

# Strategies Employed by Teachers to Motivate Students in Secondary Schools of Melo Koza Woreda Gofa Zone, South Ethiopia

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**Abstract:** This study examined the strategies used by teachers to motivate students' classroom learning in secondary school of Melo Koza Woreda. For this study, a mixed research methods was used. The sample for the study consisted of eight randomly selected secondary school teachers (six males and two females) and forty students (thirty-one males and nine females) were purposely selected from the two schools (Laha secondary and Mashira secondary schools. Questionnaire, Interview and classroom observations were used as the data gathering tools of this study. The findings indicate that the secondary school teachers in the sampled schools have good awareness on the different strategies of student motivation in classroom teaching. According to the findings of this study, teachers frequently use motivation strategies such as asking questions to determine whether students were following the lesson or not, providing positive and constructive feedback, asking them brain storming questions, and demonstrating their eagerness to teach. The study also found that big class sizes and a lack of money allotted by schools to reward high-achieving students are variables influencing student motivation. The woreda education office, in partnership with administrative authorities, should construct additional classrooms to allow for effective instruction and motivation while keeping the number of students in the classroom manageable.

**Keywords:** Teachers Awareness, Student Motivation, Motivation Strategies

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## 1. Introduction

According to Stojakovic, motivation is a process that initiates, directs, and sustains a particular behavior [15]. In school conditions, motivation refers to the activity of the teacher, which should cause continuous readiness by students to engage in some type of work immediately. Therefore, learning motivation is one of the basic conditions that must be met in activating students' better learning outcomes; motivation is an important factor in activating the abilities and personality characteristics of students participating in learning.

Research has shown that there are two types of motivation, namely extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Ryan & Deci, define extrinsic motivation as a force that causes the doing of something because it has a separable outcome [14]. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation according to Morris & Maisto, arises from internal factors, i.e., it is as a result of

rewards provided by an activity itself [10]. According to Krause et al, intrinsic motivation arises from internal factors such as a child's natural feeling of curiosity, exigent, confidence and satisfaction when performing a task [8]. Deci et al. argued that intrinsic motivation is more effective than extrinsic motivation in promoting learning and achievement because it creates feelings of confidence and empowerment [5].

The two orientations of motivation namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that, as discussed above which stimulate or inhibit the desire to engage in behavior, Krause et al, [8]. In explaining the intrinsic motivational strategies of students, Butler and Nisan, conducted study on effects of no feedback, task-related comments, and grade on intrinsic instruction and performance [3]. The results of the study show that reward, incentive, appreciable, personality of the teachers; environment and methodology of the teachers are also a major role to motivate the students in classroom.

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to rewards that are obtained not from the activity, but as a consequence of the activity, Morris & Maisto, [10]. As noted by Morris & Maisto, Extrinsic motivation arises from the use of external rewards or bribes such as food, praise, free time, money or points toward an activity, applies where the incentives are all external, in that they are separate from the individual and the task [10].

According to Madrid, acts in the classroom have the potential to boost, maintain, or reduce pupils' motivation. Classroom tasks, the method used, the style of contact between teacher and students, potential anxiety situations, and a variety of other elements all have an impact on students' motivation [9].

A study on teachers' motivational tactics by Nichols, agree that the teacher's personality, particularly his or her desire to be open and share his or her life with pupils, is the fundamental basic to motivational context [13]. Furthermore, Astuti conducted study on a related topic. According to Astuti, the teacher's behavior that inspired pupils might be seen in the teacher's grin, facial expression, jokes, and clear instruction when giving the lesson [1].

According to Dornyei, there are several characteristics that must be completed before any effort to produce motivation may be effective [6]. Dornyei also remarked that it is critical for teachers to understand how to excite pupils and make the subject matter that they teach exciting. If a teacher enters a classroom with no goal of making the subject exciting, he or she will have a difficult time motivating his or her pupils to participate in classroom learning activities. So, in order to engage pupils, particularly in classroom lessons, it is critical to first understand what inspires them.

