

E-Tailing – The new buzzword in Retailing

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Abstract

Purpose

The retail trade is the combination of products and services. It has four elements. They are wholesalers, small grocery shop keepers, hypermarkets and lastly customers. The research paper identifies and analyses the role of brand and its relevance in grocery retailing and its impact on customer's buying decision. The article tries to assess various issues related with the brand of grocery for selected products and its significance for the customers. Retail trade in Kolhapur is going through sea change in last decade or so. Many hypermarkets are showing their presence in the city of Kolhapur. There is steady rise in the small grocery shops even.

Research Methodology

Research approach : Kolhapur city is taken for the study of e-retailing potential. Marketing principles used by hotels, foot wears, book stores, cloth centers are taken for the study.

Scope : The study is confined to hotels, foot wears, book stores, cloth centers managers/owners.

Research Instrument : A Structured questionnaire is designed specifically to meet the objectives of the study. It contains questionnaires for hotel managers, foot waer owners, owners of music stores and book stalls and questionnaire for customers.

Population : Approximately Kolhapur city has 400 small grocery shop shops ,12 shopping malls, and 50 general stores.

Sample Size : 13 hotels, 3 foot wears, 3 book stores, 35 managers and 55 customers are taken for the study. Customers are in the age group of 30-35.

Managerial implications

In retailing, technology is important and upcoming trend. So, consumer opinion and corporate opinion needs to be assessed for further development of the strategic decisions.

Objectives of the research

- 1) To study the awareness of e-tailing practices amongst various businesses.
- 2) To study the customer opinion about e-tailing practices in Kolhapur.

Hypothesis

- 1) E – Retailing is not progressing in smaller cities.
- 2) Performance of retail business is independent of technology.

Transformation in conventional marketing –

The marketing is going through paradigm shift. The marketing practices product, prices promotion, people, physical evidence, process, place are present conventional marketing. The 7 p's in conventional marketing have different perceptions and implications in modern marketing.

In early 1970 and 80's the emphasis was provided on cost and flexibility while in late 90's and it was replaced by customer focus, speed and quality in the delivery and service respectively. Most of the retailing players in India are following the same pattern. Many researches conducted on changing shopping behaviors. Indian customers are studied and these researches suggest that the Indian customers are changing. Retailing practices in metropolitan cities have changed and in two tier cities also these changes are slowly imbibed in customers.

Customers also are slowly changing their behavior patterns related to shopping. Retailing slowly are started to lead on the minds of the Indian customers. Since 2000 the Indian consumers are confronted with new marketing practice called "Digital Marketing" where internet related technology started to appear on the management arena. The next shift is going in form of retailing to E-retailing.

E-Retailing is defined as the retailing function through internet. E-retailing has only one form of E-business in form of business to customers (B-C)

E-retailing Services –

Internet banking has been widely accepted in India the transactions are going on by the customers using the ATM and debit cards. Number of companies like HP used to give either to the internet customers even the co-operative banks are widely starting the E-banking facilities. E-Services are related with online banking system of transports, railways, aero plane. Given E-services are available on the hotel booking.

Advantages of online retailing are as follows –

An opportunity to move from physical space to cyber space

1. No location boundaries.
2. Wider spectrum customers.
3. Non-geometric buying habits of customers.

The new online retail categories –

The recent development of sending e-greetings has helped customers get into the habit of using internet. Another area of development is bill presentment. Retail banking and related services through the internet is also being promoted and a good deal of transactions takes place through the net. Shopping robots on the net help instant price comparisons to enable customers make purchase decisions.

Logistic and supply chain in online retailing –

The key success factor for online retailing is efficient logistics to ensure that the right product is delivered to the right customer at the right time. The supply chain network is triggered in an automatic fashion, meeting promised delivery dates. Alliances are critical in the areas of sourcing and vendor management, warehousing, transportation and couriating (effective order deliveries) Storing merchandise in satellite warehouses enables timely deliveries in operations that are spread over a wide area.

