Cultural Diversity Management and Organizational Outcome in Tourism Businesses
Workplace spirituality as a mediator

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Abstract

While categorization of human beings into various subgroups in terms of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality and alike is not a new phenomenon but such a diversity in communities all around the world has drawn much attention to the issue in recent years due to the increasing importance of equality for governments and societies. Workplaces are among those contexts which are proposed to equality issues and are trying to deal with it utilizing different approaches among which creating spirituality in workplace is a noteworthy one. Tourism businesses are not an exception in this regard and are faced with the diversity challenge especially in terms of interaction between different cultures throughout the industry. Additionally, it seems that organizational outcome is influenced by level of diversity at the workplace. Therefore, this paper adopts a developmental descriptive-analytical approach implemented by documentary analysis to discuss the relationship between diversity management and organizational outcome and provides a theoretical model indicating how workplace spirituality (WPS) mediates the relationship between cultural diversity management and organizational outcome in tourism businesses since cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature and can be a source of competitive advantage for businesses as well.

Keywords: Cultural Diversity, Workplace Spirituality (WPS), Organizational Outcome, Tourism Businesses

Introduction

Globalization has turned cultural diversity into a rising trend in recent decades. The concept has expanded in a way that it is being experienced not only in western countries but in diverse parts of the world. Since 1960, as a result of the adoption of the U.S government actions against racial discrimination in organizations and universities, the concept of cultural diversity has drawn an increasing attention in the academic literature. Reportedly, cultural diversity was initially focused on gender and race but then gender, race, religion, ethnicity, income, work experience, educational background, family status and other differences that may affect workplace were included (Mousa, 2018). The term 'diversity' in the business contexts contains all of the significant differences between people, some of which are obvious and some others are less obvious; Often the most significant differences are the least obvious ones, such as thinking styles, beliefs and value (Robert Bean Consulting, 2010).

Based on researches, highly diverse teams have shown better performance than less diverse groups under certain conditions since different perspectives and access to different resources which can be brought to the organization by individuals from diverse backgrounds increase creativity and performance and creates a more meaningful and satisfying workplace. Advantages of diversity for businesses may include access to a diverse customer base or international markets which is of great value for them. There are also some pitfalls to address here as minority groups may still suffer from some existing inequalities which may cause conflicts due to perceived differences. Since it is necessary to address the adverse side of diversity and manage it, different viewpoints about the positive and negative sides of diversity in an organization are proposed that have led to different approaches to diversity and its management (Podsiadlowski et al., 2013) among which creating a spiritual workplace is worth of further consideration. It is hard to define the term "workplace spirituality" precisely since it has different meaning to different people; but, generally speaking it can be defined as the feeling of making a connection between self and the organization. In the current globalized world, anxiety, fear and depression are common among employees especially in diverse environments. Therefore, they need a working environment in which they feel safe to openly express themselves; spirituality creates such an environment, advantages of that is felt by the employees and can be measured through organizational outputs (Rathee & Rajain, 2020). The

issue becomes more challenging when being thought in the context of tourism since diversity inherently exist in every aspect of the industry. Therefore, the current study is going to discuss the mediating role of workplace spirituality between cultural diversity management and organizational outcome in tourism related businesses.

Theoretical Framework

Diversity and Diversity Management

Diversity management has been an evolving concept theoretically and practically in the last few daces mainly in developed economies due to their large immigrant populations (Dean & Safranski, 2008). Cultural diversity implies the situation of the coexistence of individuals belonging to various identity groups within the same organization in which all groups should be involved at all organizational levels. For this to happen, an organizational culture is needed which allows each employee to act in full potential to reach his career aspiration without any discrimination in terms of religion, ethnicity, name, gender and the like. In the other word, one should be able to attain individual goals as well as organizational ones. Moreover, diversity management role is extensively recognized in creating a diversity-friendly atmosphere within the organization. Since employees' uniqueness is valued in such organizations, it will bring them an organizational identity. Therefore, all employees are treated as organization citizens and mutual trust will grow inside the organization. Because of demographic changes in labor m arket, diversity management focuses on recognizing employees' differences throughout organizations and has been proved to be a key success factor by which organizations can make a competitive advantage in such a multicultural business context. Diversity management is based on social identity theory following the elimination of all previous discriminatory procedures as well as establishing equal employment opportunity through legislations, rules and laws. According to this theory, individual identity is reinforced by belonging to specific groups since it will boost individual's self-esteem and cause a higher level of trust and positive attitude towards the members of the group compared to non-members. This theory tries to explain relationships inside the group and also indicates the inclination to create a positive social identity by individuals. Furthermore, it is claimed that social identity theory seeks to interpret intergroup conflicts (Mousa, 2018).