Also, Deci explained that the teacher must know what to teach and who he is teaching, if the teacher does not do this and if he is not interested in his work, he cannot motivate his class [4]. It may be said that a teacher who has been teaching the same subjects to the same classes for a long time can tends to lose the interest in his subject but this is not the reason of disinterest, the subject-matter can be the similar but the students cannot be same, even the subject-matter is developing and changing. Additionally, experienced teacher can discover new methods and approaches and of teaching learning process even the same subject matters.

Brophy describes that even though motivation is one of the major responsibilities of instructing the students, it is the responsibility of the both instructor's and students [2]. The classroom, subject lesson, atmosphere, the capability of the teachers, the personality of the teacher and the student all affect a student's motivation. The subsequent practices will support you in developing motivational approaches to use when teaching. Lesson plan keeps the motivational strategies, if the lesson is interesting it create interest and motivation among students; if not interesting, it will cause boredom, restless and involvement.

Although research on motivation is abundant (Nandola, & Sko, [11]. few researchers have bothered to focus on teachers' perceptions of the strategies they use to motivate

students. However, some recent research on motivational strategies has attempted to establish a link between teacher practice and learner behavior. Guilloteaux and Dörnyei & Papi and Abdollahzadeh, found a positive correlation between school teachers' motivational practice – measured by a classroom observation checklist and a subjective appraisal of the motivational quality of the lesson – with pupil motivation as displayed in classroom behaviour (paying attention, participating actively, volunteering answers) and questionnaire responses [7, 12].

In addition, the literature on motivation explains more about what motivation is and how it can affect teaching and learning, but few researchers look at how teachers used to motivate high school students. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature by analyzing the strategies used by secondary school teachers to motivate students in classroom teaching in Melo koza District. This study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of awareness among teachers' in motivating secondary school students' in melokoza woreda?
2. What methods do Secondary School teachers used to motivate students learning in classroom lessons?
3. How do secondary schools students view teacher's classroom motivation of students in the study area?

## 2. Methodology

For this study, descriptive survey and mixed research methods with quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. Participants comprised of eight randomly selected secondary school teachers (six males and two females) and forty students were purposely selected from the two schools (Laha secondary and Mashira secondary schools). From four government secondary schools in the woreda, the two (50%) were selected using random sampling technique.

The quantitative data generated from students through questionnaires were analyzed by descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean and standard deviation. In addition, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the qualitative data collected through interview and classroom observations thematically using description.

## 3. Results

Eight secondary school teachers (four from Laha secondary and four from Mashira) were participated in this study. Out of the eight participants, only two were female teachers. Four participants were second-degree holders while the remaining were first-degree holders. Five of eight participants were worked for more than five years and the remaining have below five years of teaching experience. Regarding student participants, thirty-one males and nine were females. Twenty-nine and nine student respondents were between the age group of 16-20 and 21-25 respectively. While two were above 25 years.

### 3.1. Interview Results

The interview was conducted with eight participants that were part of the classroom observation. The interviews were conducted within two schools (four teachers from each school) and each session lasted for 25 to 30 minutes. The first research question was to explore the teachers' level of awareness regarding techniques of student's motivation in secondary schools of Melokoza woreda. From this main question, there are four consecutive independent questions generated.

The first question was intended to examine the level of secondary school teachers' awareness about student motivation in the study schools. Thus, the participants replied that they had awareness of motivation techniques and they tried to employ them in their teaching sessions. One of the teachers explained;

*"Yes.... I know what motivation is. For me it means initiation and creating interest.*

*I believe motivation help students to be active participants". Motivation is very important for classroom teaching and learning' (interviewee teacher 1).*

Teachers associate student motivation with student achievement. Thus, they believe a well-motivated student can achieve better on subjects. One of the interviewee reported that,

*"I think motivation means enabling students to learn better. It is related with student's achievement. If we need our students to be successful in our subjects, it is necessary to motivate them while teaching" (interviewee teacher 7).*

The fourth and sixth participants reported that they motivate the students by talking personal stories, allow voluntary learners to talk jokes. As a teacher, each of us had different understandings and different strategies to motivate the students depending on the type of the lesson and classroom situations.

