

ROLE OF STRATEGIC PROCUREMENT PRACTICE IN REALIZATION OF CORPORATE GOALS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MOLO SUB-COUNTY, NAKURU, KENYA

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Abstract

Public procurement system in Kenya has undergone significant development. The study sought to investigate the role of strategic procurement in the realization of corporate goals in public secondary schools in Molo sub-county. The study sought to examine the influence of negotiation strategy on realization of corporate goals in public secondary schools in Molo sub-county. The study employed a mixed research design. The study's sample totaled to a population of sixty five respondents which included school Principals, Bursars and Pre-qualified suppliers in Molo sub-county, Kenya. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires constructed on a Likert scale. The collected data was analyzed with the aid of SPSS 21 using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Results were presented in form of tables. Correlation analysis indicated very weak negative insignificant relationship between negotiation strategies and the realization of corporate goals. The researcher recommended that the school management should not focus on negotiation as a strategic procurement tool since it does not enhance the realization of corporate goals, instead they should focus their attention on other strategies that would lead to realization of goals and objectives of the school.

Keywords: *Negotiation, Negotiation Strategy, Goals, Corporate Goals, Procurement*

INTRODUCTION

In the vast majority of organizations, procurement has evolved from a transactional function to one which is contributing to the current and future health of the organization. Procurement teams have done this by adopting a strategic approach to managing procurement. According to Giunipero and Sawchuck (2000), procurement comprises the actions taken by the purchasing organization to integrate supply chain in order to reduce costs and time and increase productivity. Strategic procurement sets out the means by which procurement policy objectives will be achieved through prioritised 'action plans'.

In the view of Callender and Matthews (2002) strategic procurement management is a knowledge area that has to do with selecting vendors, negotiating their terms as well as working towards managing the ongoing relationships with them. To improve an organization's performance, there is a need to focus on factors internal to the organization in addition to the organization's structure. According to Ravichandran et. al. (2005) resource-based theory and its extensions with their focus on firm resources and capabilities can provide the appropriate theoretical lens to examine how factors internal to an organization can be a source of competitive advantage.

An organization can only gain advantage and achieve superior performance when it has the right capabilities represent ability of the organization to combine efficiently a number of resources to engage in productive activity and attain a certain objective. According to Thai (2005), every organization that purchases goods or services must have effective standard procurement procedures, the methods they use to acquire those things required for an organization to provide goods/services to its clients. These procedures should cover all aspects of the procurement cycle, including the selection of the supplier, contract negotiations, order placement and payment and should ensure appropriate service delivery.

Each procurement activity, irrespective of size or scope, impacts in some way on the environment in which the approved organization operates. A strategic approach to procurement allows an approved organization to consider longer-term goals, such as maintaining competitive and efficient supply markets. Consequently, the ability of the PSM function to contribute to corporate success is widely recognized in practice nowadays (Narasimhan & Das, 2001).

Today, firms need to strategically acquire the materials and services that will enhance their ability to meet their customer's needs. Therefore, it is important to examine the role of strategic procurement in the realization of corporate goals in Public Secondary Schools in Molo Sub-County, Nakuru County. The purpose is to direct all activities of the purchasing function toward opportunities consistent with the firm's capabilities in order to achieve its long-term

goals. Thus, a strategic purchasing function can help to increase the firm's ability to be competitive.

Concept of Strategy

The concept of a procurement strategy appears in various ways and different perspectives, though most literature focuses on characterizing and classifying procurement strategies according to the practices and initiatives implemented by the procurement function. Krause *et al* (2001) demonstrate that a procurement function's strategy also could be articulated in terms of Hayes and Wheelwright's (1984) generic competitive objectives which include (quality, cost, dependability and flexibility), but no empirical research applies this framework to analyze the relationship between the procurement strategy and business performance. The essence of strategy is choosing a unique and valuable position rooted in systems of activities that are much more difficult to match.

Strategic Procurement

Procurement refers to all activities that one company goes through in the process of acquisition of products and services. The main premise regarding strategic procurement practice is that the activities of the procurement function should be based on strategies that are in alignment with the corporate strategic plans. The aim here is to support the efforts of the firm in order to accomplish its long-term objectives so as to attain corporate goals.

