Positivity as Mediator to Academic Resilience and Self-Efficacy

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Abstract: This study identified the significant mediation analysis of positivity on academic resilience and self-efficacy. Simple random sampling was used in selecting the 1804 first-year college students as respondents who are enrolled during the second semester of academic year 2021-2022 across all courses and campuses of a state university. Mediation analysis was used to measure the mediating role of positivity on academic resilience and self-efficacy. It is revealed that academic resilience significantly affects students' positivity and self-efficacy; while positivity as mediator affects self-efficacy being the outcome variable. However, positivity only partially mediates the relationship between academic resilience and self-efficacy thus other mediating variables may be present but were not further determined in the study. It is suggested that future researchers may try to investigate other mediating variables aside from positivity. Even if positivity partially mediates the relationship between academic resilience and self-efficacy, it is recommended that students would be more conscious of their positivity because it affects their academic resilience and self-efficacy.

Keywords: academic resilience, positivity, self-efficacy, college students, Philippines

1. INTRODUCTION

College creates a significant transition from intellectual to social life. Students face too many pressures, including social, economic, and psychological pressures, which may jeopardize their ability to maintain psychological stability (Alkhatib, 2020). Self-efficacy and resilience have a significant relation, and self-efficacy and happiness have a moderately positive relationship. Positivity and resilience were discovered to have an effect on self-efficacy (Bingöl et al., 2019).

Academic resilience has the potential to improve the learning outcomes of students on the verge of dropping out in education, but there is currently no standard method for quantifying it (Rudd et al., 2021). Academic resilience refers to a student's ability to succeed in school despite socioeconomic disadvantage, as well as the increased likelihood of academic and other life achievement despite early environmental influences (Garca-Crespo et al., 2021). Mohan (2022) includes that academic resilience is induced by adversity involving early characteristics, conditions, and experiences.

Academic resilience is a person's ability to deal with pressure in the classroom (Rachmawata et al., 2021). Students who are resilient in the classroom develop both regulated negative attitudes and resilient attitudes in the face of adversity, according to a test used to assess academic resilience (Wyllie et al., 2020). Academic resilience is significantly more closely associated with students achieving high academic performance in the face of adversity (Capstick, 2018). Although resilience has been defined in various ways over the years, it generally refers to the ability to positively adjust in the face of adversity. Resilience is also a trait, a state, or a combination of the two (Moke et al., 2018).

In addition, resilience is defined in educational contexts as students' ability to deal effectively with obstacles such as stress, pressure, and other potentially harmful elements (Saadi et al., 2019). Resilience is considered as a system of personal and psychological resources that allow a person to survive and thrive in difficult situations; it also refers to the ability to improve one's personality when confronted with difficult or critical events (Ahmadi et al., 2020).

Academic resilience is a student's ability to recover academically from a setback, such as failing an individual assessment, such as a test or the results of an objective structured examination (Cassidy, 2015). Both formal and informal educational networks, life skills instruction, youth mentorship and restoration in the form of lessons, initiatives, initiatives, and programs, youth development, preliminary training are all included in the definition of youth education (Brunila et al., 2021). Resilience is the ability to recover from setbacks such as trauma, tragedy, threats, or even high levels of stress (American Psychological Association, 2014). Numerous studies have found that resilience is strongly associated with mental health indicators such as life satisfaction, subjective well-being, and positive emotions, and negatively associated with mental illness indicators such as depression, anxiety, and negative emotions (Hu et al., 2015).

Vitale (2015) discovered that in young adults who had experienced childhood trauma, a higher level of life satisfaction was associated with resilience. According to positive psychology, resilience is the ability to deal with whatever life throws at oneself (Pennock, 2017). Although it is not the only personality trait that matters, resilience is frequently mentioned because it is a desirable trait, has numerous benefits, and, perhaps most importantly, can be developed (Ackerman, 2019).

The term "academic resilience capability" refers to a student's perception of their ability to advance academically despite the presence of serious problems or significant risk factors (Dwiastuti et al., 2022). Academic resilience serves

several functions, including motivating, understanding stress, and managing stress in the face of adversity. It also takes into account the students' level of self-assurance (Beri & Kumar, 2018). Students can cultivate academic resilience as a resource to assist them in dealing with academic challenges and avoiding the negative effects of academic stress (Oyoo et al., 2018).

