

## Competitive Properties of Trading Companies Managers

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### Abstract

*The structure of competitiveness of managers in international trading companies includes motivational, adaptive mobility, emotional-volitional, communicative, and individual-psychological factors. Variables of each factor characterize leadership traits and determine the competitiveness of the individual. We proved that the leadership characteristics determining competitiveness on the motivational factor are manifested in the superiority of direct motives; according to the emotional and volitional factor – a high level of volitional self-control and perseverance; according to individual-psychological characteristics – a level of emotional balance, communicativeness and a low level of depression and neurotic spontaneity.*

**Key-words:** Structure of Competitiveness, Includes Motivational, Adaptive Mobility, Emotional-Volitional, Individual-Psychological Factors.

### 1. Introduction

The processes of transnational trade and economic cooperation are gradually gaining ground in Ukraine, which has stimulated its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the

Association Agreement with the European Union. Nowadays, there is a growing number of companies, including Ukrainian companies, seeking to enter the international markets. In the conditions of the increasing influence of external and internal factors, there is an aggravation of economic and socio-psychological problems, intensification of crisis phenomena, an increase of competition in national and world trade. The requirements increase for quality of personnel potential for each manager which necessitates scientific research to study the psychological features of leadership and competitiveness of professionals.

The analysis of existing official and scientific publications shows significant scientific and methodological gaps in the recruitment process for international companies, inconsistency with the requirements of the employer to the level of qualification of foreign and domestic personnel. Therefore, it is necessary to explore leadership qualities as a basis for competitiveness for the positions of managers in international trading companies (ITCs).

## **2. Results Analysis of Recent Publications**

Analysis of foreign sources shows the specificity of scientific approaches to the study of Competitiveness and leadership personality traits. Thus, the dynamic model of the social and comparative concept of competitiveness research is based on two main factors - individual and situational, which can increase competitiveness on various indicators, including leadership qualities (Gibbons and Buunk 1999).

There are other views on the study of competitiveness (M. Stephen, I. Garcia, A. Tor, R. Gonzalez).

The current socio-economic conditions lead to new models of leadership that reflect risks, complexity, dynamism, and constant changes in trade and economic interactions (Blank, 1995; Meneghetti, 2004; Bussotti, 2019). V. Lamanuskas (2017) points out the special importance of education in this leadership.

Thus, according to the data about leadership studies, there have been formed three main approaches: the approach from the perspective of leadership (this is traditional, the first approach, which predicted the existence of a unique set of qualities of the person born with, also attributes such qualities as intelligence, education, attractive appearance, initiative, confidence, etc. This approach was the impetus for the development of other concepts: an approach from the perspective of leadership behavior (it was concluded that a leader can be educated); situational approach to the

perspective of leadership (states that situational factors play a decisive role in leadership effectiveness but this not exclude the importance of personal and behavioral characteristics).

### **3. Research Methods, Procedure, Participants**

The methods of theoretical and empirical research are used in the study. *Theoretical*: analysis, systematization, and generalization of scientific approaches to the researched problem. *Empirical*: ascertaining research; psychodiagnostic methods: "Entrepreneurship motives" (Karamushka and Khudyakova 2011). The emotional-volitional component was studied by using the following methods: "Test questionnaire of the study of volitional self-regulation" (Korolchuk and Kraineuk 2012); the communicative sphere was researched with the help of the methodology: "Study of characteristic tendencies in interaction with others T. Leary"; the individual-psychological component of the surveyed was studied by the method: "Freiburg multifactor questionnaire" (Bodrov 2003).

Organizational work has been performed in three stages: the first - theoretical, the second - empirical, the third - the final. The total number of surveyed – 135 persons, including 25 experts and 110 candidates for ITC managerial positions.

### **4. Research Results**

According to the results of factor and correlation analysis, 5 factors determine the level of competitiveness of managers in ITC: motivational, adaptive mobility, emotional-volitional, communicative, and individual-psychological. Based on the model of empirical research, the results of the analysis of the surveyed are presented, which are obtained by appropriate methods that reveal the content of each component.

The motivational component of the group of candidates for the positions of managers (hereinafter candidates) and top executives of international trade campaigns (ITC), as experts, were studied by the method "Entrepreneurship Motives".

