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Educational Leadership and Challenges of the 21st Century

Dr. Ferit Hysa

University College “Dardania” Prishtina, Kosova

Email: ferithysa@kolegjidardania.com; ferithysa@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Albanian society and the global society are facing more and more economic difficulties to ensure a good well-being and mental health. These problems were created by the lack of human and material resources, but also by bad governance. The key instrument that improves the lives of citizens and regulates their governance is education.

Education is a very important area for investment and development prospects of families and society. In the 21st century, the challenges are many and varied education for the contemporary citizen, the citizen to cope terms of new circumstances that surround him. Investing in education is the key to success. Educational results depend heavily on the leadership and development of school leadership to meet the needs of society. Decentralization of educational structures, decentralization of powers and increased responsibility of school leaders requires a new school structure and a new leadership in education. How does school leadership affect the achievement of high student results?

Keywords: education, leadership, school leadership, decentralism, school.

Introduction

The Albanian society and the global society are facing more and more economic difficulties to ensure a good well-being and mental health. These problems were created by the lack of human and material resources, but also by bad governance. The key instrument that improves the lives of citizens and regulates their governance is education. From day to day, from year to year, increasingly, the necessity of an efficient education to cope with the challenges of the 21st century.

Education, education is a very important issue that has supported the development of society at all times. Through the education of the society, his elite has not been able to build a better society but also to lead the society towards the new developments necessary and to give way to the economic and social problems of society. Society itself through education and solving many problems of integration and well-being for many of its citizens. Although education has existed all the time and society has spent a lot on it, it will spill over time, money and funding, but we see a great lack of its effectiveness. Intellectual thinking should be more dedicated to finding the most effective ways of supporting and carrying out education. This is a very wide sphere, but we are focusing on the development of school leadership as an aspect of support and instrument of development of education and education.

School institutions are the most organized and specific place for acquiring knowledge, skills and abilities of students. Its effectiveness and efficiency, the quality of education, the results of students and their ability to face life's challenges depend on the jurisdiction, organization, and operation. Jurisdiction and its organizational structure are determined by legislative decision-making at the national or state level and the changes or change in the statute is slow and often political, but it has an impact on the effectiveness of the school, but a more important element in the effectiveness and efficiency of the school remains education leadership and the school one. The school as an educational institution, unlike other institutions, is very complex and the factors that affect the quality of education are many, they affect in a dynamic way, with different intensity and in a continuous way which must be evaluated and decisions made proper. This can be done and should be done effectively by the school leadership, including all influential actors in the quality of education, not only for support but also for determining the goals, objectives, and necessary skills that students must acquire to face the challenges of life. and to build a healthy society that participates in decision-making and influences education for democracy.

What is leadership according to Bush? Bush (1998; 2003) links leadership to values or purpose while management relates to implementation or technical issues. Leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives. “Leading and managing are distinct, but both are important. How does school leadership affect the achievement of high student results? What is the best educational leadership for an effective and efficient school and high student results? How can educational leaders be prepared for an effective and efficient school so that students achieve high results? How are educational or school leaders prepared and decided to administer, manage or lead education or school in Albania?

Literature review

Definitions of educational and school leadership

The main purpose of educational leadership is to guarantee academic success through process, training and material improvements. Unfortunately, this success cannot be guaranteed or even accomplished without the help and collaboration of everyone involved, including the students, parents, teachers, policymakers and even the general public. From a business standpoint, educational leadership is a method of quality control and academic management. Here is the actual process of educational leadership:

Create a vision of academic success for all students regardless of socio-economical levels

Aspire to maintain a responsive, healthy and safe learning environment

Delegate responsibility to everyone involved

Improve curriculum content and instructional methods

Education systems obtain and adapt current management tools and techniques

Leithwood (1999) contend that there is no agreed definition of the concept of leadership. Yukl (2002, pp.4–5) adds that “the definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective. Some definitions are more useful than others, but there is no ‘correct’ definition.” Cuban (1988, p.190) says that “there are more than 350 definitions of leadership but no clear and unequivocal understanding as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders”. However, given the widely accepted significance of leadership for school effectiveness (Daresh 1998, NCSL 2001a, Sammons et al 1995, Sheppard 1996) and for school improvement (Stoll and Fink 1996, Hallinger and Heck 1999), it is important to establish at least a working definition of this complex concept. As Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989) emphasise:

Outstanding leadership has invariably emerged as a key characteristic of outstanding schools. There can no longer be doubt that those seeking quality in education must ensure its presence and that the development of potential leaders must be given high priority. (Beare, Caldwell and Millikan 1989, p.99).