The procurement can only be interpreted as a strategic function if it has an integrative role in the business unit's strategic planning process (Carr & Pearson, 2002). The degree that procurement is being characterized as strategic is highly dependent on how top management views it as an important resource of the firm. There exists several internal factors such as management style; the depth of procurement's other responsibilities among others.

Realization of Corporate goals

To be effective, goals must serve both the needs of your company and those of your employees. For your company, goals must contribute directly to your short- and long-term business strategies. For your employees, goals must be clear, objective, and understandable or they will quickly become disengaged. To achieve "corporate goal alignment" at your organization, you must first clearly communicate strategic business objectives across your entire company.

Interdepartmental goal visibility can also help speed the process of alignment by allowing managers to access and see the goals of other departments and thus reduce goal

redundancies and conflicts throughout your organization. Additionally, many employee objectives are not entirely under the control of one individual. Enabling and even mandating that individuals assign some goals to two or more people increases engagement and shared accountability throughout the organization.

Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

Public secondary schools are institutions under the Ministry of Education (MOE) whose mission is to provide, promote and co-ordinate life-long education, training and research for sustainable development. The institutions that offer the education are mainly in two categories: private and public institutions. Public institutions are owned and funded by the government under the free (subsidized) secondary education jointly with other donors as well as the parents and sponsors of these institutions.

There may also be funding from other sources such as grants and fundraisers (Ministry of Education, 2012). Acquisition of goods and services in these institutions is therefore through public procurement. The management of the schools is mainly tasked to the schools' Board of Management (BOMs), the principals together with the Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) of the respective schools. The principal also has a team of teaching and non-teaching staff whom he can also work with in the various aspects of the running of the school. The supervisory task over the management of the schools is the duty of the Ministry of Education through its agents in the district and county (formerly provincial) offices.

Molo Sub-County is one of the sub-counties in the Nakuru County in the former Rift Valley Province in Kenya. The district has twenty one (21) registered public secondary schools as at 30th June, 2015 which falls into the following sub-categories: provincial boys boarding, district mixed boarding, district boys boarding, and district mixed day schools. Secondary schools receive learners from the primary schools after completion of their primary education and attainment of the required marks to pursue secondary education.

Statement of the Problem

Research on the topic of corporate and purchasing strategies has become increasingly prevalent as the function shifted away from a primarily clerical role to a more strategic one. Corporate purchasing strategies contribute to over 15% of global purchasing accounting for about 5% of the contribution to a country GDP. In Public Secondary schools, most of the procurement functions are not carried out by designated procurement staff. Moreover procurement staff are consulted too late in the procurement process and the majority of staffs do not hold professional procurement qualifications thereby failing to align procurement

practices with organizational goals. The provision of independent procurement department therefore, is essential to the performance of all the acquisition of goods and services for an organization. The aim of the Public Procurement Regulations of 2006 was to promote fairness, transparency and non-discrimination in procurement in public institutions with the main aim of ensuring efficient use of public funds. Given the current and projected expenditures of 70% in procurement as well as the increasing importance of the purchasing function in contributing to firm profitability by over 25%, it is important for firms to employ a systematic means of deciding which procurement practices will contribute most to the attainment of corporate goals. According to Porter E.M. (2008), if a firm uses procurement tool solely to keep pace with its competitors, and without regard to how it fits into its corporate strategy, the outcome may be less than optimal. Purchasing professionals must recognize that these tools represent a means for the function to achieve its goals. It's against this that this study was being undertaken to investigate the Role of Strategic Procurement in the realization of corporate goals in Public Secondary Schools in Molo Sub- County.

Research Objective

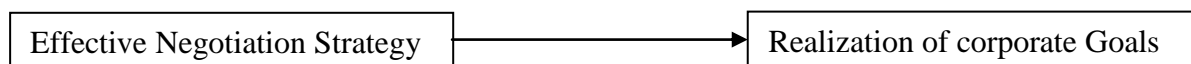
The broad objective for the study was to assess the role of strategic procurement practice in realization of corporate goals in public secondary schools in Molo Sub-County, Nakuru. The specific objective for the study was: To examine the influence of negotiation strategy in the realization of organization goals in public secondary schools in Molo Sub-county.