The freedom and belonging motives are set in candidates at  $15.09 \pm 1.27$  p. At the same time, this indicator is significantly higher in experts than in the group of candidates (by 1.2 p. at  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, it has been found in the group of experts that the motive for freedom and belonging is fixed within the high level of interpretative criteria of this methodology, and is significantly lower in the group of candidates and is at the level of average evaluation criteria, which is less favourable for the competitiveness in the labor market.

The group of experts, which is 3.01 p. outperform the same indicator in candidates ( $p < 0.05$ ), and this indicates the need to develop such important leadership characteristics that contribute to the effectiveness of the surveyed. The motives for innovation and risk were the least pronounced in the group of candidates -  $13,96 \pm 1,69$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 1).

In the group of experts, as experienced professionals, all the direct motivational components to their professional activities are pronounced on the high-level compared to candidates (Table 1).

Table 1- The Results of the Study According to the Method "Entrepreneurship Motives"

Groups of motives	Group of candidates	Group of experts
<b>Direct motivational components</b>		
Motives of commercial success	17,01±2,09	19,12±1,19*
The freedom and belonging motives	15,09±1,27	16,29±1,12*
Initiative and activity motives	14,35±1,54	17,74±1,96*
The motives for innovation and risk	13,96±1,69	17,06±0,9*
<b>The indirect motives</b>		
Self-realization motive	17,18±1,9	15,68±1,65*
Respect and self-esteem motives	14,85±1,39	15,43±1,96*
The motives of social contacts and group belonging	14,09±1,2	15,01±0,95
Compulsion motive	17,06±0,89	6,82±1,24*

Note \* - the significance of differences at  $p < 0,05$

At the same time, it should be noted that the rate for commercial success in both groups is within the high evaluation criteria.

Regarding the indirect motives of the surveyed, it is found that their level in the group of candidates is more pronounced than the direct motives. The self-realization indicators in the group of candidates are observed at the level of  $17.18 \pm 1.9$  p. and for the experts, this figure is in the range of  $15.68 \pm 1.65$  p., which is 1.5 p. below ( $p < 0.05$ ). The self-realization motive in the group of experts is fixed on the average interpretive data, which indicates a sufficient level of self-realization in representatives of this group.

The indicators of respect and self-esteem motives for both groups are observed within the mean values (10-16 p.), (in experts it is defined at the level of  $15,43 \pm 1,96$  p., and in the candidates -  $14,85 \pm 1,39$  p. ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The compulsion motive was the most significant in the group of candidates and is observed at  $17.06 \pm 0.89$  p. At the same time, the compulsion motive in the group of experts turned out to be two and a half times lesser than in candidates ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Thus, in the competitiveness structure of managers in ITC the mediated motives have proven to be the most important for career aspirants. They were the least significant among the experts who have already taken their leadership positions, and this testifies to the importance of leadership characteristics in the structure of the efficiency of the surveyed.

Based on the results obtained, we consider differences in the hierarchy of motives of candidates and experts as leadership characteristics of the competitiveness of managers in ITC. The motive for commercial success was found to be high in both groups, although it was 2.11 p. higher for experts (at  $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates the desire of surveyed to provide a secure financial status for themselves and loved ones, to achieve wealth, comfort, and to be competitive in the labor market.

The motives behind this trend are those that have proved to be leading in achieving certain leadership positions in the structure of competitiveness. We consider the motives for commercial success as dominant, subordinating to other motives, functional and intellectual potential of the individual.

Thus, according to the results of our study, it has been established that the material motives are the sign of leadership qualities for managers of ITC that contribute to the efficiency of competitiveness.

It is determined that in the group of experts among the immediate motives of the second position were initiative and activity motives which characterize their leadership positions according to the desire to actively and cognitively express themselves, to feel the results of their work, and the desire for competitiveness.

The third position according to the hierarchy of motives in the group of experts is that of innovation and risk. This indicates that innovations from experienced professionals remain high and the risks are minimized.

The freedom and belonging motives in the group of experts are fixed on the fourth position among the direct motives. Such specialists reach a high level of efficiency because the motives of freedom and independence contribute to their successful leadership as for the free choice of directions and methods of work, the desire not to be dependable on their leaders and to plan their time and make important decisions independently.