Promotion online : There is good scope for promoting on site products merchandised and sold online. The site itself can host links of products/ services offered by other companies for a fee. Banners, crawlers, browser buttons, URL links, etc. can be put on other non-competing sites. There is a lot of opportunity to create customer stickiness by constantly communicating with them through e-mail. Personalised offerings can be made to individual customers based on individual's shopping characteristics.

Pitfalls of e-Tailing

No Theatrical Ambience: The online retailing site does not have a theatrical ambience which can be felt by the customer.

No Emotional Experience: There is no emotional shopping experience that the customer can get in e-Tailing as he would in a brick-and-mortar environment.

Intangible Merchandise: The customer cannot hold, smell, feel or try the product.

Security Issues: Customers online are reluctant to part with their credit card details on the net, fearing they may be misused. Customers are not yet convinced that these methods are foolproof.

Impersonal customer Service: Indian customers are used to tangible personalized customer service which online retailing cannot provide. Some instances of Indian companies doing business on the net :

- Rediff.com does a good deal of merchandising on its site with innovative product offerings and prices.
- Indiatimes.com is a popular internet selling site with multi-faceted merchandise offerings.
- Bazee.com is a site very widely known in India for its "bidding sale".
- Fabmart.com does food retailing.
- PlayWin is an online lottery that is catching on with the masses.

Some organizations have tried to use the internet along with their brick-and-mortar operations. It is just a matter of time before online retailing picks up in India. If there is consistency in quality and delivery on time, certain convenience categories like o have to pay more in order to retain them. This again brings down the Indian retailers profit levels. Training the employees in delivering the better service to customer so that se/she becomes loyal to the company is also a challenge.

Traffic :

The gridlock of cars and other vehicles in the town will be reduced since the shopping centers find it difficult for parking areas and often the customers vehicles bring lot of traffic jam in peak hours.

Around 40 million people in India depend on the unorganized retail sector the trade union and traders fear these people's livelihoods will be ruined giants are permitted to enter India's retail market. The decreasing sales of fruit juice, sauce and bread items in small shops will stop the supply of these ready to eat products to the owner manned general stores which will affect the lively hood of 3.95 Cr. of the unorganized retail trade employees. So here arises challenge for government.

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It is observed that the presence of big retailers like wal-mart depresses the wages of the employees at the bottom of the pyramid in the community. Some of the retail market giants who are going to print their foot in India are notorious for driving out the competition and slashing labor cost in other countries. Reliance already started using two of the special economic zone as warehouse for their retail outlets. Farmers lost their livelihood as most of the area that acquired for this purpose are farm land. The promised compensation packages are often inadequate. Due to delay in processing and corrupted middle players of government employees it is not reaching to real farmers. At most of the places senior citizens are protesting against farm land acquisition and are arrested and imprisoned for several months. The great apprehension about these retail giants' styles of operation will bring law and order problems in the country.

The challenge would be sales tax laws as there are state tax laws and central tax laws and road tax law which boils down profits as it increased the cost of product procurement.

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Data methodology

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Research Instrument : A Structured questionnaire is designed specifically to meet the objectives of the study. It contains questionnaires for hotel managers, foot wear owners, owners of music stores and book stalls and questionnaire for customers.

Sample Size :

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Data Analysis and findings

Tabulation for Hotel Business

1. Table showing awareness of E- retailing in hotel business

Particular	Sample	%
Known	13	100
Unknown	0	0
Total	13	100

2. Table showing awareness of internet amongst hotel managers

Particular	Sample	%
Surf on internet	13	100
Not Surfing	0	0
Total	13	100

3. Amount of time spend on the internet by hotel managers

Particular	%
Half hour.	0
1-2 hrs.	0
Above 2 hrs.	100
Total	100

4. Table showing the knowledge of managers about e-Retailing

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	13	100
No	0	0
Tota	13	100

5. Table showing the factors affecting E-retailing.

Particular	Sample (each out of 13)	%
Infrastructure	8	15.38
Availability of internet	5	7.69
Technology	5	0
Lack of customer awareness	16	46.15
Trust	13	61.53