From observations find out very clear that quality in education has a very important component to be influenced. It is the school leadership. The below It will see some qualities or element to leadership.

Leadership as influence

A central element in many definitions of leadership is that there is a process of influence. Leithwood et al (1999, p.6) say that “influence... seems to be a necessary part of most conceptions of leadership”. Yukl (2002, p.3) explains this influence process: “Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person [or group] over other people [or groups] to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organisation”.

Given the schools, there is nothing else but an organization where people have an important part in communicating, interacting and structuring them and their activity to accomplish their mission, goals, or goals, I think school leadership is very important as an influence that improves the school and enhances its effectiveness.

Yukl’s use of ‘person’ or ‘group’ serves to emphasise that leadership may be exercised by teams as well as individuals. This view is reinforced by Harris (2002) and Leithwood (2001) who both advocate distributed leadership as an alternative to traditional top-down leadership models. Ogawa and Bossert (1995, pp.225–26) also state that leadership involves influence and agree that it may be exercised by anyone in an organisation. “It is something that flows throughout an organisation, spanning levels and flowing both up and down hierarchies.”

The concept of leadership, person and structure that supports leadership must be embedded. Therefore, the formation and development of leadership is very important for leadership to have effective schooling and effective leadership.

Cuban (1988, p.193) also refers to leadership as an influence process. “Leadership, then refers to people who bend the motivations and actions of others to achieving certain goals; it implies taking initiatives and risks”. This definition shows that the process of influence is purposeful in that it is intended to lead to specific outcomes. Fidler (1997, p.25) reinforces this notion by claiming that “followers are influenced towards goal achievement”.

Stoll and Fink (1996) use the similar concept of ‘invitational’ leadership to explain how leaders operate in schools. “Leadership is about communicating invitational messages to individuals and groups with whom leaders interact in order to build and act on a shared and evolving vision of enhanced educational experiences for pupils” (p.109).

Leadership and values

The leadership may be understood as “influence” but this notion is neutral in that it does not explain or recommend what goals or actions should be sought through this process. However, certain alternative constructs of leadership focus on the need for leadership to be grounded in firm personal and professional values. Wasserberg (1999, p.158) claims that “the primary role of any leader [is] the unification of people around key values”. From his perspective as a secondary headteacher, he argues that these core values should be:

- schools are concerned with learning and all members of the school community are learners
- every member of the school community is valued as an individual
- the school exists to serve its pupils and the local community
- learning is about the development of the whole person and happens in and out of classrooms
- people prosper with trust, encouragement and praise (Wasserberg 1999, p.155).

Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) add that leadership begins with the ‘character’ of leaders, expressed in terms of personal values, self-awareness and emotional and moral capability. The researchers adopted a 360 degree perspective by interviewing teachers, parents, governors and students as well as conducting three interviews with each principal. They conclude that “good leaders are informed by and communicate clear sets of personal and educational values which represent their moral purposes for the school” (p.53). They elaborate on the nature of these core ‘personal values’: These concerned the modelling and promotion of respect (for individuals), fairness and equality, caring for the well being and whole development of students and staff, integrity and honesty. These core values were often part of strong religious or humanitarian ethics which made it impossible to separate the personal and the professional and which provide empirical support for those who write of the essential moral purposes of those involved in teaching. (Day, Harris and Hadfield 2001, p.45)

Moos, Mahony and Reeves (1998) reinforce the importance of leaders’ “clear sets of educational and personal values” and stress the need for a ‘clear personal vision’(p.70).

