

Social Entrepreneurship and Resilience among Public University Students in Malaysia

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Abstract

Social entrepreneurship is given much emphasis by the Ministry of Education Malaysia as one of the entrepreneurship programs for university students. A social entrepreneurship program that draws large participation from all Malaysian public university students is Entrepreneurship Act Us (ENACTUS). ENACTUS is seen as an authentic form of education that could provide students with the opportunity to hone their social entrepreneurial skills and self-resiliency through the community service based projects. The main attempt of this study is to identify the dimensions of social entrepreneurship and resilience among public university students in Malaysia, who are active participants in ENACTUS. Social entrepreneurship dimension in this study consists of sociality, innovation and market orientation; while resilience dimension encompasses resilience to stress, adversity and risk. A sample of 341 active participants in ENACTUS program was selected using stratified random sampling. Questionnaires were used as the main instrument to collect data and the data obtained was analyzed statistically. Overall, the level of social entrepreneurship and resilience among public university students in the ENACTUS program were found to be at high level. The result shows a strong positive correlation between social entrepreneurship and resilience with the Pearson coefficient value of 0.53. This study reveals that social entrepreneurship education program has a significant role in improving the resilience among public university students. Thus, the Minister of Education in Malaysia should encourage greater participation of university students in social entrepreneurship programs to strengthen their resilience towards stress, adversity and risk.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Resilience, ENACTUS

1.0 Introduction

In Malaysia, entrepreneurship education and training have received a great deal of attention since year 1990. Entrepreneurship education and training programs have been intensively integrated into the state's formal education system. Entrepreneurship education plays vital roles in supporting the growth of business enterprises, creating job for the nations and developing the socio-economics of the country (Munirah, 2013). However, with regards to the traditional entrepreneurship education, the common criticism is that it has failed to

impart practical skills needed by the young entrepreneurs to integrate with the environmental changes within the business context (Ahmad Rafllis, Zaimah & Siohong, 2007). Therefore, more practical entrepreneurship education approaches are needed to equip the university students with innovation, creativity and at the same time build their self-resilience to face various challenges in future life (Rohaida & Hariyaty, 2015). Social entrepreneurship is found to be an interesting field to study in order to explore the practical approaches in producing high quality and balanced human capital (Brooks, 2009).

Social entrepreneurship is one of the branches in the entrepreneurship stream which is in its infancy as far as education goes. However, values of social entrepreneurship are vital for the dynamic growth in the aspects of competitiveness and employability of the human capital (Hariyaty, 2014). Malaysia-wise, an integrated human capital development should be intensified as it still faces problems with its quality of human capital and unemployment (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2010). Therefore, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the country are urged to take the lead on the concept of social entrepreneurship, which is popularly known as the use of entrepreneurial strategies for social benefits. Social entrepreneurship is a not-for-profit venture that creates social value or social change by addressing the challenges of using the innovation, innovative process, or managing fund strategies with proper attitude and entrepreneurial ethics (Mair & Marti, 2005; Hariyaty, 2014).

Several studies have shown that resilience is an important feature owned by entrepreneurs in enabling them to face stressful situations, difficulties and risks (Hariyaty, 2014; Norasmah et al., 2011). Therefore, social entrepreneurship is believed to have wide potential in developing more resilient, competitive and marketable human capital (Hariyaty et al., 2011a). In line with the mission of producing first class human capital with excellent entrepreneurial qualities; Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia have been urged to inculcate the culture of social entrepreneurship among students. This is consistent with the role of HEIs itself, that is, producing competent students, as well as professionals who have skills, self-esteem, sociable, altruism and highly competitive (Rohaila, 2007; Ministry of Higher Education, 2009; Hariyaty, 2014). This role helps to overcome social and economic turmoil, by contributing to the economic and social innovation through the development of knowledgeable, experienced and highly resilient human capital (Hariyaty et al., 2011b).