Among indirect motives in the group of experts– the first position (according to the hierarchy of motives) is ranked to the self-regulatory motives (which take the 5th position in the overall ranking of motives hierarchy). This enables managers of this level to unleash their creativity, to solve interesting, effective, and useful tasks for the company and society.

The sixth position in the hierarchy of motives is taken by the motives of social contacts and group belonging, which indicates the desire of the respondents to interact with interesting and useful people, to form a positive social and psychological climate in the team, and the desire to be in the social environment that they respect.

The motives of respect and self-esteem in the group of experts have taken the seventh position, which characterizes such leaders according to their desire to find their inner comfort and to lead people to achieve their goals.

And at the last place, with the lowest level of the indicator, there are motives of compulsion. That is, a small number of managers have been forced to choose this activity due to external circumstances, and on the other hand, a significant influence here may play the desire to take advantage of career opportunities.

The hierarchy of entrepreneurial motives for candidates for the positions of managers. Thus, for candidates for the positions of managers in ITC, their competitiveness first of all is determined by leadership positions based on commercial success, freedom, independence, and self-realization.

To a certain extent, the level of leadership characteristics and efficiency is lowered by a high rating of compulsion and lower ratings of such directly important motives as initiative and activity and innovation and risk.

Thus, considering the leadership properties of motivation as the basis of competitiveness, the following is established:

1. High level of direct motives in the group of experts which, according to the hierarchy of motives, take the first rating values (commercial success, initiative and activity, innovation and risk, freedom and belonging) and determine the leading positions of competitiveness of managers in ITC.
2. For experienced ITC managers, along with commercial success, their experience and professionalism become important together with positive realization of innovations with less risk in the conditions of freedom and independence and a sufficient level of social contacts together with belonging to the relevant social environment. At the same time, they are practically not guided by motives of compulsion.
3. For candidates for positions of managers in ITC, along with a high rating of motives of commercial success, freedom and independence, more indirect motives are inherent such as self-realization, compulsion, with lower indicators of initiative and activity of innovation and risk. This negatively

influences the leadership characteristics of candidates for managerial positions in ITC and to a certain extent reduce their competitive ability.

In terms of professional activity, the indicators of adaptive mobility are essential in the competitiveness structure of leadership characteristics of managers. Individuals who are found within this range (30-40 p.) are easily adaptable to change; they have leadership and professional competencies that help them make quick decisions and make innovative changes.

In an empirical study, we found that the level of adaptive mobility in the structure of leadership characteristics of competitiveness was most pronounced among experts - at the level  $36.8 \pm 1.83$  p.

At the same time, it was found in the group of candidates that adaptation mobility indicators were at the level  $41.4 \pm 2.9$ p. For such individuals the following leadership characteristics are inherent: they are always ready for experimentation, love risk, and for the sake of thrill they are ready to change companies, image, and place of residence. Their life is a whirlwind of plans, projects, and various adventures. However, the inability to prioritize within the time frames makes take-offs, successes, and failures.

Generalizing the analysis of the results of adaptation mobility in the structure of leadership properties of competitiveness of managers, it was found in the group of experts that the most pronounced professionally significant indicators of leadership were the ability to easily switch to change and adapt to new circumstances, interest and inclination to innovative transformations, the ability to take responsibility, a tendency to withstand destabilizing influences, a focus on winning, which logically causes a high level of competitor capacity.

At the same time, it was proved that the highest level of indicators of adaptation mobility ( $41.4 \pm 2.9$  p.), was recorded in the candidate survey, which led to a high level of adaptation mobility, but such leadership features reduce the level of competitiveness. For such candidates typical are a willingness to experiment, a risk for the thrill, they have too high mobility, they often change cities, companies, and image and very often they act haphazardly and impulsively.

The peculiarities of the emotional and volitional sphere in the structure of leadership characteristics of competitiveness of the managers in ITC were studied using the research of indicators of the methodology aimed at the detection of volitional self-regulation. It has been found that volitional self-regulation, volitional self-control, perseverance, and self-control by factor weight in the structural mechanism of competitive leadership characteristics are crucial.