The cultural diversity definition which is meant here is the diversity of groups, societies and human cultures within a given space which includes backgrounds, characteristics, values, beliefs and traditions. However, managing cultural diversity in companies operating in the tourism and hospitality industry is a big deal (Rovinaru & Rovinaru, 2010) and in the current competitive environment, companies are increasingly investing in increasing diversity in the workplace. While diversity refers to the differences between people employed in organizations, diversity management refers to policies and activities designed not only to recognize diversity but also to use these differences to advance organizational goals such as increased customer satisfaction, increased innovation, fulfilling corporate social responsibility and gaining competitive advantage point to higher company performance. Research shows that the benefits of diversity increase the likelihood of success (Reisinger, 2009).

As mentioned earlier, diversity management practices have evolved across recent decades; from liberal approaches based on the sameness philosophy to radical approaches based on the positive discrimination philosophy. Diversity management has been defined as practices to maintain variations in human capital and avoid its probable adverse influences. Another definition provided by Kirton and Greene (2010) describes it as valuing differences and advantages of such differences in organizations. The scholars further discussed it as means of developing Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action (AA) laws. Affirmative action programs in the United States were mainly focused on cultural/racial discrimination while in Australia they were focused on gender discrimination. Jayne and Dipboye (2004) affirm that diversity management programs are diverse and are mainly concerned with recruitment, promotion and retention of diverse group of workforces (Ohunakin et al., 2019).

Tourism and diversity
Globalization is a phenomenon which provokes diversity. The increased globalization of hospitality industry has made it necessary for companies in the industry to work effectively in diverse environments. The increasingly competitive world economy, gradual globalization of international companies, and rapid changes in demographic trends and labor structure are posing great management challenges in the hospitality industry. Understanding and

managing diversity has thus become important to the contemporary hospitality industry. Cultural diversity brings great opportunities and benefits to the companies in the hospitality industry. But at the same time, these companies are still facing a big challenge as how to manage multicultural workplaces effectively. Many cultural barriers such as communication obstacle, discrimination and stereotypes still need to be overcome (Gong, 2008).

Managing cultural diversity by companies operating in the global tourism and hospitality industry is not a very easy task. The management of these companies might have trouble due to limited knowledge about other cultures and may preclude objective assessment and understanding of culturally different people.

In tourism and hospitality industry, cultural misunderstandings are often an important factor in the quality of staff service and most of the time occurs when delivering services to the customers. The way staff acts and the expectations of customers are based on their cultural background. Since quality of the social contact between customers and employees influences customers' perception of service quality and their ultimate satisfaction with the product, tourism and hospitality representatives should pay increasing attention to managing cultural differences in personal relations between providers and customers. Being aware of the cultural differences and learning how to face and manage them will be one of the keys to success in the future tourism marketplace (Reisinger, 2009).

A truly diversified organization can be considered one that is able to benefit cultural diversity to reach competitive advantage. As mentioned before, cultural diversity derives from human resources of different backgrounds, with different values and expectations. From this perspective, a multinational organization should invest in employees' different skills and abilities as a major asset to the company's productivity simply by paying attention to the cultural differences in their workforce. Actually, the practice proved that the wider the range of cultural differences in the workplace, the richer the organization and the more excellent its performance (ibid). In fact, cultural diversity stimulates higher levels of innovation, creativity and responding to consumer demands and rapid changes in the environment in a better way which improves organization's performance and leads to higher competitiveness level (Rovinaru & Rovinaru, 2010).