Integrated and continuous human capital development, are among efforts continuously undertaken by Malaysian government to face the problem of the quality human capital and unemployment issues (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). Studies have shown that the ability of graduates in employment is still low, with shortages and mismatch of skills required by employers and the job market (Economic Planning Unit 2010; Mustafa, 2009; Hariyaty et al. 2011a). It is found that some Malaysian undergraduates especially from the public universities do not recognize their true potential and have questionable resilience level (Mohd Fadzillah, et al., 2005). Self-esteem and resilience among those graduates are also disputed as proven by researchers such as Aida Rahayu (2010), Ida Hartina (2006) and Economic Planning Unit (2008). Aida Rahayu (2010) found that the levels of resilience among the graduate who venture into businesses was moderate.

In fact, living life as students in public universities is never an easy task. The students will face the harsh realities of life which challenge them not only cognitively but emotionally and psychologically as well. Many students reported experiencing stress during their studies. After all, stress, adversity and risk are not uncommon among the students. By understanding how these students cope with stress, adversity and risk through social entrepreneurship

activities; faculty advisors, academic advisors and entrepreneurship educators can assist the students in managing their time with productive activities and lesser stress (Hariyaty, 2014; Ida Hartina, 2006). Although they cannot eliminate stress, adversity and risks in life; they can learn to cope with it and manage it effectively by using social entrepreneurship skills. Social entrepreneurship is proven as an effective approach to enhance the competitiveness of Muslim students in Malaysia (Hariyaty et al., 2015).

Public university students that form a major composition of the student population in Malaysia should be empowered with appropriate skills to become more resilient and competitive to fulfil the employability demand. The public university students of today need to build up high self-resilience in the face of both domestic and global level of competition. There has been few discussions or studies conducted by past and recent researcher of social entrepreneurship and resilience among the public university students in Malaysia. Therefore, this study is conducted to measure the level of social entrepreneurship and resilience among undergraduates who participate in social entrepreneurship called the ENACTUS program; as an attempt to fill the current gap. This effort put an endless hope in finding an alternative education program that could enhance the resilience among students before they start to compete in the job market or take a plunge into business venture.

In view of the above, the objectives of this study are:

- (1) To identify the level of social entrepreneurship and resilience of public university students who are active in social entrepreneurship program, and
- (2) To examine the relationship between the social entrepreneurship and resilience of public university students who are active in social entrepreneurship program.

2.0 Literature Review

Social entrepreneurship is increasingly seen as an alternative approach favored by the government, academicians, practitioners of entrepreneurship and social activists; in overcoming social and economic turmoil (Tracey & Philips, 2007; Litzky et al., 2010). Social entrepreneurship focuses on social welfare and regenerating civic consciousness; has become a platform in producing citizens who are able to improve the living standards of its community (Hariyaty, 2014). Those citizens called social entrepreneurs will use their entrepreneurial skills, innovativeness, willing to take the risk in to materialize the social entrepreneurship endeavours and to do something extraordinary (Duriex & Stebbins, 2010).

Among the prominent personalities who did extraordinary things through social entrepreneurship was Dr. Maria Montessori of Italy whom inspired the Montessori approach to education of pre-school children. Besides Maria, a renowned Bangladeshi professor of economics named Muhammad Yunus who pioneered the concept of ' micro-credit ' or small amount of loan which aims to help the poor Bangladeshi women out of poverty (Brooks, 2009; Verma, 2009; Hariyaty, 2014). Social entrepreneurs are needed to solve the problems related to society and the initiatives to produce more of them need to be taken.

Social entrepreneurship can be understood with the same set of entrepreneurship theories. Based on five basic theories of entrepreneurship such as environment, resources, perturbation, personal traits and preparation which are complementary to each other; social entrepreneurship process can be well understood and stimulated (Brooks, 2009). According to Preparation Theory which is related to personality traits, the idea that entrepreneurship can be taught is depending on factors such as education and work experience (Brooks, 2006). In general, social entrepreneurship is seen as a form of education which could provide students with opportunities to hone their potential in realizing the hopes, dreams, and self-

satisfaction of the students themselves and the community which the social services are provided for (Litzky et al., 2010).