6. Table showing the target customers of hotel business.

Particular	Sample	%
Student	0	0
Professional	13	100
Businessman	13	100
Other	4	30.76

7. Table Showing opinion of managers about threats in e-retailing –

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	4	30.76
No	9	69.24
Total	13	100

8. Table showing level of customer satisfaction

Particular	Sample	%
Highly satisfied	9	69.23
Satisfied	1	7.69
Neutral	3	23.07
Dissatisfied	0	0
Highly dissatisfied	0	0
Total	13	100

Analysis of opinions of Hotel Managers –

- 1) 61 % of hotel managers are not interested in business through internet.
- 2) Trust & lack of awareness are major reasons behind customers not using E- business.
- 3) The operations that the managers do through internet is ‘Hotel Booking’
- 4) Businessman and professionals are only the customers using this way of business.
- 5) All the star2 and star3 hotels are having this facility –
 1. Hotel Victor Palace
 2. Panchashil
 3. International
 4. Ayodhya
 5. Rajat
 6. Opal
- 6) The medium class hotels are not using this practice as they don’t feel the need of it because most of their rooms are always engaged .

Tabulation of opinions of business managers for ‘Foot Wear’

1. Table Showing opinion of managers about the knowledge of internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Known	3	100
Unknown	0	0
Total	3	100

2. Table Showing opinion of managers about the surfing on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Surf on internet	1	33.33
Not Surfing	2	66.67
Total	3	100

3. Table showing opinion of managers about time for which they surf on internet –

Particular	%
Half hour.	100
1-2 hrs.	0
Above 2 hrs.	0
Total	100

4. Table showing opinion of managers about the knowledge of retailing –

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	0	0
No	3	100
Total	3	100

5. Table showing opinion of managers about the business done on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Known / Aware	1	33.33
Unknown / unaware	2	66.67
Total	3	100

6. Table showing interest of managers in doing business on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Interested	0	0
Not interested	3	100
Total	3	100

7. Table showing reasons behind not carrying out the business through internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Infrastructure	2	66.67
Availability of internet	1	33.33
Technology	2	66.67
Lack of customer awareness	3	100
Trust	3	100

8. Table showing opinion of managers about target group of customers –

Particular	Sample	%
Student	3	100
Professional	1	33.33
Businessman	2	66.67
Other	0	0

9. Table Showing opinion of managers about threats in e-retailing –

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	3	100
No	0	0
Total	3	100

10. Tables showing opinion of managers about level of customer satisfaction –

Particular	Sample	%
Highly satisfied	0	0
Satisfied	0	0
Neutral	3	100
Dissatisfied	0	0
Highly dissatisfied	0	0
Total	3	100

Analysis of opinions of foot wear merchant –

- 1) Managers are of opinion that the “Kolhapuri Chappals” are famous but they are having direct orders from other area merchants.
- 2) No one using or providing e-retailing.
- 3) Merchants are of opinion that footwear shop are present in all the cities and the method is of no use. Also, we are not having large capital to spend on it.

Tabulation of opinions of business managers for ‘Book Stores’

1. Table showing opinion of managers about the knowledge of internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Known	3	100
Unknown	0	0
Total	3	100

2. Table showing opinion of managers about the surfing on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Surf on internet	2	66.67
Not Surfing	1	33.33
Total	3	100

3. Table showing opinion of managers about time for which they surf on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Half hour.	1	33.33
1-2 hrs.	1	33.33
Above 2 hrs.	1	33.34
Total	3	100

4. Table showing opinion of managers about the knowledge of retailing –

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	3	100
No	0	0
Total	3	100

5. Table showing opinion of managers about the business done on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Known / Aware	2	66.67
Unknown / unaware	1	33.33
Total	3	100

