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Organizational Justice As A Correlate Of Teachers' Work Commitment In Public Senior Secondary Schools In Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined organizational justice as a correlate of teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study was guided by 2 objectives, 2 research questions and 2 corresponding null hypotheses. The study was anchored on Adams' equity theory 1965. The study used a correlational research design with a population of all the 8,452 teachers distributed over 286 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, out of which a sample of 382 teachers was drawn from a total population of 8,452 teachers representing 5.39% using Taro Yamane Minimum sampling technique. The study used two (2) sets of instruments for collection of data. The first instrument was titled: Organizational Justice Questionnaire (OJQ) and Teachers' Work Commitment Questionnaire (TWCQ). The instruments OJQTWCQ were validated by the supervisors and three (3) experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. Cronbach alpha method was used to determine the reliability index of 0.95 for organizational commitment questionnaire and 0.94 was obtained for teachers' work commitment questionnaire. Simple regression was used to answer research questions. t-test associated with simple regression was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that, there is very high positive joint relationship between organizational justice indicators (distributive justice, procedural justice) and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Also, the result of the null hypotheses equally showed that, there is significant joint relationship between organizational justice (distributive justice, procedural justice) and teachers' work commitment in public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study concluded that organizational justice variables among them distributive justice, procedural justice are strong components and relate to teachers' work commitment. Based on the findings, the study recommended that principals should ensure that rewards, promotions, and recognition are based strictly on merit, performance, and clearly defined criteria to strengthen distributive and equity justice.

Keywords: Organizational Justice, teachers' work commitment, public senior secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' work commitment is a central determinant of educational quality, school effectiveness, and student achievement in any education system. At its essence, work commitment refers to the psychological attachment, loyalty, and dedication a teacher has toward their job and organization. It encompasses a strong belief in the school's goals and values, a readiness to exert effort on behalf of the

institution, and a persistent desire to remain within the organization and contribute meaningfully to its success. Teachers with high levels of work commitment often demonstrate high attendance, sustained effort in instructional responsibilities, willingness to innovate pedagogically, and resilience in the face of challenges that characterize teaching environments (Bies, 2020). Such commitment enhances not only teacher performance but also student outcomes and school development, ultimately advancing broader educational goals at both local and national levels.

In the context of public senior secondary schools in Nigeria, including Rivers State, teachers' work commitment is shaped by a complex array of organizational, social, and personal factors. These range from working conditions and career advancement opportunities to school leadership, reward systems, and psychological experiences at work. Among these factors, organizational justice, the perception that policies, decisions, and interpersonal interactions are fair and equitable has gained prominence in educational research as a potential correlate of teachers' work commitment (Colquitt, 2021). Organizational justice comprises multiple dimensions, including distributive justice (fairness of outcomes and resource allocation), procedural justice (fairness of decision-making processes), interactional justice (respectful and dignified interpersonal treatment), and informational justice (clarity and transparency of explanations for decisions). When teachers perceive high levels of justice in these areas, they are more likely to feel valued, respected, and motivated to meet professional expectations.

Teachers' work commitment manifests through several observable and psychological indicators. One major indicator is commitment to teaching tasks, which is reflected in punctuality, regular attendance, thorough lesson preparation, effective classroom management, and timely assessment of students' work. Teachers who are committed to their work take instructional responsibilities seriously and strive to deliver lessons effectively in line with curriculum objectives. Another important indicator is organizational loyalty, which involves teachers' identification with and attachment to their school. This is expressed through willingness to support school policies, participate in school activities, and contribute to achieving institutional goals. Such teachers speak positively about their schools and demonstrate a desire to remain in the organization despite external opportunities (Iqbal et al, 2023). Professional commitment also serves as a key indicator of teachers' work commitment. This includes dedication to the teaching profession, adherence to professional ethics, and continuous effort toward self-improvement through training, workshops, and further education. Teachers who are professionally committed seek to improve their instructional competence and remain current with pedagogical innovations. For teachers to be committed in their work, there is need for organizational justice.