Based on the dimension of social entrepreneurship by Nicholls and Cho (2008), there are three main foundations namely the sociality, innovation and market-oriented. The first dimension, sociality, is the degree at which an organization effectively works with an intention to achieve social objectives (Nicholls & Cho, 2008; Nicholls, 2010). As the change agents in the society, social entrepreneurs adopt a mission to create and sustain social value and engage in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation and learning (Dees, 2001). Therefore, by participating in social entrepreneurship programs, students with well-developed social networks may be more likely to attain competitiveness goals through three resources, the first of which is wealth of information (Cohen, 1988). Information is important to social network. Social entrepreneurs need to obtain and share knowledge, skills and expertise with others in order to accomplish their social entrepreneurship mission. On top of that; obligations, expectations, trustworthiness and mutual understandings are reciprocal benefits that can be gained through sociality (Rizutto et al., 2009; Nicholls, 2010).

The second dimension, innovation, is the ability of the active social entrepreneurship students to apply creative solutions to problems and opportunities to improve and enrich people's lives (Nicholls & Cho, 2008). It is also defined as the capability of turning the opportunities to fruitful entrepreneurial ideas (Hariyaty et al., 2012; Hariyaty, 2014). It can be regarded as employees' positive work attitudes and contributions that go beyond their job prescriptions or duties, plays a central role in the economic growth process and the social entrepreneur itself is the vehicle to introduce the new technologies to improve the firms' activity and to obtain social change (Galindo et al., 2013). Given the fact that entrepreneurship typically involves innovation, it is not surprising that entrepreneurs tend to be innovative people. That is, develop new ideas to meet specific challenges (Brooks, 2009) and it is one of the important elements in social entrepreneurship that most of the active ENACTUS students should portray (Norasmah et al., 2012).

The third social entrepreneurship dimension, market orientation, was defined as an activity that is based on the market needs to take into account the importance of the social and commercial flows (Nicholls & Cho, 2009). Market orientation is identified and considered as one of social entrepreneurship important elements due to its positive strong relationship to entrepreneurship. It also refers to persistent search for market opportunities and the development of congruent response strategies that enable firms to optimize their performance (Gonzales-Benito, 2009). Furthermore, the notion of market orientation relates to the adoption of the marketing concept as a business philosophy. In this respect, market orientation was defined by Deshpande et al. (1993) as an organizational culture that comprises a set of beliefs that put the customer's interest first to develop long-term profitability (in Gonzales-Benito et al., 2009). Unfortunately, there are large numbers of entrepreneurs who enjoy profiteering entrepreneurship activities but only few of them are willing to contribute back to society and actively engaged in community (Tan, 2015).

The most obvious and common way for social enterprise to become involved with the market and perhaps make some financial return is to try to sell one or more of social entrepreneurs' ideas, products or services. The main idea is that, those social entrepreneurs should promote their enterprises in a manner that is morally acceptable to them, colleagues in the enterprise, other stakeholders and the wider community (Durieux & Stebbins, 2010). Thus, in organizing social entrepreneurship activities, students must revise their competitive strategies towards accomplishing outstanding performance levels by moving the teams'

cultures towards successful market oriented model (Hariyaty et al., 2011b). By understanding the role of social entrepreneurship and market orientation, their efforts to face the new situation, local government and institutions, as well as their efforts to promote social business development will be materialized (Gonzales-Benito et al., 2009; Durieux & Stebbins, 2010).

Besides social entrepreneurship, resilience is one of the important characteristics needed by entrepreneurs to sustain in the industry and have wide potential to become the multinational and global industry players (Hariyaty et al., 2011a; Mohd Fauzi, Yahaya, Siohong & June, 2007). Yet to date, the number of studies being carried out related to social entrepreneurship and resilience is scant. After all, there are no scientific definitions of resilience yet that are universally accepted (Norasmah et al., 2012). According to Sepehrian and Nobakhtfard (2012), resilience is considered an adaptive adjustable trait that shapes the positive traits. It enables individuals to cope with stress, adversity and risk. This is in line with past researchers namely Bonanno (2004); Connor et al. (2003) and Richardson (2002) who defined resilience as a characteristic of human strength that able to cope well with stress, adaptation to changes and demonstrate positive outcomes despite exposure to adversity in life. However, Rutter (2007) and Wagnild (2009) stated that resilience is not a personality trait and that individuals become resilient only in the presence of adversity. There are some scholars who argue that social entrepreneurs are disproportionately likely to have suffered a personal trauma in their lives, such as depression and some of them are notoriously independent with high self-reliant (Brooks, 2009). Although there is no evidence that any rational person-including entrepreneurs-seeks out risk for the sake of it, there is evidence that entrepreneurs are more tolerant of risk and more creative at finding ways to mitigate it. The social entrepreneurs are generally more comfortable than other people in situations that are dynamic and not particularly clear-cut (Brooks, 2009; Verma, 2009).

