

Linking Artificial Intelligence Integration to Educator Job Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence

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ABSTRACT:

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education is transforming teaching, assessment, and administrative practices. While AI offers opportunities to enhance efficiency and instructional effectiveness, its impact on educators' workplace outcomes remains underexplored. This study examines the relationship between AI integration, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction among higher education educators in Kerala, India. Drawing on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, it investigates the direct effect of AI integration on job satisfaction and the mediating role of emotional intelligence. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed, and data were collected from 387 educators in arts and science colleges. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), the findings revealed that AI integration positively influences emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Emotional intelligence also positively affects job satisfaction and partially mediates the AI–job satisfaction relationship. The findings highlight the need for institutions to complement AI adoption with psychological and emotional support initiatives.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence Integration, Educators, Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The swift progression of artificial intelligence (AI) technology is transforming work methodologies across various sectors, including higher education. AI-driven tools, including intelligent tutoring systems, automated grading platforms, and

generative applications, are progressively integrated into educators' regular teaching, evaluation, and administrative tasks (Zawacki-richter et al., 2019); (Holmes et al., 2019). These technologies have significant advantages for enhancing instructional efficacy, increasing efficiency, and

facilitating personalized educational experiences. Despite this, their integration also presents additional requirements, such as technical complexities, ongoing skill development, and changing role expectations (Tarafdar et al., 2019). As AI becomes essential in academia, understanding its effects on educators' professional experiences is increasingly necessary.

Job satisfaction is a significant indicator for employee welfare and organizational efficiency, especially within educational settings. Greater job satisfaction among educators correlates with enhanced teaching quality, increased institutional commitment, and better adaptation to change (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011); (Toropova et al., 2020). Prior studies have looked at how digital technologies affect work results, but they have mostly concentrated on performance outcomes, user behavior, or technological acceptability rather than affective outcomes like job satisfaction (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Beyond traditional technologies, AI systems' growing autonomy and decision-support capabilities call for a more sophisticated understanding of how they affect educators psychologically.

Even while scientific interest in AI in education is expanding, there are still significant gaps. Recent research has given limited attention to the impact of AI integration on educators' job satisfaction from an emotional perspective. The literature offers different points of view, highlighting both the beneficial capabilities of AI (such as efficiency and pedagogical innovation) and its corresponding challenges (including technostress and role ambiguity), but it fails to provide definitive empirical insights into how these conflicting effects influence job satisfaction outcomes (Tarafdar et al., 2019). Although emotional intelligence (EI) is acknowledged as an important personal trait related to job satisfaction (Miao et al., 2017), its function in technology-driven workplaces is not sufficiently examined, especially as a pathway connecting AI integration to emotional outcomes. Moreover, few studies have investigated these relationships in higher education settings in developing countries, where

quick digital revolution exists alongside different levels of technology competence.

This study employs the Job Demands–Resources model to elucidate the impact of job demands and job resources on employee well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017); (Lesener et al., 2019). Within this perspective, AI integration can be regarded as both a job resource and a job demand. AI can improve efficiency, aid decision-making, and promote innovative teaching techniques. Conversely, it may increase cognitive burden, involve ongoing adaptation, and provide confusion in professional responsibilities. Emotional intelligence, as a human asset, empowers individuals to efficiently regulate emotional responses, navigate technological challenges, and utilize available resources. Consequently, emotional intelligence is anticipated to have a crucial mediating function in determining the impact of AI integration on job satisfaction.

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of how AI integration influences instructors' job satisfaction by merging technological and psychological viewpoints inside a single framework. This study investigates the direct and indirect relationships between the integration of artificial intelligence, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction among higher education faculty.

This research enhances the existing literature in three distinct ways. First, it examines AI integration in education, thereby extending the existing literature on digital transformation beyond general technology usage. Secondly, it identifies emotional intelligence as a mediating factor, providing enhanced understanding of the psychological factors by which AI integration affects job satisfaction. Third, it provides context-specific findings from higher education institutions in Kerala, India, so enhancing the limited research on AI integration in developing educational settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

AI Integration and Job Satisfaction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education signifies the degree to which

educators adopt AI-enabled tools for teaching, evaluation, and administrative functions. Recent research demonstrates that AI is progressively integrated into academic pursuits, affecting instructional methodologies and educator's professional experiences (Chatterjee & Bhattacharjee, 2020); (Dwivedi et al., 2023). AI technology can improve productivity, minimize repetitive tasks, and assist in instructional decision-making, thereby significantly enhancing job satisfaction significantly.