Academic resilience is required for students to remain engaged in learning processes and strategies and achieve academic success (Ramadhana et al., 2021). People demonstrate that resilient people have better academic outcomes, lower dropout intentions, higher grades, and are more optimistic about their lives (Bittmann, 2021). This made it appropriate to consider the impact on student motivation (LeBarron, 2018) as an indicator of academic resilience in students (Ramadhana et al., 2021).

Higher academic achievement and resilience were associated with higher academic self-efficacy; the two variables had a direct correlation. In comparison to the robust group, the less resilient group had slightly lower academic performance, lower self-efficacy, and higher stress ratings (Hernandez et al., 2019).

In connection to resilience, positive thinking or positivism, as per Richardson (2020), is one of the factors that contribute to the aforementioned learned ability or trait. Resilience and positive thinking were crucial (Lai et al., 2020) to withstand such adversity and grow better and stronger from it (Chow et al. 2018).

Positivity is defined as a generalized way of perceiving and dealing with reality that shapes the subjectivity with which people judge their experiences; it is a positive outlook on life that includes the concepts of self-esteem, life satisfaction, and optimism (Caprara et al., 2018). While positivity is generally shown as a primary representation of mental representation by Machouche et al., (2012). Positivity is an evaluative personality that combines self-esteem, life satisfaction, and optimism (Barbaranelli et al., 2018). Positive thinking also had the greatest indirect effect on academic performance (Charook et al., 2019).

Positive thinking is thought to be a critical factor in helping students succeed and achieve their learning goals, according to studies on its impact on academic success. However, extensive research has clarified the role of a positive mindset as a factor underlying behavioral change in students (Humaida, 2017).

To avoid such negative effects on students as a result of pressure, various techniques for overcoming tension, such as self-regulation and mindful-based intervention programs, can be used (Ramli et al., 2018). Despite the fact that positive emotions are associated with lower negative effects and negative emotions with higher positive effects, the underlying mechanisms underlying these interrelationships are unknown. Emotional exhaustion, which refers to how one perceives stressful life situations, is one component. Self-efficacy belief in the mediating effect of positivity affects performance of the student (Horiuchi et al., 2018).

Anglin et al. (2018) define positive psychological capital as a person's or organization's level of psychological resources, such as hope, optimism, resilience, and confidence, as a visible indicator on a crowd. While perceived social support refers to a person's sense of being understood and supported by others, actual social support refers to actual social support (Liu et al., 2016). Thus, positivity expands thought-action repositories and creates a diverse resource that can be called upon in difficult times. More engaged and motivated to learn new skills, with positive feelings about learning, teachers, peers, and accomplishments (Weinerman & Kenner, 2016). The ability to pay attention to and regulate positive experiences (Geiger et al., 2017).

Positivity is influenced by self-efficacy beliefs (Tabernero et al., 2021). Self-efficacy is based on how people evaluate their ability to perform the activities necessary to achieve a specific goal in a given situation (Greene, 2017). The Social Cognitive Theory explains that self-efficacy influences how people feel, think, and motivate themselves, as well as the decisions and actions they take (Dorfman & Fotus, 2019). Self-efficacy has been linked to a variety of positive outcomes, including increased engagement and performance (Power et al., 2019). As a result of the intervention, both knowledge of and self-efficacy in using self-regulated learning strategies increased statistically significantly (Cerezo et al., 2019).

Self-efficacy is a set of beliefs that determines how successfully a person can carry out a plan of action in imaginary scenarios. In other words, self-efficacy is the belief that one can succeed in a given situation (Bandura, 1977). Although self-efficacy is frequently defined as a belief strongly related to a specific task or circumstance, numerous studies have revealed the existence of a more generalized assumption (Feldman et al., 2015), which is a general sense of self-efficacy in the face of a wide range of expectations (Volz et al., 2018). Self-efficacy is an individual's assessment of his or her ability to complete the tasks at hand (Bandura, 1995, 1997; Schunk, 1991). It influences people's thought processes and emotional reactions, as well as how much effort they put forth, how long they will persevere in the face of adversity, and how tough they will be in difficult situations (Phan, 2012).