In Malaysia, the aspect of resilience has gained much attention due to low level of graduates' capability in getting job because of the mismatch of skill owned by graduates with the jobs they applied (Sarimah et al., 2011). Other reasons why graduates remain unemployed are lacking of self-confidence to enter the job market (Nunez et al., 2010; Mustafa, 2009). Be it a student or an entrepreneur, they need inner self-resilience toward stress, adversity and risk to avoid physical disorder such as depression, anxiety, headache and etc. As a result, Malaysian Ministry of Education in their Higher Education Strategic Plan Beyond 2020 had strongly emphasized on the importance of resilience among the university student for them to deal with the current challenges of globalization (Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia, 2011). Therefore, through this study, the term resilience is seen as "the capacity to surge again, bounce back, face adversity; develop social, academic and vocational competencies, even though exposed to excessive pressure or stress inherent in the present life." This term was used by Rirkin and Hoopman since 1991 in several studies related to resilience in the context of students, educators and educational institutions (Henderson & Milstein, 2003).

The resilience level of the public university students is assumed to increase if they can involve actively in a comprehensive and challenging social entrepreneurship program likewise. Entrepreneurship Action by Us (ENACTUS), formerly known as Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) is non-profit organization responsible for organizing programs to encourage students to undertake economic and community services activities, for social and economic up-lift of the local communities (Hardy & Noor Faizah, 2014). ENACTUS works with business leaders and HEIs to mobilize university students in making changes within the community. Students can develop skills to become business leaders who are socially responsible and able to transform the society. Till 2014, the number of HEIs which joined the ENACTUS programs

is more than 33 including the private and public universities (Hariyaty, 2014; Verma, 2009). It is therefore appropriate that a specific study conducted to identify the levels of social entrepreneurship and resilience among the public university students in Malaysia who are actively participating in social entrepreneurship program. In this manner, future findings shall be used to craft more effective social entrepreneurship-oriented programs in public university.

Given the situation mentioned earlier, this study is conducted to measure the level of social entrepreneurship and resilience among the public university students in Malaysia. The conceptual framework of the study is shown in Figure 1.

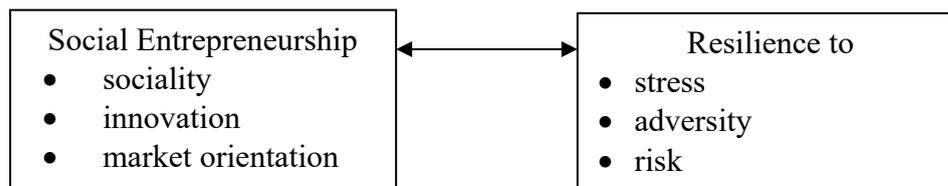


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the study

[Adaptation of the Social Entrepreneurship Dimension (Nicholls & Cho 2008) and Resilience Model (Richardson et al. 1990)]

3.0 Methodology

The study is a cross sectional with a questionnaire survey approach. The study population consists of 1750 active students of ENACTUS program in Malaysian public universities. A total of 341 samples randomly selected among the ENACTUS participants from ten public universities in the north, middle, east, west and southern region. The items were adopted from various works of researchers such as Hariyaty (2014), Slocumn et al. (2008), Wagnild (2009) and Richardson et al. (1990). Likert Scale ranging with 1 for "Strongly Disagree", to 5 for "Strongly Agree" was used to measure respondents' responses. The questionnaire consists of three parts, Part A (4 items) to obtain information regarding respondents' background; Part B (25 items) to measure the organization of social entrepreneurship projects participated by the respondents and Part C (26 items) to measure the aspects of students' resilience to stress, adversities and risks. A pilot test was conducted to identify the reliability of the instrument, whereby value of Cronbach's Alpha was $r=0.94$ for Part B and Part C, which is highly reliable as the minimum value of the Cronbach's Alpha that may be applicable to the newly constructed items was 0.6 to 0.7 (Hair et al., 2006). The constructs and the items in the study questionnaire were validated by getting experts' opinion and agreement. Seven experts of social entrepreneurship and six experts of resilience from local public universities had portrayed their high level of consensus upon the items and constructs validity as shown in Table 1 and 2. Meanwhile, the reliability of the questionnaire in this study was unarguably high with the Cronbach's alpha value obtained 0.94 for both constructs.