6. Table showing interest of managers in doing business on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Interested	1	33.33
Not interested	2	66.67
Total	3	100

7. Table showing reasons behind not carrying out the business through internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Infrastructure	2	66.67
Availability of internet	0	0
Technology	2	66.67
Lack of customer awareness	2	66.67
Trust	1	33.33

8. Table showing opinion of managers about target group of customers –

Particular	Sample	%
Student	3	100
Professional	3	100
Businessman	3	100
Other	2	66.67

9. Table showing opinion of managers about threats in e-retailing –

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	3	100
No	0	0
Total	3	100

10. Tables showing opinion of managers about level of customer satisfaction –

Particular	Sample	%
Highly satisfied	2	66.67
Satisfied	0	0
Neutral	1	33.33
Dissatisfied	0	0
Highly dissatisfied	0	0
Total	3	100

Tabulation of opinions Cloth shop managers/owners

1. Table showing opinion of managers about the knowledge of internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Known	2	50
Unknown	2	50
Total	4	100

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2. Table Showing opinion of managers about the surfing on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Surf on internet	1	25
Not Surfing	3	75
Total	4	100

3. Table showing opinion of managers about time for which they surf on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Half hour.	4	100
1-2 hrs.	0	0
Above 2 hrs.	0	0
Total	4	100

4. Table showing opinion of managers about the knowledge of retailing –

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	2	50
No	2	50
Total	4	100

5. Table showing opinion of managers about the business done on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Known / Aware	1	25
Unknown / unaware	3	75
Total	4	100

6. Table showing interest of managers in doing business on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Interested	2	50
Not interested	2	50
Total	4	100

7. Table showing reasons behind not carrying out the business through internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Infrastructure	1	25
Availability of internet	1	25
Technology	0	0
Lack of customer awareness	1	25
Trust	1	25

8. Table showing opinion of managers about target group of customers –

Particular	Sample	%
Student	4	100

Professional	3	75
Businessman	2	50
Other	0	0

9. Table showing opinion of managers about threats in e-retailing –

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	3	75
No	1	25
Total	4	100

10. Table showing opinion of managers about level of customer satisfaction –

Particular	Sample	%
Highly satisfied	0	0
Satisfied	1	25
Neutral	3	75
Dissatisfied	0	0
Highly dissatisfied	0	0
Total	3	100

Analysis of opinions of cloth shop managers/owners –

- 1) 50 % managers know what is internet.
- 2) Only ‘Cotton King’ shop is having e-retailing facility.
- 3) 50 % managers / owners are not interested in having such facility.
- 4) One of the reason that the customers are not ready to shop online is that they don’t get the feel of the product.

Tabulation of opinions of business managers

1. Table showing opinion of managers about the knowledge of internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Known	33	94.28
Unknown	2	5.72
Total	35	100

2. Table showing opinion of managers about the surfing on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Surf on internet	27	77.14
Not Surfing	8	22.86
Total	35	100

3. Table Showing opinion of managers about time for which they surf on internet –

Particular	%
Half hour.	14.29
1-2 hrs.	11.43

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Above 2 hrs.	54.29
No	19.99
Total	100

4. Table showing opinion of managers about the knowledge of retailing –

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	30	85.71
No	5	14.29
Total	35	100

5. Table showing opinion of managers about the business done on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Known / Aware	25	71.43
Unknown / unaware	10	28.57
Total	35	100

6. Table showing interest of managers in doing business on internet –

Particular	Sample	%
Interested	15	42.88
Not interested	20	57.12
Total	35	100

7. Table showing reasons behind not carrying out the business through internet –

Particular	%
Infrastructure	22.88
Availability of internet	14.29
Technology	14.29
Lack of customer awareness	45.71
Trust	37.14

8. Table showing opinion of managers about target group of customers –

Particular	%
Student	48.57
Professional	80
Businessman	80
Other	34.29

9. Table showing opinion of managers about threats in e-retailing –

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	17	48.57
No	18	51.43
Total	35	100

