

**EFFECT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING ON ORGANIZATIONAL
PERFORMANCE OF REFERRAL HOSPITALS IN KENYA: A CASE OF
KENYATTA NATIONAL HOSPITAL**

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ABSTRACT

Globally, organizations from both public and private sectors have over time recognized the importance of strategic management, which is considered as a tool, which can be employed for purposes of enhancing performance. Environmental scanning is an aspect of strategic management, which focuses on acquiring of relevant information by managers, which relate to activities in the operating environment of organizations for purposes of being well informed in view of action to be taken in the future. The provision of services at KNH has faced numerous difficulties. The difficulties are brought on by inadequate equipment, the presence of outdated equipment, and unfavorable working circumstances. Moreover, there is a shortage of medical personnel and the present personnel are demoralized. The study recommends an established Environmental Scanning Framework that encompasses various dimensions, including political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors. Assign a dedicated team within each referral hospital responsible for conducting regular environmental scans and analyzing the findings. Establish a centralized data collection system that gathers relevant information from both internal and external sources, including government agencies, research institutions, and international organizations.

Keywords: *Environmental Scanning, Organizational Performance, Referrals Hospitals*

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Globally, organizations from both public and private sectors have over time recognized the importance of strategic management, which is considered as a tool, which can be employed for purposes of enhancing performance (Kumar, 2021). Institutions that have experienced success in their operations are those, which have recognized and instituted effective strategic management practices. Strategic management provides enablement for organizational leaders

in making decisions towards the positive performance and growth of institutions. As such, strategic management provides enablement for organizations to survive in the dynamic modern business environment, which is ever changing (Aschenbrücker & Kretschmer, 2018). In Kenya, the rapid population growth has brought about the need for effective and efficient services in the public healthcare for purposes of catering for the growing demand for accessible, affordable and quality healthcare services (Issack & Muathe, 2017). Vision 2030, published by the Ministry of State for Planning and National Development (2007), states that the Government of Kenya as one of its key objectives has incorporated several programs covering the health sector in the Vision 2030 social pillar. This seeks to increase public service delivery efficiency (Kiplagat & Kiiru, 2021).

In today's rapidly evolving world, organizations are constantly faced with a multitude of external forces that can impact their operations, strategies, and overall success. Environmental scanning, a strategic management practice, has emerged as a vital tool to help organizations proactively navigate these complexities (Issack & Muathe, 2017). This process involves systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information about the external environment to identify trends, opportunities, and threats that may influence an organization's decision-making. This publication delves into the significance of environmental scanning, provides insights into its methodologies, and benefits (Kumar, 2021).

Environmental scanning is an aspect of strategic management, which focuses on acquiring of relevant information by managers, which relate to activities in the operating environment of organizations for purposes of being well informed in view of action to be taken in the future. Environmental scanning or analysis is notably the beginning (first) stage in strategic management in that it serves as a link between organizational strategy and the operating environment (Issack & Muathe, 2017). Hence, a full grasp of this phase enables organizations to learn, know and understand about existing and unfolding business opportunities that can be ventured into as well as underlying potential threats associated with such opportunities. Effective scanning of the environment therefore is considered a vital component of a successful organization. Environmental scanning leads to easy access and gathering of information that

in turn serve as reflection of underlying opportunities as well as threats which are present in the market environment (Ondera, 2013).

In order to build an organization's vision and mission, it is important to recognize both external opportunities and internal risks and opportunities (Kumar, 2021). In view of the outcome of environmental scanning which takes into consideration the underlying opportunities and threats, strategies are then formulated for purposes of exploring identified opportunities and/or addressing potential threats (Baroto, Arvand & Ahmad, 2014). Strategy formulation includes but not limited to deciding on what and where to allocate resources to and invest in, whether to diversify or expand, whether to enter or withdraw from international markets and ways of addressing any hostile takeover.