However, the integration of AI brings about distinct obstacles in the workplace. Studies indicate that technology-driven settings can elevate cognitive demands, role ambiguity, and perceived effort, potentially diminishing job satisfaction (La Torre et al., 2018); (Tu et al., 2025). These opposing consequences underscore the dual function of AI as both a job resource and a job demand. When instructors view AI as advantageous and supportive, it is more probable to improve job satisfaction.

H1: Artificial intelligence integration is positively associated with educator job satisfaction.

AI integration and emotional Intelligence

The term "emotional intelligence" (EI) describes a person's capacity to recognize, control, and successfully use emotions. In technology-driven environments, emotional intelligence is essential for humans to adapt to change, navigate inconsistencies, and establish good relationships (Mayer et al., 2016); (Miao et al., 2017).

Recent research indicates that interaction with digital technologies is associated with the enhancement of adaptive emotional and psychological competencies (Bawden & Robinson, 2020); (Sailer et al., 2021). Interacting with AI systems necessitates technical proficiency as well as emotional regulation, adaptability, and resilience. These processes may facilitate the development of emotional intelligence over time.

According to the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017); (Lesener et al., 2019) technology demands might encourage development of personal resources, especially when individuals

must navigate complex and dynamic work environments. Consequently, the integration of AI is anticipated to enhance emotional intelligence in educators.

H2: Artificial intelligence integration is positively associated with emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence and job satisfaction

Emotional intelligence has been consistently associated with favorable workplace outcomes, including job satisfaction. Individuals with heightened emotional intelligence are more proficient at managing stress, regulating emotions, and sustaining strong interpersonal connections.

Recent meta-analytic and empirical findings validate that emotional intelligence correlates positively with job satisfaction across many professional settings (Miao et al., 2017); (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). Recent studies underscore the significance of emotional competences in improving well-being and job satisfaction within digital and technology-driven contexts (Sembiring et al., 2020); (Mérida-López et al., 2022).

In the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017); (Lesener et al., 2019) emotional intelligence serves as a personal resource that mitigates job demands and amplifies the beneficial impacts of job resources. Consequently, elevated emotional intelligence is anticipated to result in increased job satisfaction.

H3: Emotional intelligence is positively associated with educator job satisfaction.

Mediating role of emotional intelligence

The integration of AI may directly affect job satisfaction, but its impact is likely mediated by psychological factors. Emotional intelligence serves as an important pathway for educators to understand and respond to technology advancements.

Recent research demonstrates that the impact of digital transformation on employment outcomes is influenced by psychological aspects, including emotional control, self-efficacy, and adaptability

(Ayyagari et al., 2011); (Tarafdar et al., 2019). These techniques become increasingly more important in AI-driven workplaces since people have to constantly adjust to changing technology demands.

In the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017); (Lesener et al., 2019), personal resources serve as intermediaries between job demands and outcomes. Emotional intelligence, as

an intrinsic human resource, empowers educators to effectively overcome technical difficulties and convert AI integration into favorable job satisfaction results.

H4: Emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between artificial intelligence integration and educator job satisfaction.

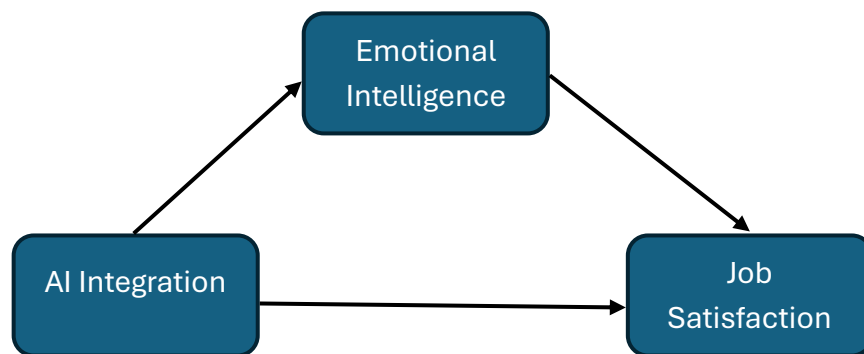


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study, demonstrating the direct and indirect connections among artificial intelligence integration, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction. Emotional intelligence is suggested as a mediator variable in the relationship between AI integration and job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This research used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey methodology to investigate the connections between artificial intelligence (AI) integration, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction among educators. A survey-based methodology is suitable for gathering respondents' opinions of AI integration and its impact on work-related outcomes in higher education environments.