Self-efficacy has been connected to wellbeing and the development of one's strengths as a fundamental human need and type of eudaimonic happiness (Loton & Waters, 2017) as the learners' self-efficacy affects their academic performance (Salavera et al., 2017; Talsma et al., 2018). Although academic achievement is a well-known phenomenon, there have not been many attempts to investigate academic resilience as a predictor among high school students (Oyoo et al., 2018).

Self-efficacy has been linked to resilience in dealing with such challenging situations (Gratacós et al., 2021). Each individual has a unique level of academic self-efficacy. Others are extremely low, while others are extremely high (Basith et al., 2020).

The ability to manage, carry out, and solve issues related to the learning task, while remaining confident in their ability to complete the task successfully, indicates a student with a high level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2013). The findings indicate that higher levels of academic self-efficacy are more likely to lead to higher levels of academic success (Yokoyama, 2019), which reflects the task- and circumstance-specific nature of efficacy beliefs (Artino, 2012).)

Martinez-Calderon et al. (2018) strongly suggested that self-efficacy can be very important in the growing belief that students' positivity about self-efficacy has a direct impact on stress reduction and resilience building. Self-efficacy has a deeper relationship with resiliency because it bridges the gap between the challenges of being positively significant and the actions of individuals (Verner et al., 2020). The combined effects of resilience and self-efficacy (Ordway et al., 2019) The students had high levels of confidence in their ability to stick with and complete tasks, succeed now and in the future, and overcome challenges (Terry et al., 2019).

Even after accounting for cognitive factors, academic self-efficacy and effort self-regulation have been identified as important non-cognitive predictors of academic achievement in college students (Jung et al., 2017). Experiences in various situations lead to self-efficacy beliefs as well as the results of difficult situations, including both strengths and weaknesses. Self-efficacy beliefs are task-specific; the best self-efficacy outcomes are seen in similar but adaptable situations (Olave, 2019).

Self-efficacy is an empirically supported and theoretically sound motivational belief that has been shown to be critical for learning and skill acquisition (Klassen & Klassen, 2018). As a result, teachers must be more qualified and innovative in their use of the learning model in order to generate motivation that leads to increased achievement and self-efficacy in students. If students have a high level of self-efficacy, they will have superior learning outcomes (Kurnia et al., 2017).

In order to better understand how positivity mediates between academic resilience and self-efficacy and how academic resilience predicts self-efficacy, the researchers were motivated to examine the relationship between the three aforementioned variables.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The general objective of the study is to examine how college students' academic resilience affects both positivity and self-efficacy while positivity affects self-efficacy. It also intends to investigate the mediating effect of positivity between academic resilience and self-efficacy.

Specifically, the research sought answers for the subsequent questions:

- 1. How may the respondents be described in terms of the following:
 - a. academic resilience;
 - b. positivity; and
 - c. self-efficacy?

- 2. Do respondents' academic resilience significantly affect their positivity and self-efficacy?
- 3. Do respondents' positivity significantly affect their self-efficacy?
- 4. Do respondents' positivity significantly mediate the relationship between their academic resilience and self-efficacy?

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

The study used a measurement for mediation design that can be thought of as a statistical approach. It is different from correlational analysis. A design like this implies measuring the proposed mediating variable and then using statistical analyses to determine mediation. This method involves only measurement and does not involve manipulating the hypothesized mediating variable (Spencer, 2005).

In this study, the mediator/mediating/intervening variable is positivity while the predictor variable is academic resilience and the outcome variable is self-efficacy.

3.2 Sampling Techniques

A simple random sample is a subset of a population chosen at random. Each member of the population has an exact equal chance of being chosen using this sampling method. This method is the simplest of all probability sampling methods because it only involves a single random selection and requires little prior knowledge of the population. Because randomization is used, any research conducted on this sample should have high internal and external validity (Thomas, 2020).

