

RECIPROCITY IN VIOLENT CONFLICT: PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT ON BENEFICIARIES OF PRESIDENTIAL AMNESTY PROGRAMME IN NIGER DELTA, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

_Violent conflict is reciprocated by the people of the Niger Delta region, Nigeria to the perceived injustice of the Federal Government and environmental threats posed by the multinational oil companies. Based on reciprocal determinism, this study examined the influence of personal factors comprising self-efficacy and outcome expectancy, situational factors comprising corporate social responsibility and perceived government support on violent conflict. A total of 200 participants were selected using convenient sampling technique from among beneficiaries of the government amnesty programme. Standardized psychological scales and supplemented semi-structured interview were adopted to collect data. Result of the hierarchical regression analysis shows that personal factors jointly accounted for 23% variation in violent conflict. The inclusion of situational factors resulted in 5% change in variance in violent conflict. In conclusion both personal factors and situational factors predicted violent conflict. Most of the beneficiaries experience violent conflict, positive perception of the Amnesty Programme and post-amnesty peace in the Niger Delta. Implication of findings is discussed in line with conflict management style and conflict management resolution.

Keywords: Reciprocal determinism, violent conflict, Niger Delta

INTRODUCTION

Increasing inequality especially between groups can lead to social unrest and conflict (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2013). Conflict is a negative behaviour, a threat which indicates perceived incompatibility of goals or action and so is violent conflict an aspect of conflict. Violent conflict refers to when at least two independent armed groups, one of the groups being the government, perceive some incompatibility between themselves. The interest of each group is opposed by the other group, with fightings producing casualties and deaths of at least 25 people per year (Wallensteen and Axell, 1994). Violent conflict is an overt behaviour or action that may

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be brought about by triadic interaction with personal factor and situational factor (Bandura, 1986). This triadic interaction is often known as reciprocal determinism. The personal factor consists of internal forces that bring about a behaviour and often a change in the behaviour. The situational factor represents external forces in which the behaviour occurs.

A personal factor such as self-efficacy suggests that an individual is competent and has perception of confidence in one's ability to perform a behavior such as violent conflict. An individual may be influenced by a situation but the individual may also influence the situation. The two interact, thus reciprocal causation between situation and individual allows the individual to either react to or act the behaviour. Individuals with feelings of self-efficacy are more persistent, and successful in skills (Scheier & Carver. 1992; Weinberg & Gould, 2007). Protesting members of aggrieved groups are likely to exhibit more self-efficacy and stronger belief in their ability to influence the situation (Caplan, 1970).

Outcome expectancy is another core personal factor which refers to the likely consequences a behavior will produce. Outcome expectancy may be influenced by the situation because outcome expectancy shapes the decisions people make about what behaviour to exhibit and which behaviour to suppress (Bandura 1986). Punishment or reward of the behaviour determines if the behaviour is repeated or not. The importance of these expectations may also drive a change in behaviour. Violent conflict may be committed by the individual or groups. Situations that provoke individuals may also provoke groups. However, collective violent conflict can be rewarding as it beams attention to the group.

Perceived government support is a situational factor which encapsulates the people's belief about the extent to which organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Eisenberger, *et al.* 2002; Eder & Eisenberger, 2008) or government values, make contributions and cares about the people's well-being. Perceived government support may be vital for determining people's behaviour towards the organization (Beheshtifar *et al.*, 2012) or governmental organization. In line with reciprocity principle, the response of people towards the action of others is in similar and equitable ways. Perceived government support to the people would therefore strengthen or weaken violent conflict from the people to the government.

Another situational factor is corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility is an organization's initiatives to assess and take responsibility for its effect on environmental, ecological and social wellbeing of the people as it profits from deterioration of the environment (Blowfield & Frynas, 2005). An organisation can cause harm to the vulnerable people in the communities (United Nations Environment Programme-UNEP, 2011) through its actions and inactions. People probably are exposed to risk such as violence, crime and unemployment (World Bank, 2007). Lack of adequate corporate social responsibility to compensate for its actions especially inactions may be reciprocated with violent conflict by the people.