Organizational justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in the way decisions are made, resources are distributed, and interpersonal relationships are managed within an organization (Arogundade, 2025). It focuses on how individuals judge the equity, transparency, and ethical standards of organizational practices and managerial actions. In educational institutions such as secondary schools, organizational justice reflects teachers' perceptions of fairness in areas such as workload distribution, promotion and appraisal processes, disciplinary procedures, communication, and the manner in which school leaders interact with staff. Scholars generally conceptualize organizational justice as a multidimensional construct (Meyer & Allen 2020). Distributive justice concerns the perceived fairness of outcomes, such as salaries, promotions, teaching loads, and recognition. Procedural justice relates to the fairness of the processes used to arrive at decisions, including consistency, transparency, and opportunities for voice. Interactional justice emphasizes the quality of interpersonal treatment teachers receive from school administrators, particularly respect, dignity, and empathy. Informational justice focuses on the adequacy, clarity, and honesty of explanations provided for decisions and policies. Together, these dimensions shape teachers' overall sense of fairness within the school organization.

Organizational justice is critically important in secondary schools because it directly influences teachers' attitudes, behaviours, and effectiveness. One major importance of organizational justice is its role in enhancing teachers' work commitment and motivation. When teachers perceive that decisions affecting their work are fair and transparent, they are more likely to feel valued and respected, which strengthens their psychological attachment to the school and willingness to exert effort in their duties. Organizational

justice also contributes significantly to positive job satisfaction and morale among teachers (Omotayo, 2025). Fair treatment reduces feelings of frustration, resentment, and alienation, thereby promoting emotional well-being and professional fulfilment. Teachers who experience fairness are more likely to approach their instructional responsibilities with enthusiasm and maintain a positive attitude toward their students and colleagues. Another important contribution of organizational justice is its effect on school climate and interpersonal relationships. Fair administrative practices foster trust between teachers and school leadership, encourage cooperation among staff, and reduce conflicts. A school environment characterized by justice promotes open communication, collaboration, and shared responsibility for achieving educational goals.

Lawal (2022) identified distributive justice and procedural justice as vital components of organizational justice. These components provided a sense of direction in conducting this study.

Distributive justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in the allocation of organizational outcomes and rewards. It is concerned with how tangible and intangible resources such as salaries, promotions, workload, recognition, training opportunities, and incentives are distributed among members of an organization. The concept is grounded in equity theory, which posits that individuals evaluate fairness by comparing their inputs (such as effort, qualifications, and experience) with the outcomes they receive relative to others in similar positions. When outcomes are perceived as equitable, individuals are more likely to view the organization as fair; when inequities are perceived, dissatisfaction and negative work attitudes may arise UNESCO (2017). In secondary schools, distributive justice is reflected in teachers' perceptions of fairness in areas such as teaching load allocation, promotion and advancement, access to professional development opportunities, assignment of responsibilities, and recognition for performance. Because teachers are highly sensitive to how rewards and responsibilities are shared, perceptions of distributive justice play a critical role in shaping their attitudes toward their work and their schools.

The relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment is both theoretically and empirically well established. When teachers perceive that rewards and outcomes are distributed fairly, they are more likely to feel valued and respected, which strengthens their emotional attachment to the school and increases their commitment to teaching tasks. In secondary schools, fair distribution of workloads and rewards encourages teachers to exert greater effort in lesson preparation, classroom instruction, and student evaluation. Teachers who believe that their contributions are appropriately recognized and rewarded tend to demonstrate higher levels of affective commitment, reflected in enthusiasm for teaching and willingness to support school initiatives. Conversely, perceptions of distributive injustice such as unequal promotion practices, favoritism, or inequitable workload distribution can lead to reduced commitment, frustration, and withdrawal behaviours, including absenteeism and minimal compliance with job requirements. Empirical studies in educational settings have consistently shown that distributive justice is positively associated with teachers' organizational and professional commitment (Arogundade, 2025). Research conducted by Bies (2020) in Nigerian secondary schools indicates that teachers who perceive fairness in the distribution of rewards and responsibilities exhibit higher levels of job involvement and loyalty to their schools. These findings suggest that distributive justice serves as a motivational mechanism that reinforces teachers' sense of obligation and attachment to their work. Furthermore, distributive justice contributes to teacher retention and school stability. In contexts where resources are limited, such as public secondary schools in Nigeria, fairness in allocation becomes even more salient. When teachers perceive distributive justice, they are more likely to remain committed to their schools despite challenges, thereby supporting continuity in teaching and learning processes. Thus, distributive justice is a critical organizational factor that influences teachers' work commitment and, by extension, the effectiveness of secondary schools.