In tourism and hospitality industry that is inherently global, labor intensive and capital-intensive and customer satisfaction is essential to success, nurturing diversity and managing it effectively has become a strategic endeavor. Companies operating in the hospitality industry, unlike manufacturing companies, must be positioned at the customer base, thus employing a more diverse workforce and managing diversity enables them to hire talented ones from a broad range of people, corporate culture; foster positive organizational culture and improve their customer service (Manoharana & Singal, 2017).

Tourism and Spirituality

As people are increasingly searching for transcendence in life in the modern era, travel is going to be known as being advantageous in the emerging spiritual marketplace (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). The geo-psychological separation from usual life provides a situation to practice spirituality in life in a different way. Tempo-spatial interruption is also a key characteristic of travel which contributes to the experience of spirituality; and it can be considered as a main reason for the popularity of spiritual experiences in tourism. Considering spirituality as a goal, tourism and travel provides a context in which spirituality can be found and experienced. Regarding spirituality as a practice of connectivity, travel offers many opportunities to connect with others, with the world and with ourselves. Cohen (1979) developed a typology of five modes of experiences around the concept of the 'center' in his noble theoretical model of the tourist experience. The concept of "center" is a metaphor used to describe core values of societies. He clarifies that, through tourism practices people can manage tensions with the core values of their societies; therefore, travel settings are capable of engage people in a meaningful way with themselves, others and the life (Cheer et. al., 2017).

Workplace Spirituality

It is confirmed practically and academically that employees seek some sort of soul enrichment and spiritual fulfillment at work i.e. working beyond organizational objectives and flourishing their full potential; this is notably recognized by the employers now as meaningful working life has drawn attentions recently. Kind of work environment which allows to fulfill employees' spiritual selves is considered as a key element of organizational success (Dean & Safranski, 2008).

The concept of workplace spirituality stems from management, religion, psychology and ethics; it turned into an independent area of study since 1990s (Mansi, 2012). The idea is that workplace function is not simply to make a living but it should stimulate spiritual growth (Tanwar & Jain, 2019). Meaningful work encourages ethical business practices, commitment to social responsibilities and promote environmental awareness. Spirituality is concerned with bring productive by providing constructive benefits to organizations and the society (Mansi, 2012).

However, some inherent challenges also exist in the diversity paradigm; such as unequal practices which are sometimes neglected and scholars fail to report the limitations of diversity, through which tendency towards exert power leads to discrimination. Others question its application to amend the limitations of EO or believes that not all approaches result in business benefits. For example, study of three approaches to diversity by Ely and Thomas' (2001) i..e. (1) the integration and learning approach, (2) the access and legitimacy approach (employing a diverse workforce to access a market) and (3) the discrimination and fairness approach (a rebranding of EO) showed that only the first brings about benefits since it links diversity to work processes (Riach, 2009).

As such, spiritual workplace is supposed to have three main pillar in the pertinent literature: self-work immersion, interconnectedness, and self-actualization. Self-work immersion refers to the high level motivation to work which is concerned as an important spiritual related organizational value. Interconnectedness introduces a sense of connecting to something more psychic and everlasting than personal goals. Self-actualization is one's mental and spiritual balance as defined by Maslow; therefore, a spiritual person having such characteristics, is always concerned about others and tries to help them selflessly (Tanwar & Jain, 2019).

Some experts have argued that WPS is an element of organizational culture stems from organizational culture, therefore, both the employee and the organization play a vital role in creation of a spiritual environment at the workplace. Workplace spirituality can be discussed upon in three levels:

individual, organizational and interactive. At the individual level, WPS is concerned with the spiritual ideas and values one brings to the workplace. At the organizational level, WPS is focused on what individuals perceive about the organization spiritual value. The interactive level concerns the relationship between individual's spiritual values and organizational ones. Spirituality in the workplace is looking to make an atmosphere in work environments through which employees can grow personally and make them spiritually empowered to contribute to their society in a meaningful way and serve others; it allows individuals to integrate their inner life with their professional roles (Adnan et al., 2020).

Organizational outcome (employees' job satisfaction and employees' job performance)

One of the main determining factors of employee's performance outcome in any organization is Job satisfaction Ohunakin et al., 2018). Actually, it can be said that organizations are responsible for caring about their employees' job satisfaction especially regarding the fact that it would directly influence productivity in the organizations. Job satisfaction can be considered as the result of job nature and individual's expectations, and the personal evaluation of different aspects of the work environment. Ohunakin et al. (2018) defines job satisfaction as a positive attitude or pleasant feelings towards job arising from work achievements. Castellacci and Viñas-Bardolet (2019) discuss that the level of job satisfaction is varied based on the perception of employees toward issues such as career prospect and value for income.