Leadership and vision

Vision is increasingly regarded as an important component of leadership. There are different views about whether vision is an essential aspect of school leadership or, rather, a feature which distinguishes successful from less successful leaders. Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989), for example, say that “outstanding leaders have a vision of their schools – a mental picture of a preferred future – which is shared with all in the school community” (p.99). However, in drawing on the work of Bennis and Nanus (1985), they articulate 10 ‘emerging generalisations’ (present authors’ emphasis) about leadership, four of which relate directly to vision:

1. Outstanding leaders have a vision for their organisations.

The vision... may be a dream expressed in written form as our school will be a learning centre in the community, where every child will enjoy coming to school and will acquire the basic skills (p.107).

2. Vision must be communicated in a way which secures commitment among members of the organisation

They cite Bennis and Nanus’ (1985, p.28) view of how this is achieved by visionary leaders: Their visions or intentions are compelling and pull people towards them. Intensity coupled with commitment is magnetic (p.109)

3. Communication of vision requires communication of meaning

They support Bennis and Nanus’ (1985, p.33) assessment that “the management of meaning, [the] mastery of communication, is inseparable from effective leadership” (p.109). They add that symbols are important for the communication of meaning.

4. Attention should be given to institutionalising vision if leadership is to be successful
Articulation and communication of the vision need to be supported by a process of ‘implanting’ the vision: The principal should work with others to implant the vision in the structures and processes of the school, something that calls for the technical and human skills of policymaking and planning (p.115).

These generalisations are essentially normative views about the centrality of vision to effective leadership.

Some projects show the high level of support for the notion of visionary leadership but Foreman's (1998) review shows that, in practice, it remains highly problematic. "Inspiring a shared vision is the leadership practice with which [heads] felt most uncomfortable" (Kouzes and Posner 1996, p.24) while Fullan (1992a, p.83) adds that "vision building is a highly sophisticated dynamic process which few organisations can sustain". Elsewhere, Fullan (1992b) is even more critical, suggesting that visionary leaders may damage rather than improve their schools:

The current emphasis on vision in leadership can be misleading. Vision can blind leaders in a number of ways... The high-powered, charismatic principal who "radically transforms the school" in four or five years can... be blinding and misleading as a role model... my hypothesis would be that most such schools decline after the leader leaves... Principals are blinded by their own vision when they feel they must manipulate the teachers and the school culture to conform to it.(Fullan 1992b, p.19)

Their study of 12 self-selected 'effective' schools shows that most heads were able to describe "some sort of vision" but "they varied in their capacity to articulate the vision and the visions were more or less sophisticated" (p.33). Moreover, the visions were rarely specific to the school. They were "neither surprising nor striking nor controversial. They are closely in line with what one might expect of the British system of education."(p.35)

The Bolam (1993) study also casts doubt on the ability of heads to communicate the vision effectively and to ensure that it is shared by staff. In most of the schools comparatively few teachers were able to speak with any confidence about the elements of the vision. This would suggest that... the headteachers of these schools had not consciously and deliberately set out to communicate their vision to colleagues and to ensure that its influence permeated every aspect of organisational life.(Bolam 1993, p.36)

Towards a definition of leadership

Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision.

Leadership can be understood as a process of influence based on clear values and beliefs and leading to a 'vision' for the school. The vision is articulated by leaders who seek to gain the commitment of staff and stakeholders to the dream of a better future for the school, its students and stakeholders.

After reviewing the literature, the research questions are still not answered. we will try to give these answers by completing the study. How does school leadership affect the achievement of high student results? What is the best educational leadership for an effective and efficient school and high student results? How can educational leaders be prepared for an effective and efficient school so that students achieve high results? How are educational or school leaders prepared and decided to administer, manage or lead education or school in Albania?

The methodology of study

This study is based on qualitative research methodology and its analysis is that of comparative analysis in which the importance that other developed countries determine for school leadership as well as the path followed for its development and continuous improvement is compared. In the review of the literature, it is clearly evident the knowledge, skills and abilities that the educational leadership should possess and through this methodology the state of this educational leadership in Albania will be revealed compared to the developed countries, mainly in the UK, USA and Australia.