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) works with the assumption of reciprocal determinism that behaviour has triadic relationship with personal and situational factors. Individual cognitive processes mediate learning a particular behaviour, therefore behaviour can be central to the



individual's personality. Reciprocal determinism proposes a change in such behaviour. The individual's personal level of self-efficacy and outcome expectancy in addition to the individual's cognition is both important in appraising the situation in which the individual functions. Hence, situational factor such as corporate social responsibility and perceived government support in which the individual operates is appraised by the personal factors and may contribute to behaviour such as violent conflict and also shape behaviour change from violent conflict. Corporate social responsibility and perceived government support can build self-efficacy and outcome expectancy in the people. Particularly when the people contribute substantially, such as it is in the case of the Niger Delta region. The region gives to Nigeria about 95% of its foreign exchange earnings accrued from oil production (Energy Information Administration-EIA, 2011; UNEP, 2011) but is short changed in return for its contribution (Omeje, 2004; Sala-i- Martin & Subramanian, 2003). For the huge wealth the oil generates, it may be perceived as black gold. For the much violent conflict the oil generates it may be perceived as crude oil. The people of the Niger Delta region make demands in equitable ways for the contribution they have made.

Escalation of commitment theory by Staw (1976) is a decision theory which purports that an increase in commitment of resources to an initial decision in spite of negative feedback is escalation of commitment. In order to justify prior decision and to demonstrate the ultimate rationality of a losing cause of action, a decision maker may escalate commitment by increasing resources to a previously chosen course of action in the face of negative decision consequence. There is escalation of commitment to violent conflict decision in the Niger Delta despite warnings of reprisal action and feedback of lack of development, destruction of lives and properties.

Over the last 20 years, upheaval of violent conflict is not uncommon in the Niger Delta region (Francis *et al.*, 2011). Violent conflict is incensed by the vacillating attitude of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), ranging from inaction, empty promises to perceived injustices (Ejibunu & Tuschl, 2007), as a rebuff to initial approach of activism or non-violent conflict (Pegg, 1999) adopted by the people of the region to press their demands. Compounding the Niger Delta debacle, are the intractable issues of reparation, environmental threats (World Bank, 2007), the neglect of the region, in spite of its oil wealth which are evidences of exploitation by the government. There are incidences of reciprocity in violent conflict among the contending groups that is the duo of FGN and multinational oil companies on one hand and the militants representing people of the Niger Delta on the other hand.

On its own part, the FGN claims to be checking incidences of oil bunkering, kidnapping, piracy, guerrilla warfare of the militants (Oteh & Eze, 2012) rained massive military crack downs between September, 2004 and August, 2008. Both groups exhibit retaliation in managing the violent conflict. Since October 2012, the violent conflict escalated (Ross, 2012). Violent conflict casualties orchestrated by the militant group in the Niger Delta reached an international level of recognition (BBC Online, 2010; Newsom, 2011). Most attacks by the militants, come as a pointer to general dissatisfaction with the FGN, and were directed at the multinational oil companies' petroleum operations in the region (BBC Online, 2006; UNDP, 2006).



Personal factor is about the militants of the Niger Delta, while situational factor relates to the multinational oil companies and the FGN. Subsequently, the FGN has primary concern to thwart the violent conflict (Bennett, 2002). Consequently, the FGN introduces the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) and grants amnesty to the militants in June 2009 for disarmament, rehabilitation and reintegration in order to restore peace (Egwu, 2013). The PAP fosters the perception of support on the part of the FGN towards the people of Niger Delta (Ejovi & Ebue, 2013; Newsom, 2011; Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012). Utilizing compromising conflict management style, both contending groups give up something to maintain acceptable solution (Thomas, 1976) to end the violent conflict. The beneficiaries of PAP are offered training in formal education, vocational and entrepreneurial skills both within and outside the country to create employment for self-reliance and non-dependence on government.

PAP is a form of perceived government support that aims at ending the violent conflict by targeting the beneficiaries for sustainable peace in the Niger Delta region. Beneficiaries play significant role in identifying those who down arms to embrace the programme. There is a need to get feedback from the beneficiaries to palpate the progress and success of PAP.