From the total population of 11,676 enrolled first-year college students in seven campuses, the g-power calculation is 372. However, the respondents who answered the questionnaires outnumbered the required sample size and it became a total of 1804. Apparently, having more respondents will result in better data saturation.

3.3 Respondents

The respondents were the 1804 first-year college students enrolled during the Second Semester of AY 2021-2022 across all courses and campuses of a state university in Pampanga. The researchers selected the first-year college students because they are in the transition from high school to college.

Aside from transitioning to college from senior high school, the researchers were motivated to choose the first-year college students because they currently deal with the added stress and adjustment difficulties of transitioning to higher education, which can have a negative impact on their academic performance (McDonald et al., 2018), that can be connected to positivity and self-efficacy. The respondents were the 1804 first-year college students enrolled during the Second Semester of AY 2021-2022 across all courses and

campuses of a state university in Pampanga. The researchers selected the first-year college students because they are in the transition from high school to college.

3.4 Research Locale

This study was conducted in a state university in Pampanga where the respondents were first-year college students across seven campuses and courses. The respondents were given three sets of questionnaires through one Google Form link.

The researchers chose this state university because it is where they are currently connected. Since the study took place while still in the pandemic, asking the respondents to participate is easy. The link was sent to the student leaders after the Deans and Directors provided their signatures to the letter of permission sent to them and these were forwarded to first-college class mayors to the different campuses of the university.

3.5 Research Instrument

A questionnaire is a set of questions or items used to learn more about their respondents' attitudes, experiences, or opinions. To collect both quantitative and qualitative data, questionnaires are helpful (Bhandari, 2022).

The researchers adapted three questionnaires from different authors and sought their permission. However, only two of the authors agreed. All the three instruments were under public domain online.

Questionnaire 1 is the Academic Resilience by Simon Cassidy composed of thirty (30) items which will be answered by Likert scale of 1=Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Often; and 4=Always with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.889.

Questionnaire 2 is the Positivity Self-Test by Dr. Barbara Fredrickson composed of twenty (20) items and responded by the Likert scale of 1=None; 2=Mildly; 3=Moderately; and 4=Severely with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.823.

Finally, Questionnaire 3 is the Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), which is composed of ten (10) items and will be answered using a Likert scale of 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, and 4=Strongly Agree with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.969. The Cronbach's alpha is the test of reliability or internal consistency of the items in the instruments (Creswell, 2010). It is to be noted that none of the items were deleted in the three questionnaires.

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Academic Resilience Scale	30	0.889

Positivity Scale	20	0.823
General Self- efficacy Scale	10	0.969

 Table 1. Reliability Statistic

3.6 Validation of the Questionnaires

The researchers consulted three (3) experts in the field of research in order to validate the research instruments before the Google Form link was sent to the respondents. The suggestions and comments during the consultations were used and applied to improve the research instrument so that it would be clear and easily understood by the respondents. The content and face validity of the instruments were also checked by the validators.

3.7 Data Gathering Procedure

Upon the approval of the research instruments, the researchers formally wrote a consent letter to the respective directors and deans for their permission to conduct the study to the first college students of their campus/college. A Google form informing the respondents about the purpose of the study was provided.

The link was first sent to their student leaders and were forwarded to the various first-year college class mayors across the seven (7) campuses) and courses. Around five days of, the total number of respondents is 1804.

3.8 Statistical Treatment

For descriptive statistics, the statistical treatments that were utilized are mean and standard deviation while for inferential statistics, a statistical technique called mediation analysis is used to quantify the causal chain between an antecedent variable, a mediating variable, and a dependent variable. Although mediation analysis is helpful for observational research, it may be most convincing when used in randomized therapy and preventative programs to address cause and effect problems (MacKinnon & Valente, 2019).

An evaluation of the causal processes by which a treatment or intervention influences a desired outcome is the goal of mediation analysis. The goal is to divide the overall treatment effect into two parts: a direct effect that reflects any effects not captured by the observed mediator and an indirect effect that operates through one or more observed intermediate variables known as mediators (Huber, 2020).