The method of collecting the data of the study is done with the documentary method and that of the interview. The method of the documentary study consists of the criteria and procedures for the selection and placement of quality leadership in the tasks of different levels of educational leadership. through the interview method, data will be collected about the knowledge that educational leaders have in Albania, and the path followed for knowledge, skills and development of educational leadership. according to the research questions, we also have these other details of the research method of this study.

For research questions like How does school leadership affect the achievement of high student results? and What is the best educational leadership for an effective and efficient school and high student results? the answer was given by the review of the literature and it is described in detail how the educational leadership affects the achievement of high results among students, as well as the best leadership for an effective and efficient school to achieve

Table 1. What successful school leaders do.

Domains of practice	Specific leadership practices
Set Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a shared vision** • Identify specific, shared, short-term goals • Create high-performance expectations • Communicate the vision and goals**
Build Relationships and Develop People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate growth in the professional capacities of staff • Provide support and demonstrate consideration for individual staff members • Model the school's values and practices** • Build trusting relationships with and among staff, students and parents** • Establish productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives
Develop the Organization to Support Desired Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build collaborative culture and distribute leadership** • Structure the organization to facilitate collaboration** • Build productive relationships with families and communities** • Connect the school to its wider environment** • Maintain a safe and healthy school environment • Allocate resources in support of the school's vision and goals**
Improve the Instructional Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff the instructional program** • Provide instructional support • Monitor student learning and school improvement progress**

high results for students. however, a brief description of each research question will be made in the discussion data section related to the research question such as: i) How can educational leaders be prepared for an effective and efficient school so that students achieve high results? And ii) How are educational or school leaders prepared and decided to administer, manage or lead education or school in Albania? an interview is conducted with a set of questions for each question to 7 teachers, 7 educational leaders and 7 parents. as well as for each targeted group, a focus group is held with a set of prepared questions.

The data collected are analysed in a comparative manner with other countries that have priority and developed knowledge, skills and abilities of educational and school leadership. The positivist interpretive approach is often used in data analysis as a complementary and clarifying method.

The study is based on the best UK studies and on the experience and practice of education in Albania and focuses on the need for an Albanian school for its future. For this, the best leadership modalities dealt with in world literature have been selected. The Albanian context of education and its European integration challenges have been studied.

The purpose of the study is to assess the current situation and determine the extent of school leadership's impact on school effectiveness and the need to develop leadership. Citizens need for an effective school and high scores are immeasurable and this is the school's challenge in the 21st century. Comparative analysis has also been used to highlight Albanian problems in comparison with Anglo-Saxon prospects and solutions given the path followed by contemporary European studies.

Data of the study

What are the most effective and efficient models of educational leadership?

we are presenting a synthesis of the review of the educational leadership literature so far:

Here is a model of effectiveness according to Leithwood et al.

Model 2 according Reynolds, D., and Teddlie, C. (2000) summarized by Taysum (2022)

- 1 Effective leadership that was:
Firm; involving; instrumentally orientated; involved monitoring; and involved staff replacement
- 2 A focus upon learning that involved:
focusing on academic outcomes; and maximising learning time
- 3 A positive school culture that involved:
shared vision; an orderly climate; and positive reinforcement
- 4 High expectations of students and staff
- 5 Monitoring progress at school, classroom, and student levels
- 6 Involving parents by means of:
buffering negative influences; and promoting positive interactions
- 7 Generating effective teaching through:
maximising learning time; grouping strategies; benchmarking against best practice; and adapting practice to student needs
- 8 Professional development of staff that was:
It is located; and integrated with school initiatives
- 9 Involving students in the educational process by means of:
responsibilities; and rights

How can educational leaders be prepared for an effective and efficient school so that students achieve high results?

We asked the interviewees the following questions:

Question: What kind of qualifications do they have?

The answers of the interviewees were:

Educational leadership, school leadership and other education leaders must have the basic qualification of a teacher, must have a master's degree for a teacher and must have completed a master's degree in education administration and management. Educational leadership, school leadership and other education experts must have knowledge, mastery and skills for education curricula, for teaching masters as well as knowledge, mastery and skills for educational leadership. The school is the basic unit of the students' education and it is influenced by many factors in a very complex way. The nature of student education is completely different from the management of other businesses, therefore a special qualification is necessary and necessary to have high student results in accordance with the requirements of the time.