Previous studies indicated that conflict is related to team member satisfaction performance (De Drue & Weingart, 2003); outcome expectancy (Feierabend & Feierabend, 1972); self-efficacy (Scheier & Carver, 1991); sex difference (Anderson *et. al.*, 2006); youth prevalence (Surgeon General, 2001) but properly managed conflict can change group outcomes (Alpert *et al.*, 2000). Other researchers (Bennett, 2002; Ijaiye, 2014; Kiikpoye & Patrick, 2013; Oko & Agbonofah, 2014; Nwankwo, 2015) found that there is relationship between corporate social responsibility and violent conflict. Reade and Lee (2012) found that perceived organizational support attenuate the negative relationship between employee sensitivity to ethno-political conflict.

Studies on causes of conflict in the Niger Delta include occult imaginations (Anugwom, 2011); perceived marginalization (Ehigie, 2005); human rights violation Ejibunu & Tuschl (2007) revenue allocation (Omeje, 2004) and infrastructural decay (UNDP, 2006). Other related research works on the Niger Delta are self-esteem (Akinbobola, 2012); environmental worry (Akinbobola & Njor, 2014); risk perception (Akinbobola & Njor, 2013); presidential amnesty (Egwu, 2013; Ejovi & Ebue, 2013; Newsom, 2011; Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012).

There is a gap in research on violent conflict in the Niger Delta using reciprocal determinism. Violent conflict may escalate in the Niger Delta unless there is a behaviour change from violent conflict. Few studies have been done on violent conflict using beneficiaries of PAP; this in turn makes this research relevant. The present study examined if there is triadic interaction among personal factor which are self-efficacy and outcome expectancy and situational factor which are corporate social responsibility and perceived government support on violent conflict. This study further investigated the level of violent conflict, self-perception of PAP and post amnesty peace in the Niger Delta using the PAP as a focal point for the study among current beneficiaries. The following hypothesis was therefore tested:

Personal factor and situational factor will have significant influence on violent conflict.



METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive survey design (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). The setting for this study is the Niger Delta in Nigeria. Niger Delta is a region consisting of nine oil-producing states (UNDP, 2006). The region makes up 8% of Nigeria land mass, in the south of the country (Hogan, 2013).

Participants

The participants for this study consist of 200 beneficiaries of the PAP located in Bayelsa and Rivers States. The participants were beneficiaries who were easy to reach and were selected using convenient sampling technique (Lucas,2014), Participants comprised of 134 (67%) male and 66 (33%) female. Their age ranges from 16-47, with a mean of 26.97 years. Based on age, younger participants are 101(50.50%) and older participants are 99 (49.50%). The participants are mainly youths. The participants are from 8 out of the 9 states that make up the Niger Delta. The participants based on state of origin are Abia 0(0)%), Akwa Ibom 17 (8.5%), Bayelsa 57(28.50%), Cross Rivers 6 (3%), Delta 31 (15.5%), Edo 18 (9%), Imo 19 (9.5%), Ondo 5 (2.5%), Rivers 47 (23.50%).

Instrument

A questionnaire was used to collect data. The demographic section asked questions about participant's age, sex, state of origin and semi-structured interview on knowledge of the violent conflict in the Niger Delta, self-perception of the PAP and knowledge of post amnesty peace in the Niger Delta region.

Conflict scale is adapted from Velicer et al., (1989) which originated from Bardis (1973). This scale assesses the extent of individuals' evaluations of violence. A 13-item multidimensional scale measures violence. A sample item is "A conflict revolution can be perfectly right". Items were scored on a Likert type scale, from "Strongly Disagree (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7). The original violence scale measures four dimensions which are war, corporal punishment, penal code violence, and extreme interpersonal violence. Only one dimension which is war is used out of the 4 dimensions in this study. The present study reports Cronbach alpha reliability of .83



Self-efficacy scale is developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). This scale measures participant's ability to exert control over one's own behaviour and social environment. A 10-item scale, scored on 4 point where (1) indicates "Not at all true" and 4 indicates "Exactly true". A sample item is "I am certain that I can accomplish my goals". The present study reports Cronbach alpha reliability of .85