Hypothesis of the Study

H₀₁: Effective negotiation strategy has no significant role in the realization of corporate goals in Public Secondary School in Molo Sub-County.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The figure showed that effective negotiation strategy was the independent variable while realization of corporate goals was the dependent variable. Effective negotiation strategies influence the realization of corporate goals as shown in the conceptual framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The study was premised on contingency theory. Contingency theory means that one thing depends on other things, and for organizations to be effective, there must be a “goodness of fit” between their structure and the conditions in their external environment. As such the correct management approach is contingent on the organization’s situation. This study accepts the notion of contingency theory, which suggests that the selected PMS design and use must conform to its contextual factors. However, for the purpose of this study, contingency theory is used and reviewed in a narrower focus as follows. Contingency theory represents a rich blend of organizational theory such as organizational decision making perspectives and organizational structure.

The essence of the contingency theory paradigm is that organizational effectiveness results from fitting characteristics of the organization, (such as its cultures) to contingencies that reflect the situation of the organization. According to Donaldson (2001), organizations seek to attain the fit of organizational characteristics to contingencies which leads to high performance. Therefore the organization becomes shaped by the contingencies (fit) to avoid loss of performance. Thus, there is an alignment between organization and its contingencies, creating an association between contingencies and organizational contextual characteristics (Burn & Stalker, 1961).

Contingency theory is based on the premise that there is no universally appropriate or perfect measurement system which applies equally to all organizations in all circumstances. In fact, it is suggested that particular features of an appropriate measurement system will depend upon the specific circumstances in which an organization finds itself. The study position is that contingency theory offers a useful way of conceptualizing the relationship between certain “contingency” variables and organization structure. In the view of contingency theorists, the design of accounting information and control systems is based upon specific characteristics of the organization and its environment.

Contingency theory is essentially a theoretical perspective within organizational theory that emphasizes how contingent characteristics or contextual factors such as technology, size, environment, culture and strategy affect the design and functioning of organizations. In order to accomplish corporate goals organizations/schools must align their strategies with the contingencies facing the organization. All the organizations exist to serve their customers, shareholders, employees, suppliers and society’s needs. These groups form the various contingencies institutions must deal with to accomplish their corporate goals. Hence through negotiations and construction of healthy relationships with these groups, organizations would

run effectively. As such this theory forms the basis of the study as the researcher is interested in establishing how the schools manage these contingencies in their strategic procurement to accomplish their corporate goals.

Empirical Review

Procurement Strategies set out to identify the effective means of procuring goods and services to achieve the required standards through: developing a procurement plan, ensuring that procurement supports delivery of the organization's vision, enabling creative approaches to procurement by placing outcomes at the centre. The plans should be adhered to from time to time for realization and realignment to corporate goals. Proper spending analysis is critical to evaluate the nature of goods and services procured sources of supply, the lead time and ultimate expenditure of the procured goods and services. This will help the organization adopt lean procurement as and when need arises. The objective is to ensure that quality and measurable outcomes can be achieved for goods and services procured for an organization.

In implementing procurement strategies, an organization is expected to realize various benefits like improved value for money, more efficient and effective procurement, effective partnership with suppliers, benefit and development of the local economy, effective collaboration between service providers, better risk analysis and management, better planning and savings based on economy of scale and qualitative, Consistent and a managed approach to Procurement (Caldwell, Bakker & Read, 2007).

Alvier, Campos and Lesa (2010) argue that a successful procurement strategy is achieved by identifying key saving potential areas and driving innovative sourcing models which can enable operators to reinvent their cost structures. For example by turning traditionally fixed costs into variable through outsourcing models. Focusing the resources on the most relevant sources of cost, the procurement function can support the operator in achieving critical efficiency improvements in the short term. This is achieved by direct or indirect manipulation of the key purchase levers of price of goods and volume of purchase.

They further argue that robust sourcing model is essential for the overall success of strategic procurement since it is required at all levels in the organization. In order to procure different items under each category, the sourcing model needs to advance deeper into the aspects of spend analysis, supplier relationship management, and category plans. Sourcing options in the supplier market can either be from local or international vendors.