Procedural justice refers to individuals' perceptions of fairness in the processes and methods used to make decisions within an organization. Unlike distributive justice, which focuses on the fairness of outcomes, procedural justice emphasizes how decisions are reached, including the consistency, transparency, impartiality, and ethical standards of decision-making procedures. It also involves the extent to which

affected individuals are given opportunities to express their views, challenge decisions, and receive explanations for actions taken by those in authority. In secondary schools, procedural justice is reflected in the fairness of administrative processes such as staff appraisal, promotion procedures, disciplinary actions, allocation of teaching responsibilities, and policy implementation (Federal Republic of Nigeria. 2014). When school administrators apply rules consistently, involve teachers in decision-making, and base judgments on accurate and unbiased information, teachers are more likely to perceive high levels of procedural justice. Such perceptions play a crucial role in shaping teachers' attitudes toward school leadership and the institution as a whole.

The relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment is strongly supported by organizational and educational research. When teachers perceive that decision-making processes within their schools are fair and inclusive, they are more likely to develop trust in school leadership, feel respected as professionals, and demonstrate greater commitment to their work. In secondary schools, fair procedures in areas such as performance evaluation and promotion enhance teachers' sense of ownership and belonging (Bies, 2020). Teachers who believe that decisions affecting their careers are made objectively and transparently tend to show higher levels of affective and normative commitment, reflected in enthusiasm for teaching, cooperation with school management, and readiness to support school initiatives. Procedural justice also promotes acceptance of decisions, even when outcomes are unfavorable, because teachers trust the fairness of the process. Conversely, perceptions of procedural injustice such as favoritism, inconsistency, or lack of teacher voice can undermine teachers' work commitment. Teachers who feel excluded from decision-making or unfairly treated may become disengaged, resistant to school policies, or less motivated to perform their duties effectively. Empirical studies in Nigerian secondary schools have shown that procedural justice significantly predicts teachers' organizational commitment, suggesting that fair administrative practices are critical for sustaining teacher motivation and retention.

This study was rooted on Adams' Equity theory, proposed by John Stacey Adams in (1965), posits that individuals assess the fairness of their treatment in the workplace by comparing the ratio of their inputs to outputs with that of others. Inputs are the contributions employees make, such as effort, skills, and experience, while outputs are the rewards they receive, including salary, recognition, and career opportunities. According to Adams, perceived inequity generates tension and dissatisfaction, prompting individuals to take corrective action, either by adjusting their inputs, seeking increased outputs, or psychologically rationalizing the imbalance. In educational settings, teachers may evaluate whether their effort in lesson preparation, classroom management, and student mentoring is appropriately recognized and rewarded relative to their colleagues. When teachers perceive fairness in distribution of resources, promotions, and recognition, their commitment to the school and willingness to go beyond minimal requirements tend to increase.

Equity theory is particularly relevant to this study because it provides a mechanism to understand how perceived distributive and procedural justice can influence teachers' work commitment. Distributive justice the perceived fairness of outcome allocations and procedural justice the perceived fairness of the processes that lead to outcomes directly correspond to the constructs in Adams' framework. For instance, if teachers in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State perceive inequitable salary structures, favoritism in promotions, or biased performance evaluations, their organizational commitment may be negatively affected. Conversely, fair treatment fosters higher engagement, satisfaction, and long-term retention, making equity theory a valuable lens for examining organizational justice in the education sector.