Outcome expectancy is a 2-item scale constructed by Wong (2005). A sample of item is "How likely will a task be accepted". This scale is adapted to measure participants' degree of confidence that undergoing a task would lead to positive outcome. Items were scored on a rating scale from "Negative outcome" (1) to "Positive outcome (7). The present study reports Cronbach alpha reliability of .79

Corporate social responsibility scale is adapted from Abbott & Monsen (1979). This scale measures organization level of response to social obligations and cultural environment, societal laws and regulations. The scale comprises of 6 dimensions which are environment, equal opportunity, personnel, community involvement, products and other disclosures. The present study utilises 9 items from 2 dimensions namely environment and community involvement. A sample of item is "Recycling of waste materials". Items were scored on a Likert type scale, from "Strongly Disagree (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The present study reports Cronbach alpha reliability of .76

Perceived government support scale is adapted from Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) perceived organizational support which they adopted from Eisenberger *et al.*, (1986). Perceived government support scale measures participants' general belief regarding the governmental organization's commitment to them. Perceived government support contains 8-item. A sample of item is "The government would ignore any complaint from my community". Items were scored on a Likert type scale, from "Strongly Disagree (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The present study reports Cronbach alpha reliability of .85

Procedure

The questionnaire is administered individually to the participants who are beneficiaries of the PAP. The participants were selected using convenient sampling technique (Sekaran, 2003). Participants are encouraged to fill the questionnaire in all honesty and assured of their nondisclosure and confidentiality as regards their responses. The questionnaires were retrieved from the participants when they have been completed. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis of the data.

RESULTS



Semi-Structured Interview

The result in Table 1 reveals that most of the participants 166(83%) experience high level of violent conflict, 34(17%) experiences low level of violent conflict in the Niger Delta. Using frequency count, some areas of the region with the highest frequency of violence mentioned are Azuzuama, Ban-ogoi, Nembe and Odi in Bayelsa State, and Akasa, Obio-Akpor, Ogoni, Oporoza, Eleme and Umuechem Rivers State.

Table 1: Level of Violent conflict in the Niger Delta

Level of violent conflict	Ν	%	
High	166	83	
Low	34	17	

The result in Table 2 reveals that most of the participants 151(75.5%) have positive perception of PAP and 49 (24.5%) had negative perception of PAP. Result of thematic analysis revealed that those with positive perception felt that PAP provides empowerment for job creation, social infrastructure, security and social welfare for the youths. They revealed they do not get support from the multinational oil companies.

Table 2: Perception of Presidential Amnesty Programme

Assessment of PAP	Ν	%
Positive	151	75.5
Negative	49	24.5

The result in Table 3 reveals that most of the participants 148 (74%) experience high level of post amnesty peace, 52 (26%) low level of post amnesty peace at the Niger Delta.

Table 3: Level of Post Amnesty Peace in the Niger Delta

Assessment of Post Amnesty Peace	Ν	%	
High	148	74	
Low	52	26	



Inter-correlations

Means, standard deviations and inter-correlations are presented in Table 4. Observing triad interaction: For personal factor and violent conflict, there is bivariate significant correlation between self efficacy and violent conflict (r = 0.47; P<.01); negative significant relationship between outcome expectancy and violent conflict (r = -0.15; P<.05). For personal factor and violent conflict, there is a negative significant relationship between perceived government support and violent conflict (r = -0.28; P< .01). For personal factor and situational factor, bivariate correlation indicates a positive significant relationship between corporate social responsibility and outcome expectancy (r = 0.19; P< .01). A negative significant relationship is shown between perceived government support and self-efficacy (r = -0.16; P< .05). Situational factor namely corporate social responsibility and perceived government support have significant inverse relationship (r = -0.34; P< .01).