A detailed assessment of the different supplier options should be undertaken, weighing various criteria, such as price, lead time, quality, on-site support and long term conditions, amongst others. Here, procurement personnel should use their creativity in exploring alternative

supply options. This section will provide a review of literature on negotiation strategies, collaborative relationships, cost management and corporate goals.

Effective Negotiation Strategy

Basically, negotiation is a process involving two or more people of either equal or unequal power meeting to discuss shared or opposed interests in relation to a particular area of mutual concern. “If you want to succeed in business...you have to learn how to negotiate” quoted by Simon Hazeldine. According to Giunipero and Percy (2000), influencing and persuasion, understand business condition and customer focus are fundamental for negotiation process. Good business relationship with supply chain partners has been boost through effective negotiation and communication.

According to Ramsay (2004) negotiation process is key in managing differences of business relationships between buyers and suppliers. Two major approaches in negotiation are always fronted which include cooperative negotiation which stress on win-win formula between both parties. Both parties in cooperative negotiation assumes that all aspects of their interest been taken care well in order to maximize their cooperative value and benefit (Ramsay, 2004; Dion & Banting, 1988). This leads to problem solving through trust and mutual understanding environment. Another approach of negotiation called competitive negotiation which is genuine distributive and adverse towards common understanding. Emphasize given on individual interest whereby each party attempt to maximize self gain through aggressive cost competition tactics, enforce time pressure, lack of flexibility and threatening lost of business in order to gain advantage against the other party. As examine by Janda and Seshadri (2001), cooperative negotiation cultivate win-win formula which able to increase supplier loyalty and improve supplier relations as all parties involved strongly believed, satisfied and agreed with mutual understanding and their common interest well protected.

Firm's needs to find ways to compile resources to have more bargaining power with supplier as part of sustainable competitive advantage. Bargaining power with supplier been gained as part of negotiation skills in purchasing organization. According to Giunipero and Percy (2000), influencing and persuasion, understand business condition and customer focus are fundamental for negotiation process. Effective negotiation and communication able to foster good business relationship with supply chain partners.

Negotiation is critical element to execute in purchasing strategies that an organization developed. Negotiation will be used to close the gaps between purchaser and supplier. Negotiating strategic with tactics need to be developed as a foundation to support purchasing deal. In cooperative negotiation, buyer-supplier negotiate creates win-win situation in order to

decide the ways to divide and share the extended value pie (Monczka *et al.*, 2004). In this situation effective negotiation from buyer's point of view creates value when receiving better price than a competitor, assistance in developing new technology or product design, shorter lead time for ordering and delivering.

Realization of Corporate Goals

Organizational goal does not represent a radical departure from the traditional concept of procurement strategy; the only difference is that Internet-based technologies are used as tools to carry out the firm's procurement and corresponding corporate strategies. Burt and Doyle (2003) identified a number of strategic objectives of the e-procurement function. These objectives were continuous quality improvement, total cost management, time-based competition, technology access and control, and risk reduction.

A procurement magazine survey of consultants revealed a number of objectives that firms pursue when employing procurement strategy in achieving organization goals. These included driving the lowest possible purchase price, identifying sources of high-quality products or services, simplifying the procurement and supply management processes, and reducing transaction costs. In addition, a leading consulting firm reported that companies use strategies to reduce transaction costs, purchase price, purchase order processing cycle times, and to speed up the time-to-market cycles.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted both quantitative and qualitative research designs (mixed research design) in conducting the study. Quantitative research methods, according to Marczyk *et al.* (2005) attempts to maximize objectivity, reliability, and generality of findings, and is typically interested in prediction. Integral to this approach is the expectation that a researcher set aside his or her experiences, perceptions, and biases to ensure objectivity in the conduct of the study and the conclusions that are drawn.

Population and Sample

The target population in this study was the school principals, Bursars and Pre-qualified suppliers in Molo Sub-County. A sample of 65 respondents was selected from a total of 169 target population. Sampling was found appropriate for data collection due to the expansively area covered for the study making it hard for the researcher to reach all the people forming the target population. As such a representation of the population was sought for this study to enable the generalization of findings.