10. Tables showing opinion of managers about level of customer satisfaction –

Particular	Sample	%
Highly satisfied	17	48.87
Satisfied	5	14.29
Neutral	13	38.14
Dissatisfied	0	0
Highly dissatisfied	0	0
Total	35	100

Analysis of Manager’s opinion about E-retailing –

- 1) 95 % of shop managers (owners) know that managers in Kolhapur are aware about internet.
- 2) 77 % of shop managers / owners use to surf on internet. i.e. many managers access the computer daily.
- 3) 55 % of shop managers/owners spend their more than 2 hrs. daily on internet.
 20 % of shop managers spend less than half an hour to surf on internet.
 14 % of shop managers spend half an hour daily.
 11 % of shop managers spend 1 to 2 hours to surf on internet.
- 4) 86 % of shop managers/ owners know about retailing. Thus large no. of managers aware about retailing.
- 5) 72 % of shop managers know the business done on the internet. Thus almost 2/3rd of managers know that the business done on internet.
- 6) 58 % of managers are not interested in doing business on internet.
- 7) 42 % of managers are ready to do business online.
- 8) Impact of different factors on the non popularity of online business
 - a) Lack of customer awareness - 46 % of managers have opine that the biggest hurdle for online business.
 - b) Trust – After customer awareness, trust is the bigger hurdle for online business (38 %)
 - c) Infrastructure – (22 %)
 - d) Availability of internet (15 %)
 - e) Technology (15 %)
 Also play the vital role for not carrying out online business.
- 9) 80 % of shop managers are targeting professionals & businessman for their business.
 48 % of shop managers are targeting students for their business.
- 10) Half of the shop managers are unaware about the threats which occur in E-Retailing. Thus we can say hat managers don’t have deep knowledge of E-retailing.
- 11) Almost 49 % of shop managers say that E-Retailing will reach to the level of high satisfaction for the customers. 39 % of shop managers are neutral on the satisfaction issue.
- 12) According to many managers trust and lack of awareness in the customers are the main reasons due to which people are not ready to buy online. Sometimes people want to get the feel of shopping (cloths). Internet awareness & its faithfulness has not percolated to the society. That’s why shop managers are not ready to start business on internet. Education, availability of technology also plays important role as

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a hurdle in the e-retailing. Some businesses are depends on the location of firm and the local people so there is need of e-retailing.

Tabulation of customer's opinion of e-retailing –

1. Table showing the knowledge of customers about existence of internet

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	51	93
No	04	07
Total	55	100

2. Table showing the no. of customers surfing on the internet.

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	48	87
No	07	13
Total	55	100

3. Table showing regular time spent on internet.

Particular	%
Half hour.	29
1-2 hrs.	45
Above 2 hrs.	26
Total	100

4. Table showing the customers awareness about retailing process

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	41	75
No	14	25
Total	55	100

5. Table showing the customers awareness about business done on internet.

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	40	73
No	15	27
Total	55	100

6. Table showing the habit of customers of shopping online.

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	12	22
No	43	78
Total	55	100

7. Table showing interest of customers in doing business on internet

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	29	53
No	26	47
Total	55	100

8. Table showing types of goods which customers are ready to shop online (who are interested in doing business on internet)

Particular	Sample	%
Electronic Goods	14	25.35
Musical Instrument	13	24
Food	03	5.3
Grocery	0	0
Apparel	11	20
Biomedical Components	14	25.35
Total	55	100

9. Table showing factors due to which customers are not ready to shop online.

Particular	Sample	%
Infrastructure	3	05
Availability of internet	8	14
Technology	10	18
Lack of customer awareness	15	27
Trust	14	25
Total	55	100

10. Table showing the customers knowledge about threats in e-retailing

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	27	50
No	28	50
Total	55	100

11. Table showing the knowledge of customers about the websites dealt with their field

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	36	65
No	19	35
Total	55	100