Table 4: Zero Order Correlation Matrix Showing Relationship between Independent Factors and Dependent Factors

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Self-Efficacy						31.58	6.07
2. Outcome Expectancy	-0.07					6.03	1.47
3.Corporate Social Responsibility	-0.03	0.19**				25.44	7.27
4.Perceived Government Support	-0.16*	-0.01	-0.34**			22.81	4.97
5. Violent Conflict	0.47**	-0.15*	-0.05	-0.28**		46.12	10.22

Hypothesis Testing

Hierarchical regression was used to test hypothesis one which stated that personal factor and situational factor have significant influence on violent conflict. It is important to statistically control for the direct influence of personal factor on violent conflict before evaluating the independent contribution of situational factor. Thus, personal factor is entered into the hierarchical regression model during step one, with situational factor being entered in a second step. In Table 5 result of hierarchical regression analysis is computed with the predictor factors. Personal factor which is self-efficacy and outcome expectancy are entered first. The personal factor jointly and significantly accounted for twenty three percent ($R^2 = .23$) variance on violent conflict F (2, 198) = 29.39; P < 0.1. The independent contribution of each of the personal factor shows that only self-efficacy contributes significantly to violent conflict ($\beta = 0.46$; t = 7.31**; P <. 01). The result of the beta weight shows that participants with high self-efficacy exhibit violent conflict more than those with low self-efficacy.

In the second model, situational factor is added to the equation to examine if it has direct effect on violent conflict. The result revealed that situational factors along with the personal factors



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jointly and significantly contribute twenty eight percent ($R^2 = .28$) variance to violent conflict F (5, 195) = 6.54; P < .01). The inclusion of situational factor alone results in five percent change in variance ($\Delta R^2 = .05$; P < .01) to violent conflict. The significant independent contribution of each of situational factor shows that only perceived government support contributes significantly to conflict (β = -0 24; t = 3.61**; P <. 01). The result of the beta weight shows that participants with low perceived government support exhibit violent conflict more than those with high perceived government support. The result in Table 5 indicates that both personal factor and situational factor exhibit significant influences on violent conflict.

		Model I		Model II	
Variable		β	t	β	t
Step 1					
Personal Factors					
	Self Efficacy	0.46**	7.31**	0.42**	6.80**
	Outcome Expectancy	-0.11	-1.79	-0.13	-2.09
Step 2					
Situational Factors					
	Corporate Social Responsibility			0.07	1.05
	Perceived Government Support			-0.24**	-3.61**
F		29.39**		6.54**	
R		0.48		0.53	
R (square)		0.23		0.28	
Change in R (Square)		0.23		0.05	
Adjusted R (Square)		0.22		0.26	
Df		2/198		5/195	
Std. Err.		9.01		8.77	

Table 5: Hierarchical Regression Result for Personal Factor and Situational factor on Violent Conflict



DISCUSSION

The findings of the semi-structured interview that more beneficiaries experience a high level of violent conflict corroborates the finding of (UNDP, 2013) that violent conflict disrupts human development, impedes investments and growth, and causes government to divert resources to maintaining law and order. The FGN versus the militant group by their reprisal actions unfortunately escalated the conflict. The finding that only a few beneficiaries have negative perception of PAP support Newsom (2011) that PAP recorded relative short term success but may not reduce violent conflict on a long term. The fact that there are still a few beneficiaries with negative perception of PAP leaves more to be desired for the programme. PAP utilises a compromising conflict management style where both groups in the conflict are partially satisfied (Barki & Hartwick, 2011), hence both the FGN and the militant group had reprisal attacks, an end will come to attacks when both are fully satistied. The findings that few of the beneficiaries experience low post amnesty peace corroborates (UNDP, 2005) that, violent conflict impedes the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa generally, and in Nigeria specifically. UNDP (2005) rated Nigeria low in Human Development Index (HDI) because there is incessant violent conflict in the country. Although more of the beneficiaries experience post amnesty peace and stability, the few who do not experience post amnesty peace are vulnerable and at risk of reverting to crime and violence.