Research Instruments

The study used self-administered questionnaires as the main instrument for primary data collection. A questionnaire is a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample and is one way to elicit self-values (Kombo, 2006). The questionnaires contained closed ended questions constructed on a Likert scale. The Likert type scale, commonly used in business research was applied because it allowed participants to provide their perceptions and opinions both in terms of direction (positive or negative) and intensity (degree of agreement or disagreement). The ratings were on a scale of 1 (lowest or least important) to 5 (highest or most important).

The study considered questionnaires since they have more advantages over other types of research instruments. They are relatively cheaper, do not require as much effort from the questionnaire as verbal or telephone surveys, and often have standardized answers that make it simple to compile data.

The Data

The data collected was checked for clarity and coded in readiness for analysis. The analysis was done using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21. Data was analyzed using both descriptive (Means and standard deviations) and inferential (Pearson correlation coefficient) statistics.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The researcher distributed 65 questionnaires to be filled by the respondents. Fifty four questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented a response rate of 83.1% which was characterized as very good.

Negotiation Strategy

The researcher sought the respondents' perception in regard to their negotiation strategies. The means and standard deviations values were established to enable the researcher make inferences concerning the study variable. the finding from the analysis were as presented in table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
1. All employees are aware of negotiation strategies	54	1	4	2.37	1.033
2. Management has put in place strategies to make employees aware of negotiation strategies	54	1	5	2.50	.986
3. I'll do almost anything to keep from having to engage in negotiation	54	1	4	2.94	.834
4. In negotiation, someone wins and someone has to lose	54	1	5	3.87	1.047
5. The feelings of the other person that I'm negotiating with are important to me	54	1	5	3.69	.948
6. Negotiation works better when the focus is on common agreement rather than differences	54	2	5	3.57	.860
7. I can be aggressive when it comes to getting my way from a negotiation	54	1	5	3.22	.965
8. When you compromise in a negotiation, you just lose	54	1	4	2.52	1.005
9. If the other person gets a low deal from our negotiation, that really doesn't matter to me	54	1	5	3.04	.971
10. Procurement officials are not firmly trained in negotiation strategy in procurement practices	54	1	5	3.44	1.208
Valid N (listwise)	54				

The table showed that the respondents agreed on three of the ten aspects of negotiation skills. They agreed that in negotiation, someone wins and someone has to lose, that the feelings of the other person that one is negotiating with are important to them and that negotiation works better when the focus is on common agreement rather than differences. These aspects registered means approximately equal to 4 (Agree). Respondents were however undecided on whether they would do almost anything to keep from having to engage in negotiation, on whether they become aggressive when it comes to getting their way from a negotiation and whether when they compromise on a negotiation they feel they have lost. They further remained indifferent on whether if the other person gets a low deal from a negotiation that really doesn't matter to them and on whether procurement officials were not firmly trained in negotiation strategy in procurement practices. These aspects recorded mean values approximately 3 (undecided). On the other hand respondents disagreed with the assertion that all employees are aware of negotiation strategies and that management has put in place strategies to make employees aware of negotiation strategies. The mean values for this aspects were approximately equal to two (disagree). The researcher noted that respondents demonstrated greater cohesion in their responses on six of the aspects of negotiation skills registering standard deviation values less than one. However, respondents expressed divergent views in

the remaining four aspects of negotiation strategies having standard deviation values greater than 1.

Realization of Corporate Goals

Finally, the researcher established respondents' perceptions with regard to the realization of corporate goals. The mean and standard deviations values of the responses were computed to aid in making the necessary inferences. The findings from the analysis were as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Perceptions on the Realization of Corporate Goals

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
11. Lack of proper knowledge of the procurement laws by school administrators affects procurement function in schools	54	1	5	3.72	.834
12. Lack of proper collaboration between suppliers and buyers hinders information flow which is key to strategic procurement	54	2	5	3.59	.901
13. Fraudulent and corrupt practices leads to compromises on the principle of value for money	54	1	5	3.28	1.054
14. Unethical behavior and practices of procurement officers and their superior officers may result to compromise of quality of goods, works or services and thus affect organizations goals	54	1	5	3.31	1.006
Valid N (list wise)	54				