The second question was about the motivational techniques used by teachers in classroom teaching. Almost all the teachers indicated that there are different methods for motivating students, which depend on the type of subject and the interest of the students. One of the teachers interviewed said about this;

*"I try to use different motivation techniques during presenting the lesson based on the type of activities; I try to vary my techniques especially when the students feel tired", motivation makes students active in teaching time. If we try to motivate our students, it is better for them to understand the lesson and become well initiated" (interviewee 3).*

Teachers believe with the importance of giving rewards for best performances. However, it has negative consequences. One of the teacher interviewee explained that,

*"I am sure that continuously rewarding students is not important. It may not encourage self-motivation. It could not create intrinsic motivation. Students always look for rewards from teachers, thus results in lack of self-*

*confidence. So I do not like to reward my students for each performance" (interviewee teacher 5).*

The first, second, fourth and fifth interviewees reported that they used calling the students by their names; trying to relate the lesson and the support their contents to students' real life most of the time; they sometimes used to tell interesting stories to initiate the students; used to give positive and descriptive feedback. The eighth interviewee reported that,

*"I reward my students for every success by telling them very good, good, keep going, keep.... (Interviewed teacher, age 8).*

The seventh interviewee said:

*"Although there are many methods that are used, I always try to ask questions to find out if students are following the lesson or not; give them personal and group work; ask them thoughtful questions; showing them desire for teaching, etc. (interviewed teacher 7).*

The other question raised by the researcher was on the factors that make motivational techniques difficult to apply in the classroom. The participant's focuses on money and time used to prepare the motivators. One of the interviewee reported that;

*"For me motivation is very important instrument in teaching process. However, it is time consuming. Like rewarding and hand clapping which interrupts teaching and waste more time" (interviewee teacher 2).*

Similarly, one of the interviewee reported that motivation consumes a lot of money especially in terms of rewards, which need money by saying;

*"I am sure that to motivate students by giving gifts like text books need money. Always giving rewards for good performance is not good. Rewards do not encourage internal motivation, nor do they facilitate learning (interviewee teacher 8).*

Teachers advocate that teaching methods like lectures as the preferable one for the reason that their classes are overcrowded. Almost all the interviewees reported that,

*"Monitoring the students' progress and giving them written comments, promote learner autonomy, encouraging the students to understand and to set achievable group goals, create strong and various groups that have good feeling about each other and choosing interesting topics to deliver the course were difficult to apply for them because of large class size"*

Teachers view that in order to motivate students they should work hard to ensure that every student benefit and gain knowledge about the subject they are teaching. One of the interviewee talked that,

*"For me teaching is a hard job to do. I think addressing all the needs of my students is difficult task. It is for motivation too. Students' motivation depends of different factors. So identifying and using those strategies need our skill and knowledge and experience of the profession" (interviewee teacher 1).*

The last question asked to the interviewee was which teachers suggest the most important method to motivate

students; the first and third interviewees said that creating a supportive atmosphere in the classroom, recognizing their names, showing them a smile; letting them work in groups and asking them questions is the most decisive method.

The second interviewee said that,

*“I tell my students to work together to achieve their common objectives, presenting the teaching material logically and creating the students autonomy to share responsibility were very decisive techniques” (interviewee teacher 4).*

Similarly, one of the interviewee reported that group work could maintain motivation in learning process by saying:

*“I encourage my students to work together. So that everyone contribute ideas in a particular activity. Group works help students to share experience”.*(Interviewee

teacher 6).

The other three teachers indicated that giving praise and establishing rules is very important and a decisive method for motivating students.

### 3.2. Analysis of Close Ended Questionnaires

The closed-ended questionnaires consisted of five-point Likert scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. However, for the purpose of analysis the strongly disagree and disagree options have combined to disagree whereas the strongly agree and agree options were combined to agree. However, these undecided response options are treated as it is.