Population, sampling and data collection

The study population consists of higher education instructors from arts and science colleges in Kerala, India. This background is particularly relevant in view of the growing use of digital and AI-driven tools in education, evaluation, and administrative functions.

A total of 387 valid responses were gathered and utilized for analysis. The respondents comprised higher education teachers from arts and science colleges in Kerala with varying levels of teaching experience and academic qualifications. The study utilized a purposive sampling technique, selecting participants based on their familiarity with or experience with AI-enabled services in their professional roles. This method is suitable for acquiring data rich in information when the phenomenon being examined is not equally experienced throughout the population.

Data were gathered utilizing a structured questionnaire primarily distributed through online platforms. Participation was optional, and respondents were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

Measurement instruments

Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and all constructs were measured using standard or modified scales. The integration of artificial intelligence was evaluated using a Perceived AI Integration Scale specifically created for this study, based on previously proven tools that

assess AI utilization and perceptions. The scale measures educators' involvement with AI in regular teaching, assessment, and administrative tasks, encompassing various dimensions such as instructional application, assessment assistance, administrative efficiency, communication, decision-making support, professional development, and ethical considerations. Content validity was established through expert evaluation before data collection. Emotional intelligence was evaluated utilizing the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (Law et al., 2004), which examines self-emotion evaluation, appraisal of others' emotions, utilization of emotions, and management of emotions. Job satisfaction was assessed utilizing the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1997), which encompasses various dimensions of job satisfaction, including supervision, working conditions, communication, and compensation.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed with SmartPLS. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was applied to evaluate both the measurement and

structural models. The analysis was performed in two phases. The measurement model was initially assessed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs. The structural model was analyzed to evaluate the proposed relationships and the mediating influence of emotional intelligence. Bootstrapping methods were employed to assess the importance of the estimated relationships.

RESULTS

Measurement model Assessment

The measurement model was analyzed to determine the reliability and validity of the constructs incorporated in the study. The PLS-SEM methodology involved the assessment of indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Reliability and convergent validity were evaluated by outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), whilst discriminant validity was examined using the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio.

Table 1. Reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Artificial Intelligence Integration	AI1	0.889	0.957	0.957	0.794
	AI2	0.908			
	AI3	0.902			
	AI4	0.898			
	AI5	0.879			
	AI6	0.896			
	AI7	0.866			
Emotional Intelligence	EI1	0.892	0.916	0.916	0.799
	EI2	0.898			
	EI3	0.894			
	EI4	0.892			
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.885	0.962	0.962	0.766
	JS2	0.891			
	JS3	0.859			
	JS4	0.879			
	JS5	0.863			
	JS6	0.877			

	JS7	0.893			
	JS8	0.854			
	JS9	0.873			

Table 1 displays the results of convergent validity and reliability. The specified threshold value of 0.70 (Henseler et al., 2015) was exceeded by all factor loadings, demonstrating satisfactory indicator reliability and verifying that the observed variables accurately reflected their corresponding constructs. With Cronbach's alpha values between 0.916 and 0.962 and composite reliability values between 0.916 and 0.962, all constructions demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability, surpassing the suggested threshold value of 0.70 (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015); (Hair et al., 2012). Additionally, the AVE values exceeded the suggested threshold of 0.50, ranging from 0.766 to 0.799, demonstrating sufficient convergent validity (Hair et al., 2012). These results show that the constructs have adequate validity and reliability for further structural model evaluation.

The Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was used to further evaluate discriminant validity.

Table 2. HTMT Ratio

Constructs	AI	EI	JS
AI			
EI	0.828		
JS	0.793	0.855	

All HTMT values were below the suggested threshold of 0.90, as Table 2 illustrates, suggesting sufficient discriminant validity across the constructs (Henseler et al., 2015). This implies that every construct in the suggested model measures a different conceptual domain and is experimentally different from the others.

Structural model assessment

The structural model was assessed to investigate the proposed connections between artificial intelligence integration, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction after the measurement model's suitability was established. The bootstrapping process in SmartPLS was used to evaluate the significance of structural path.