Employee performance can be defined as individual's accomplishment and attainments in their job during a particular period of time; in other words, it can be described as the comparison of actual output of individuals with their intended output. Employee performance is concerned with the level of individuals' performance in the organizations which is a different concept compared to the organizational performance. Employee performance is also defined as a multi-dimensional construct which should be defined in terms of outcomes or behavior. The outcome aspects are the result of individual's behavior which is usually influenced by different environmental factors, while behavioral aspects are individual's contribution to a given responsibility that influences the organization goals (Ohunakin et al., 2019).

The Mediating Role of Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality concept is not a new idea as it has always been existed in organization and management theory. For example, meaning of work which is implicit in the concept of workplace spirituality is related to job characteristics model; although, it goes further and involves finding meaning, purpose and good feeling about work. nevertheles, workplace spirituality (WPS) theories are at an early stage. WPS has variety of definitions in the existing literature and is applied in different ways. Therefore, it is difficult to find a single generally accepted definition due to the extensive and varied use of the concept (Adnan et al., 2020).

Developing workplace spirituality concept is an attempt to recognize employees' inner life which is supposed to be nourished by meaningful work throughout communities at work. Its triple dimensions are (1) meaningful work, (2) sense of community, and (3) alignment with organizational values. Since the positive effects of spirituality at the workplace both on employees and organizations is proved reportedly, the approach is being strongly supported by many organizations. Recent studies have reported that promoting spirituality at the workplace leads to increased job satisfaction, job performance and productivity (Lata & Chaudhary, 2020).

The development of workplace spirituality can brings about positive consequences for individuals, including organizational commitment, job satisfaction, trust, honesty, creativity, work engagement, personal fulfillment, and intrinsic motivation. The main focus of workplace spirituality is to create meaning and self-fulfillment to individuals at their work environment. Based on SIP theory (Social Information Processing Theory) it can be said that high levels of workplace spirituality provides employees with inner motivators and makes them self-motivated at work which makes their lives meaningful and increases the instances of ethical behaviors from their side. Therefore, individuals working in such spiritual workplaces are better able to recognize good from evil and demonstrate morally and ethical behavior. High levels of workplace spirituality can be considered as the existence of strong ties and relationships between individuals which is known as a collective feeling of community. According to SIP theory, this sense of belonging

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to a community motivates employees towards mutual understanding and growing mental and emotional relationships with others which results in higher levels of empathy among them. Employees in a truly spiritual workplace, everyone cares about others and has the feeling of belonging to a broader social community in which he can support others and being supported by them as well (Naseer et. al., 2019).

Methodology

This research adopts a developmental descriptive-analytical approach whose qualitative data have been collected and analyzed by documentary analysis. As such, the evolution of the concept of spirituality in tourism literature and in particular tourism related businesses has been analyzed and utilizing spirituality to manage diversity and improve organizational outcome has been discussed. In this regard, the research questions were put forward in this way: **Question (1):** how does cultural diversity management influence workplace spirituality in tourism related businesses? **Question (2):** how does workplace spirituality influence organizational outcome in tourism related businesses; **Question (3):** how does cultural diversity management influence organizational outcome in tourism related businesses; **Question (4):** how does workplace spirituality mediate the relationship between cultural diversity management and organizational outcome in tourism related businesses.