Thus, the obtained results of surveys according to this method indicate that the peculiarity of manifestation of separate indicators in the group of experts is a high level of self-control

( $14.7 \pm 0.8$  p.), persistence ( $10.8 \pm 1.0$  p.), and self-confidence ( $8.5 \pm 0.8$  p.). Such level of volitional self-control characterizes experts as emotionally resilient, self-confident, with a high level of activity and a level of self-control (Table 2).

Table 2- The Results of the Study According to the Method “Test Questionnaire of Volitional Self-regulation”

Test scales	Group of candidates	Group of experts
Volitional self-control	$12,7 \pm 1,2$	$14,7 \pm 0,8^*$
Persistence	$9,0 \pm 0,4$	$10,8 \pm 1,0^*$
Self-control	$7,1 \pm 1,3$	$8,5 \pm 0,8^*$

Note \* - the significance of differences at  $p < 0,05$

At the same time, the group of candidates obtained at higher than average level of all three indicators of volitional self-control ( $12.7 \pm 1.2$  p.), persistence ( $9.0 \pm 0.4$  p.), and self-control ( $7.1 \pm 1.3$  p.).

The level of persistence, although most pronounced in the experts, but in the group of candidates this indicator is higher than the average level, which also characterizes the surveyed as seeking to implement the case, plans, and they have a respect for social norms.

The comparison of all indicators of volitional regulation of the group of experts and candidates shows that in the latter they are significantly lower ( $p < 0,05$ ), although above the average level. The peculiarity of the emotional and volitional sphere of experts is that they generally have manifested enough ability for stress resistance, self-control which contributes to their leadership positions and competitiveness in the labour market.

To determine the level of the communicative component, we have applied T. Leary's (Leary 1957) methodology to find out the types of attitudes to the surrounding people and certain characteristic tendencies in the structure of leadership characteristics of competitiveness of managers.

According to the results of the analysis of the methodology, it was found that according to the first tendency, which reflects dominance, power, authoritarianism were most pronounced in experts  $12.7 \pm 1.5$  p. compared with the candidates  $9.9 \pm 0.9$  p. ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Thus, the type of interaction with others according to the first tendency characterizes the candidates and, in particular, the experts, as dominant individuals, energetic, authoritarian leaders, competent and successful in matters capable of taking responsibility.

It is known that the second tendency, depending on the degree of expressiveness, reflects self-confidence down to selfish manifestations.

It is determined that according to the fourth tendency the candidates have a suspicion index of  $10.7 \pm 1.2$  p., although in the group of experts it was by 1.1 p. more pronounced ( $p < 0.05$ ). The obtained results show that in the structure of leadership characteristics of the managers in ITC, the indicator of suspicion is essential and such individuals are inherent: criticality, scepticism, distrust, persistence, tendency to doubt, suspicion. This impedes interpersonal contacts and causes verbal aggression, although it should be noted that such individual features are more pronounced in the group of experts compared with the candidates ( $p < 0,05$ ).

The fifth tendency is somewhat beyond the professional qualities and leadership characteristics of managers in terms of yield ability, meekness, passive subjugation. Although on this scale the obtained indicators at the level of  $8.6 \pm 1.0$  p., may characterize experts as emotionally restrained, capable to obey, critical of themselves, and for the categories of candidates inherent in obedience, ease of embarrassment, modesty, and honest performance of their duties (at  $p < 0,05$ ).

Similarly, we estimate the sixth tendency to define credibility in the group of surveyed which is defined at the level of 6.2-7.7 p. It is considered as a zone of moderate adaptive behaviour, which characterizes the examinees as inclined to conformism, enthusiasm for the environment, polite.

The seventh tendency, which determines friendliness and goodwill, has its peculiarities of expression. The group of experts is at the level of  $8.0 \pm 0.4$  p., which characterizes them as inclined to cooperate, flexible, and compromise in solving production problems, excessively conformal, enthusiasts in achieving goals that seek to be in the spotlight deserve recognition.

Candidates have an indicator of goodwill of  $9.7 \pm 0.5$  p. and compared to the experts it is higher at ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the candidates are inherent in kindness with all, the orientation towards acceptance and social approval, the desire to satisfy everyone without regard to the situation; they often use mechanisms of displacement and suppression.