What experience do they have?

The answers of the interviewees were:

Experience! Experience is very important. Every job that starts needs experience. Even a good teacher has this experience, which is provided through the teaching practices that teachers do during their bachelor's and master's studies and in their 1-year practice before earning the teaching title. Experience in educational or school leadership is even more necessary. During the work, the teacher tests his or her theoretical or practical knowledge and insists on his continuous training. The nature of the administrative, managerial and leadership work in the school is complex, without ready-made recipes, and experience, knowledge, skills and abilities make it possible to guide education in the right way and effectively to achieve high student results.

What kind of training will they do?

The answers of the interviewees were:

The demands of society are constantly increasing. The development of society brings new demands. All knowledge needs to be improved as best as possible. Existing knowledge and skills can give many results in the beginning, but you soon see that you need to refresh, improve and follow the newest possible models. After finishing school, you will work for 40

years, so you will walk parallel with the new knowledge that comes in the future, therefore, continuous training and qualification is necessary to give you the right efficiency.

How are educational or school leaders prepared and decided to administer, manage or lead education or school in Albania?

What preparation is required to take on the role of school director?

Regarding the qualifications and education for a school principal in Albania, it is required that the person must have received the title of teacher and have 5 years of work experience as a teacher. Meanwhile, at this time, he must have obtained the first degree of the teacher, which is titled as a qualified teacher. In recent years, an additional criterion has been set, which is required to have completed training at the school of school leadership. Universities have been opening accredited professional and scientific master's programs for education administration and management for several years, and this qualification is not taken into consideration. The school for school leadership was opened with the initiative of the government and an agreement was made with a private foundation in which a series of trainings were defined. as a rule, to register in this school, you must be the current head of the school or you must obtain an authorization from the current head of the school where you work to be allowed to continue this qualification. Most of the leaders of education, with the aim of not being replaced, are kept on temporary leave for years until they receive the school leadership school.

In the leadership school, an assessment of the school's needs for leadership training was made, but in reality these programs are not accredited by any accreditation institution. From this we conclude that the people who have been appointed as school leaders are not the most qualified, and the people who aspire to continue the school of school leadership are limited, hindered and not with equal chances to pursue this qualification.

Likewise, the procedures for the appointment of school leaders are not based on quality criteria, with equal chances for all aspirants for school leadership and with one-sided pro-government commissions for their selection and appointment.

The criteria for establishing educational leaders at higher levels are related to the qualification, they are minimal and very general. Thus, it is required to have completed the

bachelor's and master's level for teaching, to have experience in education. It is required not to be in the high leadership levels of political parties.

Analysis of documentary facts and case studies

According to the OECD (Opportunities for Development and Economic Cooperation) leadership development is of a critical importance in many countries. A set of common models includes: developing systematic leadership development strategies; Establishment of new leadership development institutions; linking the actual management training with leadership development; aiming at the profiles of the competent leadership as a qualification, standard and context of the job; identifying and selecting potential leaders; training and mentoring and promoting the development of leading leadership through the recognition of the manager's responsibility for the development of other leaders. (OECD, 2001).

Different stages of leadership development

A career prospect for leadership development is argued that the professional development activities of school leaders will be ongoing, in career and endless stages. (Peterson, in Davis et al., 2005). They have to rely on pre-school education and continue throughout the career stages of a director. Professional development takes place in forms suitable for different stages in the career of the school principal or the leader and is a major, continuous part and a coherent set of experiences for personal growth during the career and enhancement of professional skills. Ideally, leadership development will start at the teacher level and will continue for the leading candidates and first year inductors or directors. Continuous professional development would be expanded and capitalized on the basis of the leader's experience. An increased body of experience will be useful to outline just as well the mature understanding of job requirements and the criteria for effectiveness. Continuous opportunities will enable highly capable leaders to transfer their knowledge, skills and wisdom to new leaders while gaining knowledge, renewal through mentoring and training.