Organizational Performance

Environmental scanning refers to the process of systematically collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information from the external environment that could impact an organization's current and future operations. This includes identifying opportunities, threats, trends, and changes in the business environment, such as technological advancements, economic shifts, social and cultural changes, regulatory developments, and competitive actions (Kithinji, 2019). The goal of environmental scanning is to enable organizations to anticipate changes, adapt to new conditions, and make informed decisions that align with their strategic objectives. It is a crucial aspect of strategic management, as it helps organizations stay agile and responsive to external factors that could affect their performance (Nyaga, Wasike & Mote, 2021).

Effective environmental scanning helps organizations identify emerging trends and opportunities in their industry. By understanding the external landscape, organizations can position themselves to take advantage of favorable conditions before competitors do, potentially leading to increased market share and profitability. Environmental scanning also helps organizations identify potential threats and risks in the external environment. By recognizing these risks early, organizations can develop strategies to mitigate their impact, thereby safeguarding their performance and minimizing potential losses (Kithinji, 2019).

Monitoring technological advancements, consumer preferences, and industry trends through environmental scanning can inspire innovation. Organizations can proactively develop new products, services, or business models that cater to changing customer demands and preferences, driving enhanced performance and differentiation. Informed decisions are critical for organizational success. Environmental scanning provides decision-makers with data and insights that guide the development of effective strategies and tactics. This, in turn, can lead to improved overall performance by aligning the organization's actions with external realities (Akello & Atambo, 2016).

Organizations that are responsive to changing external conditions are better positioned to adapt their operations and strategies. Environmental scanning fosters a culture of adaptability, enabling organizations to adjust their plans as needed and maintain optimal performance even in dynamic environments. Understanding external trends and market conditions helps organizations allocate their resources effectively. Whether it is allocating funds, human resources, or other assets, informed decisions based on environmental scanning can lead to optimized resource utilization and improved performance (Kithinji, 2019). Organizations that consistently engage in environmental scanning are more likely to identify long-term trends that could impact their industry. By strategically planning for these trends, organizations can ensure their long-term sustainability and continued high performance.

Referral Hospitals

Referral hospitals, also known as tertiary or specialized hospitals, are medical facilities that provide advanced and specialized healthcare services beyond the scope of primary and secondary healthcare facilities. These hospitals are equipped with advanced medical technology, specialized medical professionals, and a wide range of medical specialties to offer comprehensive and complex medical care (Kiplagat & Kiiru, 2021). Referral hospitals are essential to the healthcare system because they give patients who need sophisticated diagnostic, therapeutic, or surgical procedures specialized services. They serve as a point of referral for patients who have been assessed and treated at primary or secondary healthcare facilities but require further evaluation, specialized treatment, or advanced medical procedures (Wachira & Irungu, 2015).

Environmental scanning in the context of referral hospitals in Kenya involves the systematic process of monitoring, analyzing, and interpreting external factors and trends that could affect the operations, strategies, and decision-making of these hospitals. These external factors can encompass a wide range of areas, including economic, social, technological, political, and environmental factors. By identifying the key external factors that could have an impact on the hospitals functioning (Kithinji, 2019). These could include changes in healthcare policies, advancements in medical technology, and shifts in patient demographics, economic conditions, and environmental regulations. Environmental scanning provides hospitals with the necessary information to make informed decisions and adjust their strategies as needed. It helps hospitals stay responsive to changes in the healthcare landscape and ensures that they are well prepared to provide quality care in a dynamic environment like Kenya's healthcare system (Kiplagat & Kiiru, 2021).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As Kenyatta National Hospital is a reputable referral facility, all hospitals, public and private, are expected to emulate Kenyatta National Hospital's high standards in providing medical services to the public. Over time, several studies have documented the poor performance and generally low standards of the hospital (Kenyatta National Hospital). (Performance Audit Report 2012; Wambui 2013). The provision of services at KNH has faced numerous difficulties. The difficulties are brought on by inadequate equipment, the presence of outdated equipment, and unfavorable working circumstances. Moreover, there is a shortage of medical personnel and the present personnel are demoralized. The difficulties result in slow patient diagnosis and treatment, excessively long appointments that cause non-adherence to therapy, and a large population needing services that are already overburdened. Low pay and demoralized employees working in unsanitary conditions frequently give rise to legal lawsuits. This frequently paralyzes the institution, which is already stretched thin (KNH, 2018).