**Table 1.** Students’ responses about teachers’ strategies for motivating students in classroom at secondary level.

S. N	Items	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean
1	The teacher knows motivational techniques	N 9 % 22.5	6 15	2 5	12 30	11 27.5	3.250
2	Teacher use a short and interesting opening activity to start each class	N 4 % 10	18 45	1 2.5	6 15	11 27.5	3.650
3	Teachers give clear instruction when presenting different activities in the classroom	N 10 % 25	4 10	0 0%	17 42.5	9 22.5	3.275
4	Teachers conduct competition between students to increase learning	N 8 % 20	9 22.5	4 10	10 25	9 22.5	3.075
5	Teachers create friendly classroom environment during teaching	N 6 % 15	7 17.5	6 15	14 35	7 17.5	3.225
6	Teacher has a good relationship with the students in the classroom	N 11 % 27.5	10 25	4 10	9 22.5	6 15	2.725
7	The teachers allow us to help one another in group/pair discussion in the classroom	N 13 % 32.5	5 12.5	3 7.5	14 35	5 12.5	2.825
8	The teachers encourages us to participate Without fear in classroom	N 19 % 47.5	8 20	- -	10 25	3 7.5	3.850
9	Teachers give rewards on your good performance	N 4 % 10	9 22.5	5 12.5	10 25	12 30	3.425
10	Teachers present different activities depending on your interests	N 10 % 25	12 30	- -	9 22.5	9 22.5	2.875
11	The teacher give immediate & constructive feed backs on your performance	N 2 % 5	8 20	2 5	10 25	18 45	3.850
12	The teachers use different teaching strategies to address students learning needs	N 8 % 20	7 17.5	- -	14 35	11 27.5	3.325
13	Teachers create interest in lessons through different methods	N 3 % 7.5	9 22.5	4 10	14 35	10 25	3.475
14	Teachers motivate you on your poor performance	N 7 % 17.5	9 22.5	3 7.5	11 27.5	10 25	3.2
15	Teachers punish on your poor performance	N 8 % 20	6 15	- -	16 40	10 25	3.350

Table 1 shows the students’ view of teachers’ strategies for motivating students in the classroom. The response rate shows that 57.5 percent of respondents agreed that the teacher has an awareness of motivation techniques; 37.5 percent disagreed that teachers do not have an awareness of motivation techniques. However, 5% of respondents were undecided about teachers' awareness of classroom motivational techniques. 45% of respondents agreed that teachers use a short and interesting opening activity to start each class; 42.5% and 2.5% of respondents disagreed and were undecided, respectively, about the use of a short and interesting opening activity to start each class. 35 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that teachers give clear

instruction when presenting different activities in the classroom; the majority of respondents (65 percent) disagreed with the statement that teachers give clear instruction when presenting different activities in the classroom. 42.5 percent of students agreed that teachers use competition to increase learning, 47.5 percent disagreed, and only 10% were undecided.

Regarding the question of whether high school teachers create a friendly classroom environment during teaching, 32.5% of students agreed that teachers create a friendly classroom environment during teaching; 52.5% and 15% of respondents disagree and are undecided that teachers should create a friendly classroom environment during teaching. The

majority of respondents (52.5%) agreed that teachers have good relationships with students in the classroom; However, 37.5% and 10% of students disagreed and were uncertain about the statement that teachers have good relationships with students in the classroom. 45% of students agree with the statement that teachers allow us to help each other in group and pair discussions in class; 47.5% disagree with this statement; and 75% are undecided.

A majority of 67.5% of students agree that teachers encourage them to participate without fear in class; 32.5% of respondents disagreed with the statement that teachers encouraged them to participate without fear in class 32.5% of students agree that teachers reward good performance; On the other hand, the majority of respondents (55.5%) believe that teachers do not reward good performance, while only 12.5% were undecided on the statement that teachers give rewards for good performance. According to 55 percent and 45 percent of students, teachers present different activities based on their interests. The majority of respondents disagreed, with 22% agreeing that teachers should provide

immediate and constructive feedback on students' performance. 70% of students disagreed with their teacher's immediate and constructive performance feedback. However, 5% were undecided on the issue. 37.5% and 62.5% of respondents agreed and disagreed, respectively, that teachers use different teaching strategies to address students' learning needs. Teachers motivate students based on poor performance, according to 38 percent of students; 52.5% of respondents disagreed. Whereas 7.5% of students were undecided, 35% agreed that teachers punish students for poor performance; in contrast, 65% of respondents disagreed that teachers punish students for poor performance.