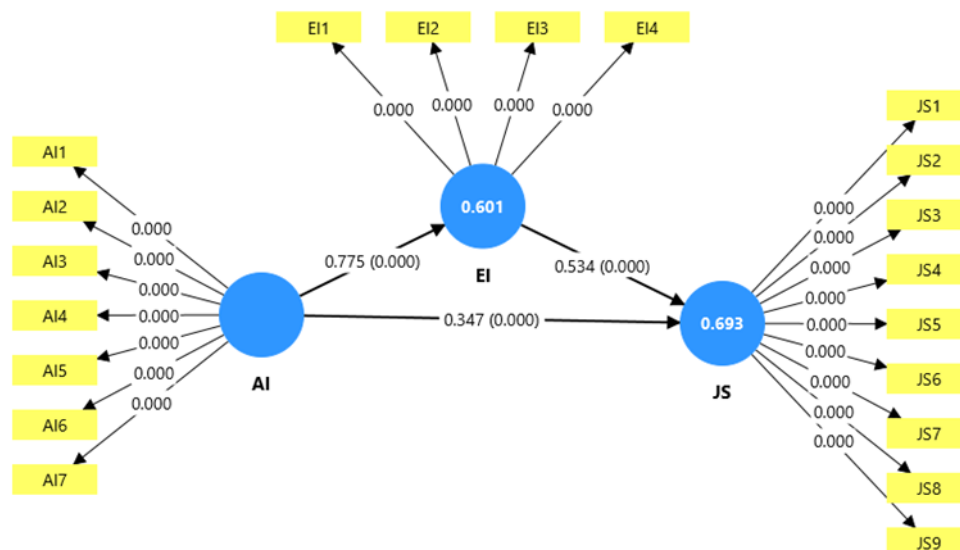


Figure 2: Structural model assessment

Artificial intelligence integration showed a positive relationship with both emotional intelligence and

job satisfaction, as seen in Figure 2. Additionally, there was a positive relationship found between

emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. The model also showed significant explanatory power, with a significant amount of the variance in emotional intelligence and work satisfaction being explained by the integration of artificial intelligence.

The path coefficients derived from the structural model analysis are shown in Table 3 to further investigate the importance and strength of the proposed correlations.

Table 3. Result of Structural Path Analysis

Path	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H1: AI Integration $\rightarrow$ Job Satisfaction	0.347	6.987	< 0.001	Supported
H2: AI Integration $\rightarrow$ Emotional Intelligence	0.775	37.159	< 0.001	Supported
H3: Emotional Intelligence $\rightarrow$ Job Satisfaction	0.534	11.274	< 0.001	Supported

As presented in Table 3, artificial intelligence integration had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.347$, $t = 6.987$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H1. Additionally, emotional intelligence was considerably impacted by artificial intelligence integration ($\beta = 0.775$, $t = 37.159$, $p < 0.001$), which supports H2. Finally, H3 was supported by emotional intelligence's considerable positive impact on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.534$, $t = 11.274$, $p < 0.001$).

Significant explanatory power was also shown by the structural model. The model explained 69.3% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.693$) and

60.1% of the variance in emotional intelligence ($R^2 = 0.601$), suggesting that the combination of emotional intelligence and artificial intelligence integration considerably contributes to the explanation of educators' satisfaction with their jobs.

Mediation analysis

The mediating effect of emotional intelligence on the relation between artificial intelligence integration and job satisfaction was evaluated using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS. The significance of the indirect effect was analyzed to ascertain the existence of mediation.

Table 4: Results of mediation analysis

Path	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
AI Integration $\rightarrow$ Emotional Intelligence $\rightarrow$ Job Satisfaction	0.414	10.426	< 0.001	Supported

Table 4 indicates that the indirect effect of artificial intelligence integration on job satisfaction through emotional intelligence is considerable ($\beta = 0.414$, t

$= 10.426$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that emotional intelligence serves as a mediator in the relationship between artificial intelligence integration and job

happiness. Given that both the direct and indirect effects were significant, the mediation effect can be characterized as partial mediation. Consequently, H4 was substantiated.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) integration, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction among higher education faculty in Kerala. The results indicated that the integration of artificial intelligence markedly affected emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Furthermore, emotional intelligence exhibited a significant positive impact on job satisfaction and partially mediated the association between AI integration and job satisfaction. These findings offer significant insights into educators' experiences of AI-integrated work environments in modern higher education contexts.

The results demonstrate that the incorporation of artificial intelligence enhances educators' job satisfaction. This indicates that the incorporation of AI-enabled technology in educational activities may enhance educators' job experiences by increasing efficiency, minimizing repetitive administrative tasks, aiding instructional activities, and streamlining academic decision-making processes. The discovery aligns with prior research demonstrating that AI-enhanced educational tools can enhance instructional efficacy and workplace experiences in higher education settings (Alam, 2021) (Zawacki-richter et al., 2019). In educational institutions, AI-enabled solutions can aid educators in assessment, content preparation, student engagement, and administrative tasks, thus enhancing professional satisfaction.