The peculiarity of altruism according to the eighth tendency in the group of experts has these indicators at the level of  $11.3 \pm 1.2$ p. This causes their hyper responsibility and hyperactivity concerning others but in some peculiar cases can be seen as an external "mask" that hides the personality of the opposite type. At the same time, the candidates have an altruism index of  $9.3 \pm 0.8$  p., which characterizes them as kind-hearted with excessive conformism; they are friendly, attentive, and mutually supportive.

Thus, the analysis of the communicative component of leadership characteristics of competitiveness revealed that the most pronounced among the experts were the following features of interaction: dominance, confidence, authoritarianism, demanding, aggressive. At the same time, the

candidates expressed aggression, a low level of friendliness, and altruism, which is caused by competition.

The individual-psychological sphere of personality is the component of the leadership characteristics of the competitiveness of the managers of MTC, which determines the peculiarities of the functioning of the psyche its style, and efficiency of activity, behaviour.

Thus, according to the FPI Neuroticism Scale, the lowest rates were recorded in the group of experts  $2.4 \pm 0.05$ . At the higher rate they were observed in the representatives in the group of candidates  $5.5 \pm 0.06$  (at  $p < 0.05$ ). The Neuroticism at the level of high figures of average indicators (at the border of high ones) is observed in the group of candidates which testifies to certain problems of socio-psychological, economic, and domestic character which are conditioned by the choice of the further life path that might require for the examined the psychological help.

On the second scale - spontaneous aggressiveness, it is determined that its indicators at the level below the average recorded in the group of experts -  $4,0 \pm 0,2$  and the candidates -  $3.7 \pm 0.4$ .

Thus, the indicators of spontaneous aggression of experts and candidates are determined to be lower than the average level, and this indicates that the examinees do not have impulsive-aggressive behaviour.

Concerning the Depression Scale, its indicators are set at a low level of experts and candidates of 3.8-3.4 and this indicates the adequacy of the subjects' behaviour and attitudes towards themselves and the social environment.

Concerning the fourth scale, which examined the level of emotional stability of the subjects, the peculiarity of assessing its indicators is indicated in the opposite proportion - the higher the indicator, the lower the emotional stability, and vice versa

It was found that the highest level of emotional stability is inherent to the experts of  $3.8 \pm 0.4p$ .

In this case, the candidates showed manifestations of emotional instability of  $5.7 \pm 1.0 p$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

The fifth scale is communication skills, characterizing real and potential manifestations of social activity, leadership needs for communication. This figure is determined by experts at the level of  $5.9 \pm 1.1p$ . Below the average indicators of communication skills were found in the group of candidates candidate at the level of  $4.3 \pm 0.2p$ . ( $p < 0.05$ ), which requires focused psycho-correction work to develop candidates' communication skills to enhance their leadership potential and effectiveness.

On the scale of reactive aggressiveness, it was found that the most pronounced this indicator was in the group of experts  $7.5 \pm 1.6p$ . and such a high level is shown in the aggressive style of interaction, in the attitude towards the social environment and the expressed desire for domination. The same quite high level of reactive aggressiveness is also inherent in the candidates of  $6.9 \pm 1.5p$ . which requires psychological correction and harmonization of interaction.

Scale (VIII) reflects a person's tendency to respond to stress in everyday life. Thus, the smallest indicators on this scale are determined in the group of experts -  $3.4 \pm 0.2p$ . In this case, the more pronounced stress response to ordinary events inherent for candidates -  $4.9 \pm 0.9 p$ .,  $p < 0,05$ . Such a level of indicators in the group of candidates, although within the average interpretative values of the methodology, but may indicate anxiety, tightness, uncertainty, which causes difficulties in social contacts, interaction, which does not contribute to leadership potential and efficiency.

The ninth scale allows us to assess the degree of openness of the individual, and high scores indicate the desire for trusting and frank interaction with others within a high level of self-control and vice versa. Within the limits of the average interpretive criteria of the method, the level of openness in experts was determined to be  $5.8 \pm 1.0 p$ . At the same time, the candidates on the scale of openness recorded indicators at a low level of  $3.1 \pm 0.2$  and this indicates the manifestation of alertness, distrust, and insincere answers to the questions of the method.

