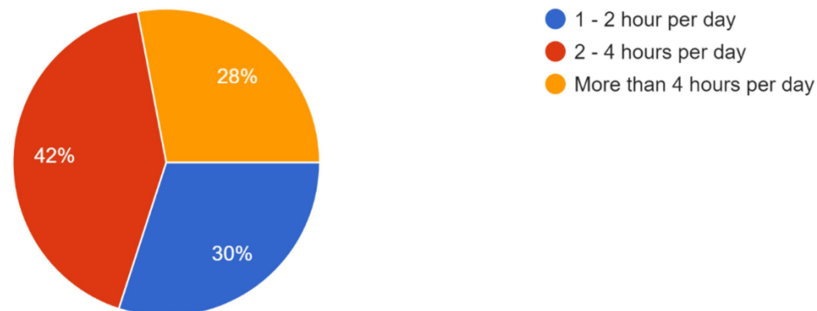


Figure 3. Average time spent to Instagram.

In third Question, female users were asked about their average time spent per day on Instagram app? The answer choices were from 1 hour to 4 hours. The majority 42% female goes with 2 to 4 hours per day on Instagram, where 30% females spent 1 to 2 hours per day on Instagram and 28% spend 2 to 4 hours from their whole day on Instagram.

In Table 4, the females were asked about their following 41reference of Influencers. The femlaes were asked that whether they follow Influencers on Instagram or not. The answer choices were Yes or No.

Do you follow any Instagram Influencer?

100 responses

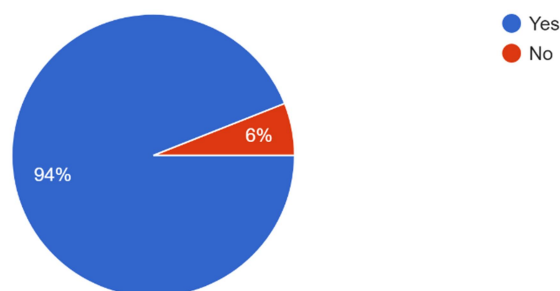


Figure 4. Follow to Instagram's influence.

The results of this survey question claims that majority 94% of females follows Instagram Infuencers while only 6% doesn't follow Influencers on Instagram.

In the fifth question, the female respondents were asked that whether they admire the appearances of the influencers on Instagram or not. The answer choices were Yes or No.

Do you admire their Appearances?

100 responses

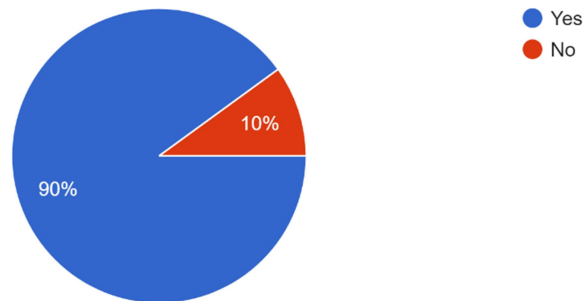


Figure 5. Admire the appearances.

The results of this question states that 90% of the female respondents admire influencers appearance which is in majority and only 10% of the female respondents doesn't admire Influencers Appearance.

In the sixth question, the female respondents were asked that whether they follow the Influencer's routine in their daily life, in terms of Fitness and Beauty. The answer choices in this question were Yes, No and Sometimes.

Have you tried following their routine (In terms of Fitness & Beauty)

100 responses

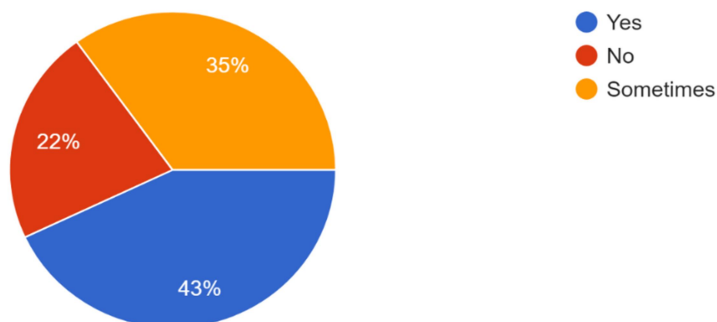


Figure 6. Following routine.