Table 1:

Level of experts' agreement on the items and constructs of social entrepreneurship

CONSTRUCT	MEAN±SD	AGREEMENT LEVEL
SOCIALITY	4.57±0.05	HIGH
INNOVATION	4.67±0.06	HIGH
MARKET ORIENTATION	4.43±0.06	HIGH

Table 2: Level of experts' agreement on the items and constructs of resilience

CONSTRUCT	MEAN±SD	AGREEMENT LEVEL
RESILIENCE TO STRESS	4.83±0.21	HIGH
RESILIENCE TO ADVERSITY	4.87±0.13	HIGH
RESILIENCE TO RISK	4.97±0.05	HIGH

A descriptive analysis involving the mean and standard deviation scores was used to identify the level of social entrepreneurship and resilience among the public university students. Table 3, as recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) shows the interpretation of the level of the mean score obtained.

Table 3:

Mean score of interpretation for social entrepreneurship and resilience level

SCALE	LEVEL
1.00 – 2.00	LOW
2.01 – 3.00	MODERATE LOW
3.01 – 4.00	MODERATE HIGH
4.01 – 5.00	HIGH

On the other hand, the Pearson correlation test was applied to identify the relationship between social entrepreneurship and resilience of those active public university students in ENACTUS program. Table 4, as suggested by Davies (1971) was used to determine the relationship between these two variables.

Table 4:

Interpretation of the correlation coefficient

SCALE	LEVEL
0.01 – 0.09	VOID
0.10 – 0.29	LOW
0.30 – 0.49	MEDIUM
0.50 – 0.69	STRONG
0.70 – 0.99	VERY HIGH
1.00	PERFECT

4.0 Findings And Discussion

This study involves 341 public university students in the ENACTUS program. Among them, 135 (39.6%) were male and 206 (60.4%) were female respondents. The ethnic composition of the Muslim ENACTUS students is as follows; 335 (98.2%) were Malays, 2 (0.6%) were Chinese and 4 (1.2%) other races. Most of the public university students were on their first year of study 131 (38.4%), followed by third year students or above 114 (33.4%), and second year students 96 (28.3%). Most of them had experience in entrepreneurship 222 (65.1%) while the other 119 (34.9%) had not.

Based on Table 5, the level of social entrepreneurship among the public university students is high in all three dimensions (i.e., sociality, innovation and marker orientation).

Sociality obtained the highest mean (mean = 4.14, sp = 0.43) followed by innovation (mean = 4.13, sp = 0.38), and market orientation (mean = 4.07, sp = 0.47).

Table 5:

Level of social entrepreneurship (SE) among public university students participating in social entrepreneurship program

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP DIMENSION	MEAN	S.D	LEVEL
SOCIALITY	4.14	0.43	HIGH
INNOVATION	4.13	0.38	HIGH
MARKET ORIENTATION	4.07	0.47	HIGH

In sociality aspect, the public university students who actively participate in social entrepreneurship program resolved into solving social problems effectively by strengthening social networks, and, increasing the number of contacts with those who are able to help them achieve their social vision. In the aspect of innovation, activities organized in social entrepreneurship project is believed to bring about change in society, by finding solutions to change for the better, and they agree that some of the ideas they revealed are never thought of by others. In the market-orientation aspect, the social entrepreneurship activities organized by them are to create economic opportunities for poor population, whereby the reward for money is not the ultimate goal. Products and services offered to the community are in the interest and welfare of the community. These three aspects are in line with social entrepreneurship interpreted by Nicholls and Cho (2008); and Litzky et al. (2010). It also supports the view by Hariyaty et al. (2011a), Durieux and Stebbins (2010), Alvord et al. (2002) as well as Morse and Dudley (2002), who stated that social entrepreneurs must strive to build strong and resilient organizations, regardless the enterprise is for profit or non-profit.