From the table of findings, the researcher established that respondents agreed with two of the aspects regarding realization of corporate goals. These aspects had mean values approximately equal to four (Agree). Respondents agreed that lack of proper knowledge of the procurement laws by school administrators affects procurement function in schools and that lack of proper collaboration between suppliers and buyers hinders information flow which is key to strategic procurement. Respondents were however undecided on whether fraudulent and corrupt practices leads to compromises on the principle of value for money and whether unethical behavior and practices of procurement officers and their superior officers may result to compromise of quality of goods, works or services and thus affect organizations goals. Greater cohesion was seen on two of the aspects registering standard deviation values less than 1 while divergent views were expressed in the two other aspects with standard deviation values greater than 1.

Relationship between Negotiation Strategy and the Realization of Corporate Goals

The researcher sought to establish the underlying relationships between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The questionnaires elicited responses that were on a Likert scale. This enabled the researcher to compose a composite score of the means of responses. The composite score of means of the independent variables were correlated with the composite score of the means of responses on the dependent variable. The findings from the analysis were as presented in table 3.

Table 3: Negotiation strategy and realization of corporate goals

		Negotiation strategy
Realization of Corporate Goals	Pearson Correlation	-.024
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.863
	N	54

The table of findings indicated a very weak negative relationship ($r = -.024$) between negotiation strategy and the realization of corporate goals. However the relationship was insignificant at $p < .05$. As such the researcher observed that negotiations strategy does not significantly influence realization of corporate strategy. Further, the researcher noted that negotiation strategy inhibits the realization of corporate goals though not to a significant extent. Therefore the null hypothesis, H_{01} (Effective negotiation strategy has no significant role in the realization of corporate goals in Public Secondary School in Molo Sub-County) failed to be rejected.

Summary of Findings

Descriptive statistics indicated that respondents agreed that in negotiation, someone wins and someone has to lose, that the feelings of the other person that one is negotiating with are important to them and that negotiation works better when the focus is on common agreement rather than differences. Respondents however were undecided on whether they would do almost anything to keep from having to engage in negotiation, on whether they become aggressive when it comes to getting their way from a negotiation and whether when they compromise on a negotiation they feel they have lost. They further remained indifferent on whether if the other person gets a low deal from a negotiation that really doesn't matter to them and on whether procurement officials were not firmly trained in negotiation strategy in procurement practices. They disagreed with the assertion that all employees are aware of negotiation strategies and that management has put in place strategies to make employees aware of negotiation strategies.

Descriptive statistics indicated that respondents agreed that lack of proper knowledge of the procurement laws by school administrators affects procurement function in schools and that lack of proper collaboration between suppliers and buyers hinders information flow which is key to strategic procurement. Respondents were however undecided on whether fraudulent and corrupt practices leads to compromises on the principle of value for money and whether unethical behavior and practices of procurement officers and their superior officers may result to compromise of quality of goods, works or services and thus affect organizations goals.

Correlation analysis indicated a negative insignificant relationship between negotiation strategies and realization of corporate goals. Thus the researcher observed an inverse relationship between the two variables and noted that enhancing negotiation strategy reduces success in realization of corporate goals. Thus the researcher concluded that negotiation strategy is not significant in determining success in the realization of corporate goals.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that negotiation strategies have a negative influence on the realization of corporate goals though the influence is not significant. As such the researcher observed that more negotiations hinder the realization of corporate goals in public schools in Molo sub-county, Kenya. Therefore the researcher concluded that negotiation strategies cannot be applied in enhancing the realization of corporate since they were shown as having an insignificant relationship with realization of corporate goals.

As such, the researcher recommended that the schools' management should not focus on negotiation as a strategic procurement tool since it does not enhance the realization of corporate goals. Therefore the school should focus their attention on other strategies that would lead to realization of goals and objectives of the school. Further, the researcher recommended that future scholars should focus attention on other factors that influence the realization of corporate goals in organizations and institutions. This will provide insight to managers and directors on the cause of action to take in order to enhance the realization of corporate goals.

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