In today's rapidly changing business landscape, organizations are constantly faced with a multitude of external factors that can significantly influence their operations, strategies, and overall performance. These factors encompass economic, technological, social, political, and environmental dimensions, collectively shaping the business environment. The practice of

environmental scanning, which involves systematically gathering and analyzing information about these external factors, has gained substantial attention as a strategic tool for organizations seeking to enhance their competitive advantage and adapt to dynamic circumstances (Njeru, 2015).

However, despite the growing recognition of the importance of environmental scanning, there exists a gap in understanding the precise relationship between the depth, accuracy, and timeliness of environmental scanning efforts and their subsequent impact on organizational performance. The effectiveness of environmental scanning practices varies widely across industries and organizations, and it remains unclear how different scanning methods, frequency, and integration of findings into strategic decision-making influence key performance indicators such as profitability, innovation, market share, and sustainability (Issack and Muathe, 2017).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to determine the effect of environmental scanning on organizational performance of Referral Hospitals in Kenya.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Various stakeholder groups will find the study useful. The groups of stakeholders include the management of Kenyatta National Hospital, the Government of Kenya and scholars. The management at Kenyatta National Hospital will derive several benefits from the outcome of this research. Recommendations was provided on environmental scanning and organizational performance of referral hospitals in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

Goal Orientation Theory

Dweck (1986) introduced the theory and it holds personal beliefs are held by individuals with regards to intelligence and performance orientation. These beliefs encompass a mental framework where individuals adapt to either mastery or avoidance with regards to the

achievement of goals and performance attainment. Goal orientation serves as a framework of cognitive nature, which is applied towards reacting to challenges with respect to the achievement of goals while responding to performance outcome. Two dimensions have been identified by goal orientation scholars, which are learning, and performances orientation (Dweck, 1986).

Goal orientation is viewed as stable traits as well as situationally induced status. Lameez and Daan (2014) contend that team effort has more likelihood of being effective when the members are guided by a shared belief while shared goal orientation is a necessity in this context. Dragoni and Kuenzi (2012) analyzed team goal orientation and had the suggestion that there may be some convergence into shared goals. In a situation where team members are characterized by variations with regards to their openness to the goals which the leader (management advocates), achievement of set objectives may be affected. West (1996), define team flexibility as processes of collective reflection and adaptation of the objectives of the team. Environmental scanning remains interconnected as such allowing for the efficient functioning of organizations. The assertions of goal orientation theory support the variables of environmental scanning and organization performance.

Empirical Literature Review

Ofunya (2013) evaluated the relationship between environmental scanning and performances of Post bank, Kenya. It was put forward that the strategies employed in addressing the dynamic nature of business environment by Post bank span from cost reductions, efficient customer services as well as enhanced operational efficiency. Environmental scanning was found to be important in determining performances of the bank. Post Bank in Kenya was notably the focus of the previous research. Referral hospitals in Kenya was the unit of analysis of the current study.

Njeru (2015) assessed the effect environmental scanning on performance of SMEs within the context of Kenya. While using regression analysis, it was documented that strategic environmental scanning had some positive effect on SMEs' performances. Despite the research focusing on strategic management and performance, SMEs in Kenya were the focus. This study

differs since the focus was the health sector and specific Kenyatta National Hospital, Kenya. Hence, the justification for the current empirical research which aims at assessing environmental scanning and performance nexus with focus on referral hospitals in Kenya.