The development of causal mediation analysis based on the counterfactual framework is the most recent and significant innovation in the mediation analysis approach, which has undergone several changes over the years (Rijnhart et al., 2021). The aim of mediation analysis is to determine the mechanism(s) through which an exposure influences the outcome. Methodological issues with traditional, non-

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instrumental variable techniques for mediation analysis include bias brought on by confounding between an exposure, mediator, and outcome as well as measurement error (Carter et al., 2021).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This study focused on first-year college students in the state university across all courses and seven campuses. Respondents were given a choice if they would like to become a respondent in the study. They could simply not click on the Google form click or not click submit if they wish to not participate. In accordance to the Data Privacy Act of 2012, and to establish the greatest trustworthiness of this study, the

As shown in the descriptive analysis, the respondents' level of academic resilience, positivity and self-efficacy is high. Self-efficacy has the highest mean score of 3.18. The academic resilience with a mean score of 2.95 and the positivity with a mean score of 2.75 come after. Table 2 reveals that first-year college students have high academic resilience, positivity and self-efficacy. This may be caused by their additional two years in high school before entering college.

Resilience and general well-being are critical for both preventing and treating mental health problems. Greater mental, social, and academic success can be attained by providing children with coping mechanisms and protective behaviors that will allow them to respond positively to change and obstacles in their lives (Fenwick-Smith et al., 2018). The key protective mechanisms/factors discovered, on the other hand, were flexibility, self-discipline, personal organization, positive relationships with faculty, integration with peers, and family support. The ability of the researcher to identify the ways in which students' resilience helps them overcome challenges at school will be extremely valuable for future educational strategies (Durso et al., 2021).

2. Test of Significant Effect of Students' Academic Resilience on their Positivity and Self-efficacy

Table 3Regression Analysis of the Effect of Students' Academic Resilience on their Positivity and Self-efficacy

Dependent Variable/s	Betta Coeff.	Std. Error	Т	p- value	Significance
Positivity	0.451	0.025	21.438	0.000	Significant
Self- efficacy	0.367	0.027	16.764	0.000	Significant

researchers assured the respondents that no particular sort of data about them will be publicized or used in unlawful activity. The data collected would be used entirely for academic reasons. The researchers guaranteed protection, anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents' identity and privacy.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Level of Academic Resilience, Positivity and Self-efficacy

As shown in Table 3, the students' academic resilience significantly affects their positivity (t=16.76, p<0.01). This means that if students have high academic resilience, then their positivity becomes high as well. Also, academic resilience which is the independent variable significantly affects the students' self-efficacy (t=21.438, p<0.01). This means that being academically resilient helps students to excel in their studies.

Academic resilience capacity refers to the likelihood that students will be able to persevere and improve their academic performance in the face of severe problems or the presence of serious risk factors (Dwiastuti et al., 2022). It demonstrates that resilient people have better academic paths,

	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Academic Resilience	2.95	0.43	High
Positivity	2.75	0.51	High
Self-efficacy	3.18	0.53	High

fewer intentions to drop out, higher grades, and are happier with their lives (Bittmann, 2021).

3. Test of Significant Effect of Students' Academic Resiliency on their Positivity and Self-efficacy

Table 4

Regression Analysis of the Effect of Students' Positivity on their Self-efficacy

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Dependent Variable	Beta Coeff.	Std. Error	Т	p- value	Significance	
Self- efficacy	0.217	0.024	9.433	0.000	Significant	

Independent: Positivity

As seen in Table 4, the students' positivity significantly affects their self-efficacy (t=9.433, p<0.01). This means that if students have either high or low positivity, then it could affect their self-efficacy.

Positive thinking predicts perceived self-efficacy in controlling negative emotions and expressing positive feelings positively (Thartori et al., 2021). They are enthusiastic about learning and the subjects to be learned because they are confident in their abilities. As a result, it can be claimed that children who are highly self-effective are happier when learning and studying, which can improve their academic success (Hayat et al., 2020).