12. Table showing customer opinion on feasibility of trading practices in e-retailing

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	27	50
No	28	50
Total	55	100

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13. Table showing frequency of customers of online shopping

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	5	10
No	50	90
Total	55	100

14. Table showing frequency of customer shopping same product online

Particular	Sample	%
Yes	09	16
No	46	84
Total	55	100

Analysis of customers opinion about e-retailing –

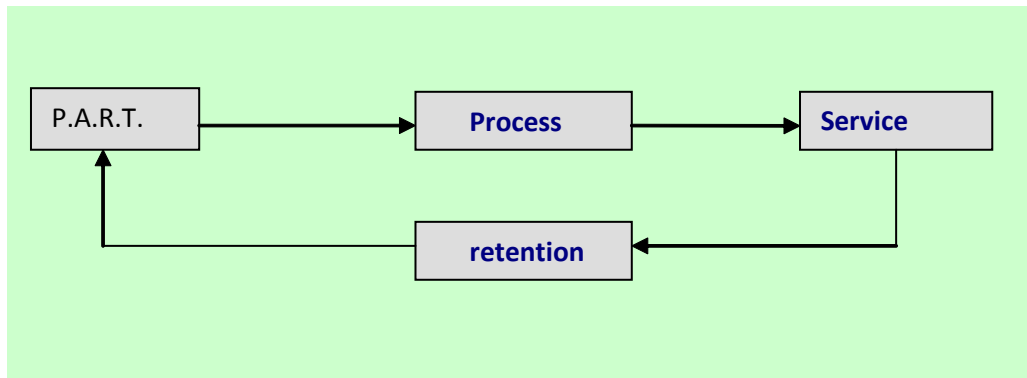
- 1) 93 % customers know what is internet,
- 2) 87 % customers use to surf on internet.
- 3) 45 % customers spend 1-2 hours daily on internet.
- 4) 75 % customers know what is retailing.
- 5) 73 % customers are knowing about the business done on internet.
- 6) Only 22 % customers shop online.
- 7) 53 % customers are interested to do the business through internet, remaining (47 %) are not interested in such practice.
- 8) Customers are mostly prefer the products to buy through internet are electronic goods, musical instruments, bio-medical compounds, apparels (few of the customers). No customer is ready to purchase the grocery through internet/online.
- 9) The major factor/reason that the customers are not ready to shop online is lack of awareness and trust on such type of practices.
- 10) Half of the customers are of opinion that there is threat in e-rretailing.
- 11) 65 % of customers are having knowledge about their field websites.
- 12) Half of the customers are of opinion that the changing trading practices are good or feasible.
- 13) Only 10 % of the customers frequently shop online.
- 14) And 16 % customers out of those who are engaged in online shopping purchase the same product frequently.
- 15) Most of the customers are hesitating to give the answers of those questions based on internet. Customers have a threat in their mind about internet. So, they are not ready to trust on the internet. Inability to access and threat in mind are the biggest hurdles for customers to do e-retailing.

Findings –

From a macro perspective, the Internet revolution in India is quite real. With a whole array of knowledge-based skills and legacy to draw upon, India is very well suited to integrate Internet into its industry even musical stores, foot wear shops, hotels are no exception. Perhaps more so than any other country in Asia, Internet will have a profound impact on India's progress towards a more open and accessible business environment. However, the

potential of Internet in the corporate sense of profit making has being overstated, and many pure web-based Indian businesses are likely to fail. Indian society is not yet ready to adapt to the ‘new economy’ in a consumer sense.

Suggested Business Model of E-Tailing for class II cities –



The suggested business model for class II cities is given above. The inputs like planning, applying, reviewing and testing of the e-tailing strategy is important for the class II city like Kolhapur where even though the internet literacy is not significant, e-tailing tendency is very low. After P,A,R,T phase, the process of awareness generation of e-tailing needs to be done. From the research it can be concluded that there is a potential for e-tailing but retention (feedback) of the customers holds the key for the performance.

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