Figure 1 is the conceptual framework indicating the assumed relationship among variables which are supported in the previous section of theoretical framework and will be discussed further in this study.
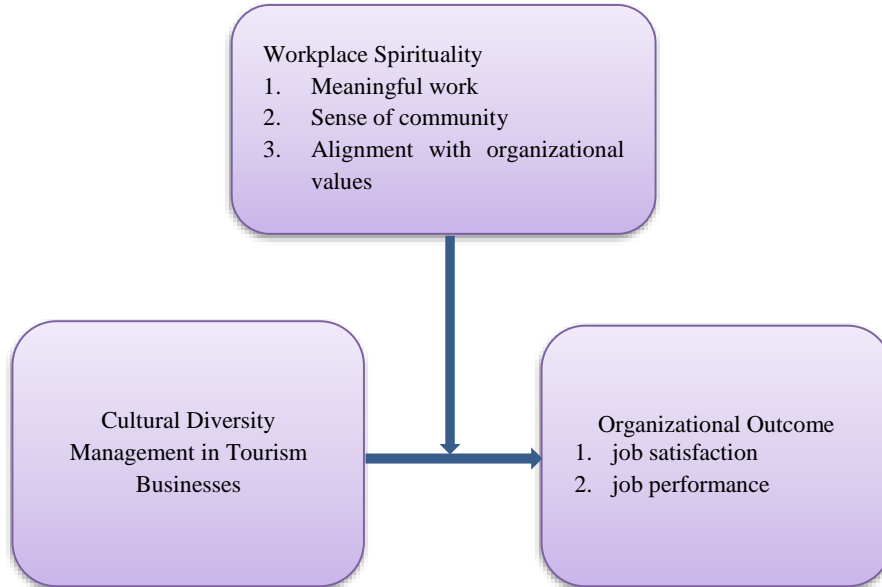
Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual model

Conclusion

As business has become exclusively internationalized and globalized over the past years, the issue of workforce diversity has also gained more popularity. The complex and dynamic business environment requires interaction among people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The main reasons why workforce diversity has become so important is the shift from manufacturing to a service economy, the globalization as well as the innovative business strategies and the increasing demand on teamwork. In addition, there are the mergers and alliances acting on a high international level and of course the changing labor market conditions. Spirituality can be utilized to promote diversity within organizations i.e. Workplace spirituality can be considered as a solution to manage highly diversified workplaces by creating spirit friendly workplaces (Mansi, 2012). It can benefit organizations in different ways e.g. it may lead to higher respect to the right of others in the organization and it can be even considered as a reciprocal relationship since showing moral behavior towards other people living and working around is something

meaningful which brings about good feeling about one selves. To be nice with others makes the working and living environment friendly and makes everything go smoothly. Moreover, in such an environment there is less dogmatism and prejudice, therefore, flexibility will grow either in personal relationships or professional ones. Besides when people have friendly behavior and good relationships, mutual understanding grows and they are more enthusiastic to learn about their cultural differences. Workplace spirituality has the potential to create an atmosphere in which differences are not judged but respected and welcome. The last issue to address is the point that in tourism industry the level of intercultural interactions is significantly higher due to the nature of the activities which are followed in the industry and spiritual workplaces along with and meaningful tasks for employees can be advantageous in making effective intercultural interactions and managing diversity. Therefore, to answer the **first question**, it can be concluded that cultural diversity management will positively influence workplace spirituality in tourism related businesses; additionally, it provides the answer to the **fourth question** by showing that workplace spirituality plays a mediating role between cultural diversity management and organizational outcome in tourism related businesses.

Spirituality in workplace plays a vital role in job satisfaction since it is an inner experience resulting from the feeling of belonging to a work community, trust, and relationships with colleagues and sharing (Fanggidae et al., 2016). The more the spiritual values are incorporated, the higher the level of well-being and quality of life would be for employees due to higher levels of hope, optimism, gratitude, and compassion. As such, workplace spirituality outcomes include higher levels of physical, psychological, mental and spiritual health of the employees which improves their performance significantly (Garg, 2017). Personal spirituality is related to job satisfaction in terms of Meaning and purpose in life which have been considered to be positively correlated with work motivation and positive work attitudes influencing job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The concept of meaning in life is perceived as being directly correlated with positive work outcomes (Der Walt & De Klerk, 2014). Therefore, the **second question** is answered as it can be perceived that workplace spirituality influences organizational outcome positively in tourism related businesses. Spirituality

performs a role as a personal resource with motivational potential and leads to high work engagement and job performance.