The research further indicated that the incorporation of artificial intelligence significantly enhanced emotional intelligence. This discovery suggests that instructors who proficiently interact with AI technologies may enhance their adaptability, emotional management, and confidence in overseeing technology-driven work settings. The integration of AI may prompt educators to enhance their responsiveness and emotional awareness in interactions with students,

colleagues, and institutional systems. The discovery corresponds with current research highlighting that effective adaption to AI-enhanced educational settings necessitates emotional adaptability, technological responsiveness, and self-regulation skills (Kasneci et al., 2023); (Viberg et al., 2020). As higher education institutions progressively integrate AI-enabled technology, the emotional competences of educators become crucial for efficiently managing technological transformations.

The findings also demonstrated that emotional intelligence significantly influences job satisfaction among educators. This substantiates the assertion that emotionally intelligent educators are more adept at managing professional stress, fostering healthy interpersonal relationships, and effectively addressing workplace obstacles, hence enhancing job satisfaction. The findings align with other research indicating that emotional intelligence favorably affects workplace attitudes, psychological adjustment, and subjective well-being (Akram et al., 2015); (Li et al., 2024). In higher education, emotional intelligence can assist instructors in navigating the emotional challenges linked to teaching duties, student interactions, workload pressures, and technological adaptation.

The study's major contribution is the identification of emotional intelligence as a crucial mediating factor between artificial intelligence integration and job happiness. The mediation findings indicate that AI integration enhances job happiness both directly and indirectly through improving emotional intelligence. This suggests that the beneficial effects of AI integration in educational contexts may intensify when educators have the emotional competencies necessary to adjust to technology-driven work situations. This study corroborates other research emphasizing the significance of emotional and psychological resources in influencing employee reactions to digital transformation and technology-driven workplace alterations (Ertiö et al., 2024); (Rasool et al., 2021).

This study enhances the existing literature on AI in education by offering empirical findings from higher education institutions in Kerala, India. Current research on AI integration has been

focused on technical adoption, student learning outcomes, and organizational performance, while comparably less emphasis has been placed on instructors' emotional and attitudinal outcomes in developing nation contexts. The study offers a holistic picture of educators' experiences with emerging technologies by analyzing emotional intelligence and job satisfaction concurrently within an AI-enabled educational environment.

From a practical perspective, the results indicate that higher education institutions ought not to regard AI integration merely as a technological project. Institutional initiatives for AI adoption must also take into account educators' emotional and psychological readiness. Offering AI-focused training programs, technical support, and emotionally nurturing work settings may enhance educators' flexibility and confidence in AI-enabled systems. Institutions may benefit from implementing professional development programs that emphasize emotional intelligence, stress management, and adaptive coping mechanisms to facilitate the effective integration of AI technologies in educational environments.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Despite its academic value, the study possesses specific limitations. The study employed a cross-sectional research methodology, which constrains the capacity to ascertain causal correlations among the variables. The study concentrated solely on higher education instructors from arts and science colleges in Kerala, potentially limiting the applicability of the findings to other educational contexts or geographical areas. Third, the study depended on self-reported data, which may be vulnerable to respondent bias and common method variance.

Future research may utilize longitudinal designs, larger and more varied samples, and incorporate additional variables such as technostress, organizational support, digital competency, or work engagement to enhance understanding of educators' experiences with AI integration. Subsequent research may also compare educators across various

educational sectors or institutional classifications to enhance comprehension of contextual disparities in AI use and workplace results.

CONCLUSION

The research investigated the relationship between the integration of artificial intelligence, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction among higher education faculty in Kerala. The results indicated that the incorporation of artificial intelligence significantly improves educators' emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Emotional intelligence exhibited a substantial beneficial effect on job satisfaction and partially mediated the association between AI integration and job satisfaction.

The results indicate that the effective incorporation of AI technologies in higher education relies not solely on technological infrastructure but also on the emotional and psychological competencies of educators. The study underscores the significance of integrating technology progress with emotional readiness in educational settings. The study enhances the existing literature on AI-driven educational settings and teacher well-being by integrating technological and psychological viewpoints into a unified framework.

The study presents empirical evidence that the integration of AI can enhance educators' workplace experiences when strengthened by emotional intelligence, thus providing significant implications for higher education institutions aiming to implement AI technologies effectively and sustainably.

Ethical Approval

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and the collected data were used solely for academic and research purposes.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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Data availability statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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