On the basis of Survey Summary of this question, 43% of the female respondents follow the routine of the Influencers, 35% of the female respondents said Sometimes and 22% female respondents doesn't follow Influencers Routine in terms of fitness and beauty.

In the seventh question, the female respondents were asked do they think that Instagram Influencers makes them think that a "Perfect Body" should look a certain way and the answer choices were Yes or No.

The result of table 7 states that out of 100 female respondents 76% thinks that Influencers makes them think a certain way about the "Perfect Body" representation and other 24% of the female respondent thinks that Influencers doesn't make them think a certain way about the "perfect body" representation.

In the eight question, the female respondents were asked how they feel about their body most of the time. The answer choices were Positive, Negative and Neutral.

How do you feel about your body most of the time
100 responses

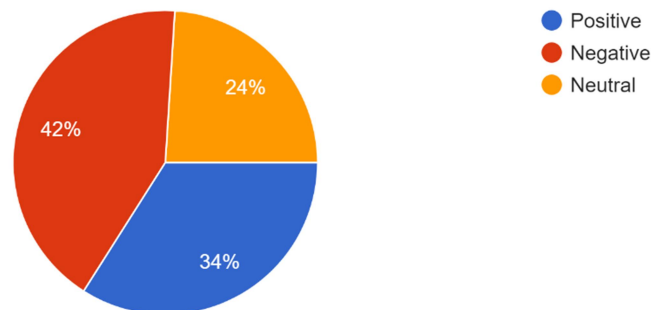


Figure 7. Feel about body most of the time.

Do you think Influencers makes us think that a perfect body should look a certain way
100 responses

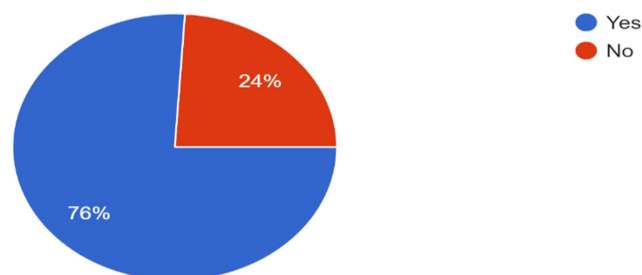


Figure 8. Influence makes to look certain way.

Based on the survey answers majority of 42% of female respondents feels Negative about their body most of the time, then the next 34% feels Positive about their body most of the time and rest 24% went with Neutral.

In the ninth question, the female respondents were asked that whether body representation effects their mental health. The answer choices were Yes or No

Does body image effects mental health
100 responses

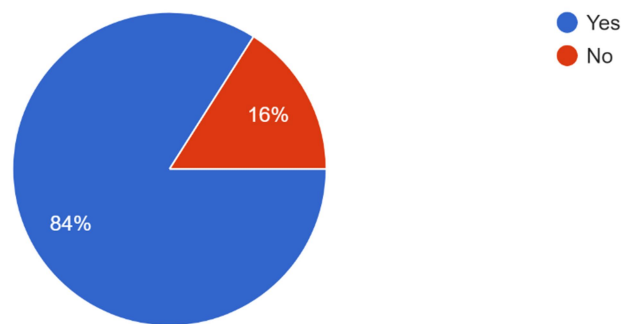


Figure 9. Body image effect mental health.

The result of this question states that out of 100 female respondents 84% of them thinks that body representation effects their Mental Health and other 16% of the female respondents thinks that body representation doesn't effect their mental health.

In the tenth and the last question the females respondents were asked that if there should be body representation on Social Media. For which the question choices were Yes or No.

Do you think there should be Body Representation on Social Media

100 responses

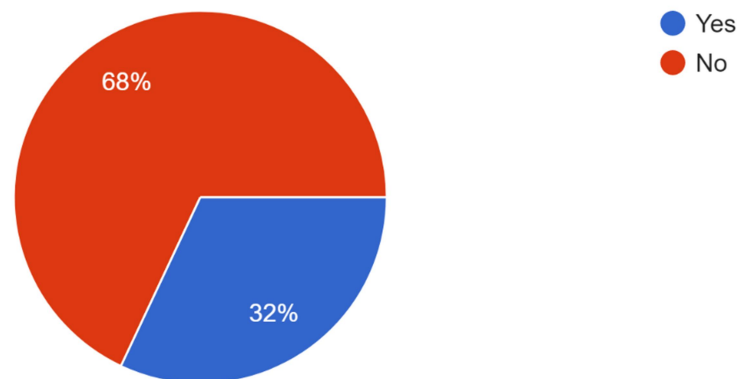


Figure 10. Thinking the body representation on social media.