Relevant to Mandela County, Issack and Muathe (2017) investigated how strategic management practices affect the effectiveness of public health facilities. Predictor variables were policy formulation, implementation, evaluation, and environmental analysis, and outcome variables were public health facility (Mandela County)-focused performance. The study is based on Mandela's mixed study design of 50 facilities (in the public health field). Hospital administrators were also included. Environmental analysis, strategy implementation, strategy formulation, and strategy evaluation were found to have a significant positive impact on hospital performance. It was recommended that public health agencies develop appropriate strategies. This enables each institution to pursue a clearly defined corporate mission with clearly defined and achievable goals.

Gabow (2019) empirically determined strategy implementation effects on performances of Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) and focused on Nairobi City County, Kenya. Descriptive research design was used and the target audience was KCB employees. Random stratified sampling was employed. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and secondary data based on document review. Correlation, descriptive and inferential analyses were carried out. Environmental scanning had strong influences on performance. The research was for KCB, that is, the Kenyatta National Hospital whereas KNH was the context to be explored in this study.

Wafula and Muathe (2019) assessed the impact of strategic management on the performance of county governments (Turkana County) in Kenya. Strategic management practices were assessed through execution, strategy development, evaluation, and environmental scans. The study was based on a descriptive research plan and data were collected by technical staff from each department within the county. Environmental scans were shown to have a positive impact on Turkana County government performance. The research focused on Turkana County. The current study differs in that it focuses on referral hospitals.

Kumar (2021) evaluated the relationship between environmental scanning and performance in Indian pharmaceutical companies. The study documents that strategic management can assess a company's competitive advantage and identify ways to counter current and future competition. The study found that strategic management (practice) has both positive and significant impacts on performance. It was concluded that monitoring, analysis and evaluation led to improved corporate performance. It is suggested that management has a well-thought-out plan to facilitate short- and long-term business operations. Although particular emphasis was placed on environmental scanning and performance contexts, the conclusions drawn were based on results from previous studies, and the study was conducted using a literature-based approach.

Literature Review Summary

Author and Year	Title	Findings	Research Gap	Focus on the current study
Ofunya (2013)	The relationship between environmental scanning and performances of Post bank, Kenya.	It was put forward that the strategies employed in addressing the dynamic nature of business environment by Post bank span from cost reductions, efficient customer services as well as enhanced operational efficiency. Environmental scanning was found to be important in determining performances of the bank.	Post Bank in Kenya was notably the focus of the previous research. Referral hospitals in Kenya was the unit of analysis of the current study	The study focuses on environmental scanning as the study variables.
Wafula and Muathe (2019)	Strategy formulation effects on performance of Turkana County Government,	Environmental Scanning Showed to Positively Impact Turkana County Government Performance.	The research focused on Turkana County. The current study differs in that it focuses on referral hospitals. Kenyatta National Hospital under the referral hospital category	The study focuses on environmental scanning, as the study variable

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent Variable

Dependent

Variable

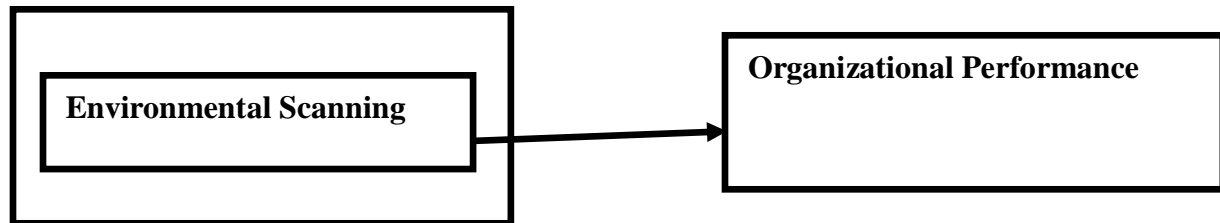


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive study design was employed in this study. A descriptive research design is a type of research method that aims to describe and observe the characteristics, behaviors, and patterns of specific populations and phenomena. The goal is to collect data without manipulating variables or establishing causality. Descriptive research design provides valuable information for understanding a particular topic or problem, setting the foundation for further research or investigation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