Besides, as mentioned before, a spirit friendly environment makes the working life meaningful to employees and even can contribute to their better performance. Since people have more effective interactions and better mutual understanding, diversity can be managed in a smoother process. As Seyman (2006) states managing cultural diversity is the response of the organization to the necessity of competitiveness and increasing diversity of the workforce. Competitive corporations cannot allow themselves losing talented and skillful employees due to discriminatory preferences or practices. The customer base has become more diverse as well and as service industries; tourism and hospitality industry is exposed even to a greater extent to the challenges of the heterogeneous labor market of the 21st century. In tourism industry the contact with the customers is vital, so corporations need to recruit employees who are able to understand and relate to the customers' needs. The main purpose of managing diversity in business is to bring out the best of employees, in a non-discriminatory, fair and just environment, for the benefit of the individuals as well as the prosperity of the whole company. In order to manage employees with different cultures and to attract diverse groups of customers, it is necessary to understand the differences, the cultural performance and the reasons for the cultural behavior of others. Since social interaction between customers and employees affects customers' perceptions of service quality and their ultimate satisfaction, it is necessary for tourism and hospitality companies to understand the cultural differences and manage this difference. They should pay close attention to understanding the cultural differences and manage them as a necessity to succeed in the tourism market. Besides, better interaction between service staff and customers improves customer experience and satisfaction, which, if effectively managed, can ultimately have a positive impact on performance. Therefore, to answer the **third question**, it can be concluded that cultural diversity management influences organizational outcome in tourism businesses positively.

Discussion

In the contemporary business scenario majority of the individuals are in thirst to achieve their spiritual needs and on the other hand due to extreme competitive environment the leaders of the organization require constructive

and positive outcomes from the spiritually boosted employees. This makes it very clear that workplace spirituality is becoming an essential element for both job seekers and job providers. The organizational environment consists of people with diversified values, capabilities, cultures, age groups, nationalities, religions but at the same time it is observed that they have common goal to achieve organizational goals and spiritual needs. Furthermore, Hospitality and tourism present a unique opportunity to understand new cultural experiences for both employees and the tourists. It is important for the personnel to understand and appreciate different cultures to enhance the nature of their interactions with tourists of different cultures, religions, races, creeds, colors, ages and genders. In addition, globalization has also enhanced the diversity experienced in the hospitality and tourism industry because of its multicultural nature. Tourism involves the movement of people from their usual surroundings to places of interest either within the country or across international borders for leisure, business, fun or adventure and the industry aims at optimizing the experience of tourists in cultural environments that differ from those of their home countries or regions. It is for this reason that businesses plying their trade in this industry must endeavor to create an atmosphere to appreciate and accommodate people from diverse backgrounds around the world. As such, workplace diversity not only facilitates easy understanding of different cultural, social and economic perspectives but also enhances the delivery of satisfactory services through communication and observation. But diversity should be managed effectively in order to be advantageous.

Additionally, the workforce composition in the hospitality and tourism establishments is definitely vast and diverse. Indeed, it is necessary to employ people from all walks of life and nationalities so as to nurture workplace diversity that portends positive influence and enhanced productivity in the hospitality and tourism industry. Workplace diversity also enables businesses in the hospitality and tourism industry to nurture and portray a positive image of inclusive equal employment opportunities for all without regard to race, gender or nationality. Diversity in the hospitality and tourism industry is enhanced through visions that promote equal employment opportunity to cater for the different nationalities in the market. The industry gets to appreciate the world's socio-cultural and economic differences through the recruitment of people of diverse backgrounds. As such, businesses in this industry need to

establish organizational policies that not only discourage discrimination but also encourage intercultural activities such as cultural educational programs and forums. Businesses also should employ organizational structure that comprise of people from different regions and races and spread key appointments to qualified staff from across the board.

Besides, due to recent trends in business context and employees approach to work, organizations are considering job satisfaction differently concentrating on spiritual values which makes individuals grow personally and spiritually in their working environment that leads to a higher level of job satisfaction and job performance. Furthermore, in organizational context, a paradigm shift has occurred throughout the last few decades from a merely economic approach towards making the balance between economic and non-economic aspects of work such as quality of life, spirituality, and social responsibility issues. Finally, spirituality may seem challenging in regard to financial performance due to its anti-materialist approach. This side is supported by some researchers as they question whether incorporating spirituality at work results in better performance. By the way, some others as Milliman (1994) strongly believes that spiritual values positively influence personal well-being as well as job performance.

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