Statement of the Problem

In Rivers State, Nigeria, public secondary schools continue to face persistent challenges related to teacher motivation, retention, and performance. A central concern is the observable decline in teachers' work commitment, which is reflected in absenteeism, lateness, poor lesson preparation, low participation in extracurricular activities, and minimal engagement in school improvement initiatives. While teachers are expected to play a pivotal role in shaping student outcomes and national development, many schools

struggle to sustain a high level of professional dedication among staff. This situation is particularly worrying given the high demands of the teaching profession, including large class sizes, inadequate teaching resources, and increasing administrative pressures.

A growing body of research suggests that teachers' perception of fairness in the workplace referred to as organizational justice significantly influences their attitudes and behaviors at work. Organizational justice encompasses teachers' views on how fairly they are treated in terms of decision-making processes, allocation of resources, recognition, and interpersonal interactions. In the context of Rivers State public secondary schools, teachers often encounter inequities in promotions, allowances, workload distribution, and recognition, which may erode their sense of belonging and commitment to their institutions. When teachers perceive unfair treatment, they may become disengaged, reduce effort, or even seek transfers to other schools or professions, thereby weakening the quality of education delivery.

Despite the importance of organizational justice, there is limited empirical evidence specifically linking it to teachers' work commitment within the unique socio-economic and institutional realities of Rivers State. Consequently, school administrators and policymakers lack clear guidance on how to address the underlying causes of declining teacher commitment. This gap is significant because improving organizational justice could offer a viable pathway to enhancing teacher commitment, thereby promoting better educational outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how organizational justice correlates with teachers' work commitment in public secondary schools in Rivers State, to identify key areas of unfairness and recommend strategies that can strengthen teacher engagement, morale, and long-term dedication to the teaching profession.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between organizational justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. examine the relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. identify the relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The study tested the following null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance:

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

$H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all the 8,452 teachers distributed over 286 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample size of 382 teachers was drawn from a total population of 8,452 teachers representing 5.39% using Taro Yamane Minimum sampling technique. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the respondents. The study used two (2) sets of instruments for data collection. The instrument were titled: Organizational Justice Questionnaire (OJQ) and Teachers' Work Commitment Questionnaire (TWCQ). The structured questionnaire was divided into two (2) sections. Section A elicited responses on personal data while Section B consisted of items structured in line with the 2 research questions of this study. The instruments

were modified after 4 points Likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) scale of responses. The instrument for this study was validated for face and content validity using the Supervisors and one (1) expert in Measurement and Evaluation from Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. This helped the researcher to obtain a critical assessment of the instrument in terms of appropriateness and adequacy. The comments from these experts were used to improve the contents of the instrument before administration. Cronbach alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The instruments were retrieved, coded and each cluster of the questionnaire instruments were analyzed to determine its reliability. The overall reliability is 0.95 and 0.94. The researcher with the help of three briefed research assistants visited the sampled public secondary schools in Rivers State to administer the questionnaire. A total of 382 copies of the questionnaire were administered. After retrieval, the analysis was conducted. 378 was retrieved and used for data analysis. This accounted for 97.38% rate of retrieval. Simple regression was used to answer research questions and t-test associated with simple regression was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question 1: *What is the relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?*

Table 1: Simple Regression on the Relationship Between Distributive Justice and Teachers' Work Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.692[a]	0.479	0.477	0.2115

a. Predictors: (Constant), distributive justice

Key:

Coefficient of Determination (R-squared)	Interpretations
80 – 100%	Very High Relationship
60 – 79%	High Relationship
59 – 40%	Moderate Relationship
0 – 39%	Low Relationship

(Ukwuije (1996) in Osaat, (2014)

Table 1 shows the results of simple linear regression analysis undertaken on relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The regression coefficient was (R = 0.69), which indicates a high positive relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment. R-squared value, which is to say, coefficient of determination aligned with linear regression coefficient (R) was 0.479. Therefore, there is a high positive relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: *What is the relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?*