On an X scale, high scores indicate the level of extraversion, and low - a pronounced introverted personality. It is found that in the candidates this indicator is high -  $7.3 \pm 1.1p$ . This characterizes them as confident, capable to take risky actions, hot-tempered, and impulsive. At the same time, the described properties in experts are expressed at the level of average manifestations according to the interpretative criteria of the method  $5.9 \pm 1.4p$ . Which indicates their self-confidence, ability to reasonable risk, optimism.

On a XI scale which stands for emotional lability, high scores indicate emotional instability, which is manifested in sharp mood swings, irritability, lack of self-regulation. It is established that in the group of candidates this indicator is within the average level  $5.3 \pm 0.8 p$ . and in experts is  $3.4 \pm 0.7 p$ . and is regarded as a low level of emotional lability in comparison with the candidates. (at  $p < 0.05$ ).

On an XII scale - masculinise-feminism, the high indicators determine that the course of mental activity is mainly in the male type, and low - in the female. It has been established that this indicator is at a high level of  $7.3 \pm 1.3 p$ . and  $7.4 \pm 1.2 p$ ., respectively, for experts and candidates.

As a result of the study of the individually-psychological manifestations of the leadership characteristics of the competitiveness of managers in ITC, the certain features of each of the surveyed groups are determined.

Thus, in the group of candidates, at the higher than average and high levels, according to the interpretative criteria of the Freiburg Personal Questionnaire, the indicators of spontaneous aggressiveness, emotional lability are determined and on the lower than average and low level – the emotional stability, sociability, and equilibrium, which had little to do with leadership manifestations and competitiveness.

Therefore, experts have a low level of neuroticism, depression, spontaneity, emotional lability, and a high level of balance, communication, openness. At the same time, a high level of reactive aggressiveness is determined which requires psychocorrection.

Thus, it is established that the individual-psychological factor of competitiveness of the managers in ITC is an important structure-forming component of the leadership characteristics of the competitiveness.

The general regularity is found out that for each group of surveyed there are certain levels of development of individual individual-psychological leadership qualities that determine the corresponding level of competitiveness of candidates and managers of ITC.

## **5. Conclusion**

Studying and understanding the theoretical and practical aspects of the phenomena of leadership and competitiveness are extremely multifaceted and ambiguous and contain some contradictions. Scientific approaches to the nature and significance of these changes depend on the historical realities and preferences of the research schools of researchers. At the same time, in our view, a systemic and unifying in the study of leadership and competitiveness is that both phenomena study specialist at the professional, psychological, social, and biological levels.

The analysis of the results of the empirical study established the model of competitiveness of managers in ITC, which includes motivational, adaptive mobility, emotional-volitional, communicative and individual-psychological factors, which allowed us to determine the appropriate psycho-diagnostic methods of the study.

Based on the purpose of the article, an analysis of the results of the study was carried out which characterize each factor. According to each factor that reveals the peculiarities of the variables which characterize leadership traits and determine the effectiveness of personality.

It is proven that the leadership characteristics that determine the competitiveness on the motivational factor are manifested in the advantage of direct motives: material direction, initiative, and activity, innovation and risk, freedom and belonging. According to the adaptive mobility factor, the most prominent professionally important leadership qualities are the ability to easily change, adapt to certain circumstances, the tendency to innovate, the willingness to take responsibility, and to withstand destabilizing influences. The emotional-volitional factor is manifested by a high level of volitional self-control and perseverance.

According to the results of communicative factors, it is established that leaders have significantly higher levels of confidence, dominance, demandingness, authoritarianism, with manifestations of aggressiveness and selfishness. According to the individual-psychological characteristics, such leadership qualities are determined as a high level of balance, communicativeness, emotional stability, and low level of depressiveness and neurotic spontaneity, which determine the competitiveness of the individual.

The formation of leadership traits in the competitiveness of the examinees is happening due to the systematic functioning of the variables of each of the factors that determine a high level of motivation, adaptive mobility, communicative, volitional self-regulation, and individual-psychological characteristics, aimed at achieving success, significant social and social behaviour, communicative abilities and individual-psychological features, which ultimately leads to a harmonious combination.

The perspective of further work is to develop a computer psychodiagnostic, to create a psychological program for the formation of leadership qualities and competitiveness of the individual.

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