### 3.3. Analysis of Classroom Observation

An observation was conducted in four selected classes (one class in each department; i.e departments of natural sciences, social sciences, languages, and civic and ethical education). Each selected class was observed twice and the teachers' motivational techniques were verified.

**Table 2.** Observation Results of Teachers Motivational Techniques used in the Classroom (N=4).

No	Items	Response	Observation		Total	%
			1 <sup>st</sup> day	2 <sup>nd</sup> day		
1	use a short and interesting opening activity to start each class	Yes	3	3	6	75
		No	1	1	2	25
2	Creates supportive classroom atmosphere	Yes	1	-	1	12.5
		No	3	4	7	87.5
3	encourages students to participate Without fear in classroom	Yes	1	2	3	37.5
		No	3	2	5	62.5
4	Provides students with positive feedback	Yes	4	3	7	87.5
		No	-	1	1	12.5
5	give clear instruction when presenting different activities in the classroom	Yes	2	4	6	75
		No	2	-	2	25
6	Uses examples effectively	Yes	1	-	1	12.5
		No	3	4	7	87.5
7	Uses eye contact	Yes	4	2	6	75
		No	-	2	3	25
8	Asking and Answer questions	Yes	1	2	3	37.5
		No	3	2	5	62.5
9	Teachers give rewards on good performance	Yes	3	1	4	50
		No	1	3	4	50
10	teachers use different teaching strategies to address students learning needs	Yes	3	4	7	87.5
		No	1	-	1	12.5

The table above shows some of the motivational techniques used by secondary school teachers when teaching in the study area. According to the checklist, of the four teachers observed at points 1, 5, and 7, almost all (75%) used short and interesting opening activities at the beginning of each lesson; give clear instruction when presenting different activities in the classroom and uses eye contacts while delivering their lessons. Besides, in items 2 and 6, 12.5% had tried to create supportive classroom atmosphere and use examples effectively to teach their students. From the eight observation sessions it was in item 4 and 10, 87.5% teachers tried to provide students with positive feedback and use different teaching strategies to address students learning needs.

Furthermore, in points 3 and 9, all the observed teachers,

namely i.e 37.7%, encourage students to participate in class without fear and reward students for good performance. On the other hand, more than half of the teachers had limitations in items 2 and 6, (87.5%) and 3 and 8, (62.5%). They failed to create supportive classroom atmosphere, encourages students to participate without fear in classroom, using examples effectively and asking and answering questions in classroom sessions.

In summary, this report shows that the majority of teachers try to use short and interesting opening activities at the beginning of each lesson, provide clear instructions when presenting different activities in the classroom, and provide eye-catching instructions when delivering lessons. Results also show that most teachers try to successfully apply some of the motivational techniques and exercises to their

classroom activities because they are interested in the subject matter they are teaching.

#### 4. Discussions

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the strategies employed by teachers to motivate secondary school students. In order to accomplish this objective, the following three research questions were raised: What is the level of teachers' awareness in motivating secondary school students' in Melokoza woreda? What are the strategies employed by secondary school teachers to motivate student in classroom teaching learning? How do secondary school students view teacher's classroom motivation of students in the study area? To answer these three questions, three data gathering tools that were; questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were used.

Analysis of teachers' interview responses revealed that teachers were aware of techniques and their importance in motivating students. Therefore, most teachers reported that motivation eliminates fear of participating in learning and maximizes positive teacher-student relationships, this gives students the freedom to respond to their teachers to solve various problems they face while learning. Furthermore, this finding is confirmed by majority (57.5%) of student respondents agreed that the teachers have an awareness of motivation techniques and that they employ during teaching. The result of the study is consistent to Dornyei stated that, it is essential for teachers to recognize how to inspire students and make the subject matter that they teach exciting. If a teacher goes into a classroom and does not intend to make the subject interesting, then he/she is already in problem to motivate his/her students in classroom learning activity [6]. So in order to engage students, especially in classroom lesson, it is essential to have an understanding of what motivates them.

The findings reflect that for teachers' motivation is a means of initiation and creating interest in learning. They believe motivation help students to be active participants. Moreover, the study shows that without using motivational strategies it is difficult to teach students in any subject. Because, teaching needs active interaction between teachers and students, as a result it is difficult to arouse students' interest without motivation. These results validate Stojakovic's conceptual understandings, according to which motivation is a process that starts, guides, and maintains a specific behavior [15]. These results therefore imply that secondary school teachers have a good knowledge and awareness on how to use varieties of motivational strategies during classroom teaching.