In conflict management resolution an alternative for behavioural change from violent conflict to peace-making is conciliation; rather than exploitation or retaliation as it has been the case in Niger Delta. Originally, the FGN exploits the oil popularly termed black gold of the Niger Delta. Later the people represented by the militants of the Niger Delta retaliated with fighting the FGN by acts such as engaging in guerrilla warfare. There was escalation of commitment (Akinbobola, 2008) to initial decisions of both contending groups to the violent conflict despite negative feedback even from the global community that the decision to resolve to violent conflict was wrong. Reciprocal de-escalation (Osgood, 1980) based on the reciprocity principle will elicit mutual reinforcement by the two contending groups of each other's actions. PAP introduced by FGN stands a good chance as de-escalatory action that encourages reciprocation of goodwill from the people of Niger Delta for sustainable peace. Peace in conflict management make the groups reconcile their perceived differences and reach genuine accord that may require behaviour change from violent conflict to peace that is sustained. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) includes promoting peace justice and inclusive societies (UNDP, 2015; World Health Organisation-WHO, 2016).

The findings of hypothesis testing that personal factors and situational factors have significant influence on violent conflict support Bandura (1986) reciprocal determinism. Self-efficacy a personal factor independently had positive influence on violent conflict corroborates Scheier and Carver, (1991). Those with high self-efficacy are activist and support violent conflict. Another personal factor, outcome expectancy did not have independent influence on violent conflict. However, the finding of bivariate correlation indicates that there is negative relationship between outcome expectancy and violent conflict, this finding supports (Alpert *et al.*, 2000; Feierabend & Feierabend, 1972). Those who believe themselves worthy of more resource than they are



receiving especially when outcome expectance is not sufficient may retaliate with violent conflict. A crude reality of oil popularly termed crude oil is evident in reciprocal violent conflict when the people on whose land the oil is tapped beliefs and expectations are cut short.

Although the situational factor have joint influence on violent conflict only perceived government support independently contribute to violent conflict, this finding substantiate Reade & Lee, 2012) A negative influence suggests that decreased perceived government support may make beneficiary to embrace violent conflict (Francis, LaPin, & Rossiasco, 2011). The less the perceived government support, the higher the beneficiaries' exhibit violent conflict. Based on reciprocity, the response of the beneficiaries to the inaction through inadequate perceived government support, is in similar and equitable way, therefore violent conflict ensues.

There was no independent support of corporate social responsibility on violent conflict, this finding does not corroborate the findings of (Kiikpoyek, 2013; Bennett, 2002; Nwankwo, 2015). This may be explained by the findings of bivariate correlation where there is an inverse significant relationship between the two situational factors namely corporate social responsibility and perceived government support. As corporate social responsibility decreases, perceived government support increases. The beneficiaries explain that they feel the impact of Presidential Amnesty Programme more since its introduction in 2009 and less of corporate social responsibility. This is an indication that multinational oil companies are not absolved of their ethical, corporate and social responsibility of the Niger Delta region. As the multinational oil companies make economic gain they are key to manage and resolve the violent conflict that erupted from their action.

The finding on the bivariate correlation further supports triad interaction as personal factor and situational factor reveal that there is negative relationship between self-efficacy and perceived government support. The less the perceived government support, the higher the beneficiary's self-efficacy. When there is decreased perceived government support, beneficiaries with high self-efficacy will exhibit violent conflict, they will feel collective efficacy often as activists. There is positive relationship between corporate social responsibility and outcome expectancy. The less the corporate social responsibility and decreased outcome expectancy, beneficiaries will agitate for more outcome or resource and therefore will exhibit more violent conflict.

Implication and Recommendation

This study has implications for all beneficiaries to elicit equitable peace behaviour. Researchers identify some beneficiaries who are at risk, these vulnerable beneficiaries perceive a negative PAP, and they also have a minimal experience of post amnesty peace. The FGN is seen to give support for continued reintegration. This study has implications for society because violent conflict is exhibited by youths, attracts global attention and drives away foreign investors from the region. Multinational oil companies are not perceived to support the beneficiaries. There are beneficiaries at risk who require continued peace counselling. For sustainable peace, government and



communities are to find lasting solutions to conflict and insecurity. Previous studies suggested effective conflict management style and conflict management resolution; specifically that self efficacy and outcome expectancy influence violent conflict. Psychological intervention for beneficiaries should be encouraged. In conclusion, this study is leading future research on more personal factors and situational factors that provoke violent conflict.

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