Meanwhile, resilience among students in social entrepreneurship program is investigated in the aspects of stress, adversities and risks. Resilience to stress determines the extent to which students face daily situations that cause individuals to feel pressured or forced to act. Resilience to adversity is the extent to which student willing to involve in healthy daily activities to help them overcoming difficulties in life. While resilience to risks determines the extent to which the degree of uncertainty and the possibility of failure are recognized and addressed by the students in their daily lives and to what extent are they able to manage the risk of failure in their studies. Table 6 below indicates that the resilience to stress is at mean score (mean = 4.13, sp = 0.46), followed by the resilience to adversity (mean = 4.07, sp = 0.38) and resilience to risk (mean = 4.12, sp = 0.39). All three aspects of resilience obtained high level with mean score above 4.01.

Table 6:

Level of Resilience (R) among Public University Students Participating in Social Entrepreneurship Program

RESILIENCE DIMENSION	MEAN	S.D	LEVEL
RESILIENCE TO STRESS	4.13	0.46	HIGH
RESILIENCE TO ADVERSITY	4.07	0.38	HIGH
RESILIENCE TO RISKS	4.12	0.39	HIGH

The findings show that students who participate in social entrepreneurship program are not easily defeated by stressful situations. Those students are self-reliant in life, are

adaptable to the social environment, strive constantly to maintain a high level of energy, are able to motivate themselves to get optimum performance, remain calm and are able to control their emotions. This study coincides with the views of Lucia and Lepsinger (1999), which states that the student whom can tolerate the effects of stress, are highly resilient. In terms of risk, the findings reject the findings by Norashidah (2009) who found that 38.5% of 912 undergraduates did not want to be involved in entrepreneurial activities for fear of risk, lack of confident and readiness, and fear of pressures from surroundings. In contrary, the ENACTUS' students felt that risk is common in life and should overcome it by finding effective solutions.

To identify the relationship between social entrepreneurship and resilience among the students in social entrepreneurship program, the null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the two variables was tested by Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient. Table 7 shows a strong positive significant relationship between the stipulated variables ($r=0.53$, $n=341$, $p<0.05$). Strong positive correlation also indicates that the higher the level of social entrepreneurship obtained by the students in ENACTUS, the higher their resilience to stress, adversities and risks. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 7:

Analysis of Pearson correlation between social entrepreneurship and resilience

FACTOR	1	2
1. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP	-	0.53**
2. RESILIENCE		-

**significant at level <0.01 (two-tailed)

The above findings also made an empirical evidence demonstrated that there is a significant positive relationship between social entrepreneurship and resilience among the public university students who participating actively in ENACTUS. This finding is aligned with the study conducted by Norasmah et al. (2012). Those researchers also found that the current level of competitiveness and resilience among university students who are active in social entrepreneurship program, is higher than those who never participate in. Milstein and Henderson (2003) recommended that tertiary education should emphasize more on sustaining the students' resiliency. Therefore, within business schools, public universities can start producing social entrepreneurship degree and MBA to meet demand of the social business entrepreneurs, as well as preparing young people to become resilient human capital.

5.0 Conclusion

The study finds that the level of social entrepreneurship and resilience among the public university students in Malaysia is high. A strong positive relationship between the observable aspect of social entrepreneurship and resilience show that enhancing the social entrepreneurship level among the students can increase their resilience towards stress, adversities and risks. In conclusion, the results obtained in this study also suggest that in order to develop or enhance self-resilience among the public university students has to be on entrepreneurship education that enhances their sociality, innovation and market orientation in social entrepreneurship. The development of resilience within individuals, is a life process, in which, all human life must deal with stress, trauma and disruption. To help public university students to be more capable in managing stress, adversities and risks; the social

entrepreneurship programs, such as ENACTUS program, should be expanded so that more university students in public universities can develop high level of resilience. Furthermore, the students can occupy themselves with the necessary self-endurance quality to cope with the job market challenges or seizing the entrepreneurship opportunities.

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