Table 2: Simple Regression on the Relationship Between Procedural Justice and Teachers' Work Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.685[a]	0.469	0.468	0.23114

a. Predictors: (Constant), procedural justice

Table 2 illustrates results of simple linear regression analysis undertaken on relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The regression coefficient was (R = 0.68), which indicates a high positive relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment. R-squared value, which is to say, coefficient of determination aligned with linear regression coefficient (R) was 0.469. Therefore, there is a high positive relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Result of Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Significant Relationship Between Distributive Justice and Teachers' Work Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.24	0.068		18.235	0.000
	Distributive Justice	0.592	0.032	0.692	18.5	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' Work Commitment

Table 3 presents the results of t-test associated with simple linear regression on whether there is relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Regression coefficient was (R = 0.69), but distributive justice contributed significantly to the model with β = 0.592 and a significant value of 0.00 was less than $p \leq 0.05$, which shows that there is a significant relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment. The t-test value of 18.235 was found to be significant at the level of 0.000. Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and affirmed the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Significant Relationship Between Procedural Justice and Teachers' Work Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.45	0.075		19.333	.000
	Procedural Justice	0.512	0.028	0.685	18.286	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' Work Commitment

Table 4 shows the results of t-test associated with simple linear regression on whether there is significant relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Regression coefficient was (R = 0.68), but procedural justice

contributed significantly to the model with β = 0.512 and a significant value of 0.00 was less than p ≤ 0.05, which shows that there is a significant relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment. The t-test value of 18.286 was found to be significant at the level of 0.000. Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and affirmed the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The findings of research question one revealed that, there is a high positive relationship between distributive justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This implied that to a high positive relationship, my salary is commensurate with the work i do in this school, promotion opportunities are fairly distributed among teachers, workload is equitably shared among teachers in this school, rewards are given based on performance, school leadership distributes responsibilities fairly, recognition is given fairly to deserving teachers, access to professional development is fairly allocated, allowances are distributed justly, teachers who perform similar duties receive similar benefits and I believe outcomes in this school reflect teachers' efforts fairly. This finding is in consonance with Edeh and Ugwu (2020) whose empirical studies have shown that distributive justice has a significant positive relationship with teachers' work commitment. Distributive justice refers to teachers' perceptions of fairness in the distribution of rewards, promotions, workload, recognition, and other organizational benefits. A study by above authors on secondary school teachers in Nigeria found that distributive justice was positively associated with employee commitment.

Procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The findings of research question two revealed that, there is a high positive relationship between procedural justice and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This implied that to a high positive relationship, school policies are applied consistently to all teachers, decisions regarding promotions are based on fair procedures, disciplinary actions are handled using transparent guidelines, I am given opportunity to express my views before important decisions are made, procedures in this school are free from bias, teachers are involved in decisions that affect their work, my opinions are considered when administrative decisions are taken, school decisions are made using consistent procedures, the principal consults staff before implementing new policies and administrative decisions are based on accurate information. This finding is in consonance with Alaa, Yazen and Swran (2020) whose empirical studies have demonstrated that procedural justice is a significant predictor of teachers' work commitment. Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the processes and procedures used in making decisions concerning promotions, workload distribution, performance appraisal, disciplinary actions, and access to opportunities within an organization. A study by the above authors found a positive relationship between organizational justice dimensions, including procedural justice, and organizational commitment among secondary school teachers. The study revealed that teachers who perceived decision-making processes as transparent, consistent, and unbiased were more likely to exhibit loyalty, dedication, and a stronger attachment to their schools. Fair procedures increased teachers' confidence in school administration and encouraged greater commitment to organizational goals.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concluded that there is very high positive joint relationship between organizational justice indicators (distributive justice, procedural justice) and teachers' work commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Also the test of the result of the null hypotheses equally showed that, there is significant joint relationship between organizational justice

(distributive justice, procedural justice) and teachers' work commitment in public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that;

1. Principals should ensure that rewards, promotions, and recognition are based strictly on merit, performance, and clearly defined criteria to strengthen distributive and equity justice.
2. The Ministry of Education in Rivers State should develop and enforce clear, standardized procedures for recruitment, promotion, and evaluation to enhance procedural justice across schools.

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