Out of 100 respondents, 68% of the female respondents said No and thinks that there should not be any body representation on Social Media and 32% of the female respondents said Yes.

Analysis of the findings

The findings of the survey presented in the previous chapter are analyzed for answers to study questions. The research analysis indicates that there are a majority of females using the Instagram application, which suggests that the Instagram app can be addictive in everyday use. Most of the participants indicated that they were active users of Instagram. The estimated consumption of the app was around 2-4 hours a day

As all the participants were active internet users and mobile devices, they would have exposure to and details on all the applications, and the more affected they feel by Instagram. It indicates that the influence of Instagram on women's body image on female audience is growing. Comparison of appearance is major, as is the route between self-acceptance and body positivity. The query about do females users of Instagram feel about their body and the findings explicitly show that females feel negative about their body which shows how negatively females are affected by the use of Instagram. This finding would also state that the physical appearance of Influencers and celebrities influence the picture form on self-esteem on common women resulting in comparison with other women also effecting their mental health.

DISCUSSION

This paragraph will link current points found during the data gathering to the literature review and research objectives in order to highlight the excellent findings of the research. The study aimed at testing the social comparison and the relation between the glorified images and the self-esteem of the female users. Social media has highly affected Females by looking at different factors such as seeing images of Influencers and

celebrities. Editing highly supports glorified content such as Colors, composition, smoothness of skin, and sharpness of detailed compositions. Hashtags like #thinspiration which glorify extremely thin bodies were banned by Instagram because related hashtags cause self-harm (ibid: 153) This shows how media is spreading so-called beauty standards.

Research is designed to see the use of Instagram activity, such as posting, sharing, enjoying, and commenting on images or videos, or regular behaviors on an Instagram account for female body image. Based on the findings of the survey, it was observed that the activity of Instagram does influence the image of the body in female users, especially in the age group of 18 to 25. Some people attempt to apply different editing methods to view themselves as well as self-presentation through images that have been uploaded on Instagram. According to participants of this research, they get triggered easily and consume that thing in daily life. As Instagram is one of the social platforms which helps to connect and communicate with others and is highly affecting the majority of the people but few participants do not care about the glorified content, so they are not influenced by Instagram.

Due to this situation the users who are targeted by such glorified content on Instagram, they automatically tend to follow the profiles which visually feel appealing to them.

CONCLUSION

The motive of this research was to decide how cultivation theory and social learning theory could be applied in the modern era of Instagram selfies and to explore how this phenomenon affects the body representation, self-satisfaction and emotional well-being of female millennial. Media is one of the resources for women to create a body image. Instagram is known as a platform for showcasing glorified lifestyle. The ideal or perfect appearance shared by social media about shape and weight may not be suitable for every woman. When women see a flawless and perfect picture, they tend to compare their body & self-image with others which can have a huge effect on their body image. The findings have indicated that exposure of a woman to an ideal beauty selfie may have a similar negative impact on the happiness of the appearance, regardless of the background or the figure of the woman and the face. The only disparity in one's negative emotions are being triggered and self-criticism can be seen and increases the negative feelings of women that they are not attractive enough due to the failure to meet modern expectations of attractiveness set by Influencers. Social Media is creating a toxic atmosphere for women and their self-esteem and image fulfillment, with their beauty expectations and perceived criteria for beauty which may have effects on women, their satisfaction with attractiveness, growing anxiety about their physical image, leading to extreme habits or actions to increase self-esteem and physical self-satisfaction, such as excessive dieting or exercise, and resorting to treatment, which can lead to depressive mental health.

RECOMMENDATION

Instagram use has been linked to increased symptoms of depression by social comparison resulting in affecting the mental health of the users. One of the reasons which have a part in constructing the representation of the women's perfect body through social media is women comparison with other women. Following Influencer's glorified and Photoshopped images on Instagram can lead to the belief that photos posted shows how a woman actually lives which may affect how they identify themselves in a negative way.

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