The study's findings showed that teachers regularly use techniques to encourage their students, such as checking to see if they are understanding the material, rewarding top performers, providing constructive criticism, having them brainstorm questions, and demonstrating them enthusiasm for teaching. These findings in line with Butler and Nisan, conducted study on effects of no feedback, task-related

comments, and grade on intrinsic instruction and performance, and results of the study show that reward, incentive, appreciable, personality of the teachers, environment and methodology of the teachers are also a major role to motivate the students in classroom [3]. The present study results therefore indicate that secondary school teachers employ different motivational strategies to create interest and love of their subject during classroom teaching.

The results of this study showed that motivation is an important issue in teaching learning process, but it consumes time and money. Teachers argues that the time used to prepare the motivators like rewarding, hand clapping which interrupt teaching for some time and other encouragements which are applied during teaching periods as a means of ensuring involvement of students is wastes time. Accordingly, in this study, teachers reported that teaching is a hard job; in order to motivate students they should work hard to ensure that every student benefit and gain knowledge about the subject they are teaching. Therefore this result indicate that motivation is an important aspect in teaching process, but it needs effort, time and money in order to do that.

The results of the interviews also revealed that it was challenging for teachers to apply strategies such as tracking students' progress and providing written feedback, encouraging learner autonomy, helping students to comprehend and set realistic group goals, forming strong and diverse groups with positive relationships, and selecting engaging course topics due to the large class sizes. It has also been noted that the majority of teachers employ the lecture technique because of the unsuitable teacher-to-student ratio, heavy workloads, and insufficient time for group projects during the teaching and learning process. This demonstrated how the teachers' disregard for other motivational strategies in the classroom was a result of the large class sizes.

The information gathered from the observation of the classroom revealed that most of the teachers make an effort to begin each class with a brief and engaging activity. They also give clear instructions when presenting various activities in the classroom and make eye contact with the students as they teach. The results also indicated that, due to their enthusiasm for the subjects they taught, the majority of the teachers attempted to implement some of the motivational strategies and exercises in the classroom activities in a positive way. Additionally, the majority of students (45%) who responded in a closed-ended response agreed that teachers begin each class lesson with a brief but engaging activity.

The results of the close ended items of students questionnaire showed that some of the teachers give clear instruction when presenting different activities in the classroom, teacher have a good relationship with the students and some of the teachers encourage students to participate without fear in classroom lessons. In contrast majority of the teachers fail to implement techniques like, conducting competitions between students to increase learning, create friendly classroom environment during teaching, the teachers motivate students on their poor performance and use of

different teaching strategies to address students learning needs. This is consistent with Dornyei's assertion that any attempt to generate motivation must first satisfy certain prerequisites in order to be successful. Some of these requirements proposed by him are appropriate teacher behavior, a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere and a cohesive learner group characterized by appropriate group norms [6].

This implies that the motivation strategies employed by secondary school teachers depend on teacher's knowledge, skill and the subject they taught.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

From the results of this study concerning teacher's use of motivational strategies in teaching in secondary schools, the following conclusions and recommendations were given:

The findings obtained from students and teachers showed that there was no doubt in awareness on how motivation was important to teach students. However, there were drawbacks to using motivational techniques. For example, having too many students in one classroom hinders discussion and forces teachers to use the lecture method. Additionally, schools' lack of funding to reward high-achieving students also has an impact on students' motivation. The results of the teachers' interviews showed that teachers routinely use techniques to check students' interest in learning, such as checking in with them to see if they were understanding the material, providing constructive and encouraging feedback, posing brainstorming questions to them, and demonstrating their enthusiasm for teaching.

The woreda education office in collaboration with kebele administrative bodies should built additional classrooms in order to enable the number of students in the classroom to be manageable to allow effective teaching and motivation.

To improve teachers' ability to implement motivational teaching strategies in the classroom, school principals and supervisors must raise awareness about the use of these strategies by teachers.

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