4. Test of Mediating Effect of Positivity on the Relationship between Students' Academic Resilience and Self-efficacy

Table 5

Mediation Analysis of the Effect of Positivity on the Relationship between Students' Academic Resilience and Self-efficacy

Variables	Beta Coeff.	se	Т	p- value	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.7632	0.0858	20.5608	0.0000	1.5950	1.9313
Resilience	0.4188	0.0303	13.8032	0.0000	0.3593	0.4783
Positivity	0.0662	0.0252	2.6314	0.0086	0.0169	0.1156

It can be gleaned on Table 5 that students' academic resilience has an impact or has something to do to their positivity, then positivity significantly affects self-efficacy. Moreover, academic resilience significantly affects self-efficacy. Basic assumptions for Mediation were met. The results also reveal that positivity significantly mediates the relationship between students' academic resilience and self-efficacy which means that academic resilience causes self-efficacy because of positivity and other external factors or intervening variables.

Academic performance and academic adjustment were revealed to be statistically significantly positively correlated with academic resilience (Sadoughi, 2018). The way people think about their knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences has a big impact on their resilience. Some scholars have proposed that resilience is a possible result of self-efficacy because the feelings of optimism, control, and security experienced while dealing with stressors aid in the development of an individual's self-confidence (Schwarzer & Warner, 2012).

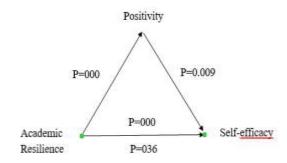


Figure 1. The Mediation Model of Positivity, Academic Resilience and Self-Efficacy

The result shows that students' academic resilience significantly affects positivity (p=000) and positivity significantly affects self-efficacy (p=0.009). For academic resilience and self-efficacy, there is a direct effect (p=000) and indirect effect (p=036). Therefore, positivity signifies itself as mediator of two variables.

Academic resilience was found to be positively correlated with self-efficacy and also, self-efficacy and positive learning-related emotions have a strong and positive relationship (Hayat et al., 2021). In addition, there was a significant correlation between self-efficacy, and positive thinking or positivity (Ibrahim, 2017).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to determine how academic resilience affects self-efficacy as mediated by positivity.

- 1. The respondents' academic resilience, positivity and self-efficacy are all high in their verbal description. Basing it from their mean score, self-efficacy appeared to be the highest, followed by academic resilience and then positivity.
- 2. It is revealed that the predictor variable which is academic resilience significantly affects students' positivity and self-efficacy.

- 3. It was found in the study that positivity being a mediator variable significantly affects self-efficacy which is the outcome variable.
- 4. The respondents' positivity partially mediates the relationship between their academic resilience and self-efficacy. This means that aside from positivity, there are other mediating or intervening variables that may affect the respondents' academic resilience and self-efficacy.

5.2 Recommendation

As the study revealed that positivity mediates both academic resilience and self-efficacy, the researchers hereby offer the following recommendations:

- 1. It is recommended that the results of the study would be disseminated to the first-year college students specifically to those who answered in Google form so that they would know the importance of academic resilience, positivity and self-efficacy. Furthermore, they would be conscious in their positivity that it could affect their academic resilience as well as their self-efficacy.
- 2. It is recommended that students would be given seminars on how to further develop their academic resilience since this predicts their positivity and self-efficacy. Teachers should also be informed that the activities that they give to their students must enhance their academic resilience because it significantly affects their self-efficacy which may contribute to becoming more productive and motivated in imprinting their academic performance. Additionally, if academic resilience becomes more developed, it could better affect the students' positivity which would be beneficial not only in facing the challenges of their studies but also in life's difficulties.
- 3. It is recommended that there would be more class and school activities that should boost the positivity of students because it significantly affects their self-efficacy. The school may invite speakers who are adept in Positive Psychology, Positive Thinking or Optimism. This will help students to have high positivity that might enhance their self-efficacy or self-beliefs in their skills, knowledge and abilities. As a result, this will better improve their academic performance.
- 4. Even if positivity partially mediates the relationship between academic resilience and self-efficacy, it is recommended that students would be encouraged to be more conscious of their positivity, positive thinking or optimism because it affects their academic resilience and self-efficacy.
- 5. It is recommended that future researchers would explore the other mediating or intervening variables that may also affect the academic resilience and self-efficacy of students.

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