In England, a leadership development strategy sets five stages of school leadership development. Each stage has a range of a variety of development options based on the predecessor, induction and further training of the perpetrators and other school leaders. In Northern Ireland, there is training for emerging and aspiring leaders as well as the service of managers and managers. The Scottish approach is set in box 4.2. Bush, T, Glover, D, 2003

Box 4.2 Scottish education leadership development

Scotland has recently been shaping its leadership development agenda to match new requirements. Since 2000 it has had a mandatory training qualification for service and induction programmes for most new school leaders and since 2003 a new framework for leadership development. It provides learning opportunities for those involved in leadership teams as well as more senior staff. *Continuing Professional Development for Educational Leaders*, intended to provide a means of promoting professional development rather than a structure for managing schools, is based on the notion of professional progression in educational leadership through four broad levels:

- **Project Leadership**, for teachers who have, or may take on, responsibility for leading a small-scale project. This refers to teachers possibly quite early in their careers, who wish to develop their leadership skills, for instance in an area related to curriculum development or supporting pupils' learning, or through a small school-based research project.
- **Team Leadership**, for teachers who, in addition to leading small-scale projects, have regular responsibility for leading either permanent teams of staff or task groups/working parties. This might be particularly relevant to aspiring and established principal teachers, whether their responsibilities are primarily in the areas of curriculum or of guidance.
- **School Leadership**, for staff who lead projects and teams and who have, or are seeking, overall responsibility for an aspect of leadership across an establishment. This might include teachers or principal teachers who aspire to membership of a senior leadership team and to established members of such teams. Some members of senior leadership teams will aspire to headship and the achievement of the Standard for Headship might be sought within this level.
- **Strategic Leadership**, for staff who, in addition to project, team and school leadership responsibilities, have overall responsibility for the leadership of an establishment or are leading strategic initiatives at local or national level. This is particularly relevant to head teachers and to those working in the education service who have a strategic role in improving Scottish education.

This particular approach seems to be adapting to the need to develop and encourage distributed leadership by investing in project and team leadership as vital for school success.

Source: Scottish Executive Education Department, 2007.

Conclusions

For years, educational leadership has been considered a scientific discipline alone in the Western world and not an addition to any other discipline. We see this from the review of the literature that not only talks about the importance of educational leadership for an effective school and high student results, but also explains in detail the knowledge, skills and skills that are needed in order for educational leadership to have a quality qualification. In the review of the literature, it is noted that the path that must be followed to obtain such a quality qualification and the criteria that must be established to appoint leaders in school and educational leadership for all levels of educational institutions are clearly explained.

In contrast to the evaluation and qualification of educational leadership in developed countries, in Albania there is a lack of evaluation of the qualification of educational leadership following the tradition that the best teachers and with good results in their studies through their teaching, were appointed in the different levels of educational and school leadership. Only recently we have an improvement, but not a deep one, that those who are appointed to the lowest level of school leadership, must first attend school leadership training. The school leadership training program, considering the relevant training topics, is more like a reinforcement of the master's degree in teaching than a program for the formation and practice of educational leadership. There are about 2,000 schools in Albania and the number of people who have completed this qualification does not exceed 500. Regardless of the insufficient number, this qualification also enables them to teach and evaluate teaching more than to become educational leaders.

Society requires an effective school which could not exist without qualified educational leadership with the best knowledge, skills and skills, based on the best models of educational leadership practiced and scientifically verified. This effective school must prepare students to face the challenges of the future, in which each student is able to solve the problems of work and life, to identify and provide solutions for the problems that arise and not just to choose problems according to learned template models. These students who will be future citizens of society must have the necessary maturity and be educated from school to contribute to a healthy society, to a democratic society that values human rights and respects the social contract. And for this to happen, it is required to be active in changing the different systems of government and participating in decision-making so that these systems are constantly improved in this direction.

If the school fulfills these and gives results that fulfill these objectives and goals, we can say that we have an effective school and that the educational leadership has fulfilled its mission.

The qualification of the educational leadership according to the western model and their emeritus in the educational institutions in Albania with clear, reliable and transparent criteria from politically independent institutions, would help the educational institutions in Albania to become more effective and efficient and for built citizens of the future to face the challenges of the future in a civilized world.

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