The study covered employees at Kenyatta National Hospital where a target of 600 employees (cutting across, support staff, doctors, nurses and specialists) was considered. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. A questionnaire is considered a tool used to collect survey data that is presented to and answered by respondents (Phellas, Bloch, & Seale, 2011). Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha with $\alpha > 0.7$ serving as the threshold. Organizational Performance was modeled as a function of environmental scanning as shown in the equation below:

$$PEF = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ENS + \varepsilon$$

Where:

PEF = Organizational Performance

ENS = Environmental Scanning

B_1 = coefficient

β_0 = Constant

ϵ is an error term

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Statistics

Environmental scanning

	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Mean	Standard Deviation
An essential component of strategic management is environmental scanning	40%	56%	4%	0%	0%	4.10	0.9380
We carry out internal analysis to identify business opportunities	61%	36%	3%	0%	0%	3.97	0.8287
We carry out external analysis to identify potential threats in the business environment	60%	36%	4%	0%	0%	3.85	0.8267
Environmental scanning leads to improvements in the performance of hospitals	56%	42%	2%	0%	0%	3.76	0.8283
Average						3.92	0.8554

The primary objective of the study was to look into the impact of environmental scanning on the performance of Kenyatta National Hospital. The researcher examined the impact of environmental scanning on performance by requesting respondents to utilize a five-point Likert scale to score the study variable. The table shows the findings of a set of four questions intended to examine how environmental scanning affects performance. The findings of the study are described using descriptive statistics to demonstrate the responses. The outcomes were as follows the first question asked was if an essential component of strategic management is environmental scanning and the replies were as follows, with a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.9380: 40% of respondents strongly agreed, 56% agreed, and 4% were neutral. The study also inquired if Kenyatta National Hospital carry out internal analysis to identify business opportunities and these were the responses: With a mean of 3.97 and a standard

deviation of 0.8287, the respondents were divided into three groups: 61% strongly agreed, 36% agreed, and 3% were neutral.

The study third question was if Kenyatta National Hospital carry out external analysis to identify potential threats in the business environment and the replies were as follows, with a mean of 3.85 and a standard deviation of 0.8267: 60% of respondents strongly agreed, 36% agreed, and 4% were neutral. The fourth question was if the environmental scanning leads to improvements in the performance of hospitals and the respondents' responses had a mean of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 0.8283, with 56% strongly agreeing, 42% agreeing, and 2% neutral. Environmental scanning was the study variable, and the overall mean was 3.92, with an average standard deviation of 0.8554. This suggests that environmental scanning has a significant impact on how well an organization performs.

The study findings are similar with other findings such as the study by Ofunya (2013) evaluated the relationship between environmental scanning and performances of Post bank, Kenya. It was put forward that the strategies employed in addressing the dynamic nature of business environment by Post bank span from cost reductions, efficient customer services as well as enhanced operational efficiency. Environmental scanning was found to be important in determining performances of the bank. Njeru (2015) assessed the effect environmental scanning on performance of SMEs within the context of Kenya, it was documented that strategic environmental scanning had some positive effect on SMEs' performances. Issack and Muathe (2017) investigated how strategic management practices affected the effectiveness of public health institutions. Environmental analysis, strategy implementation, strategy formulation, and strategy evaluation were found to have a significant positive impact on hospital performance. It was recommended that public health agencies develop appropriate strategies. This enables each institution to pursue a clearly defined corporate mission with clearly defined and achievable goals.

Gabow (2019) empirically determined strategy implementation effects on performances of Kenya Commercial Bank the study established that environmental scanning had strong influences on performance. Wafula and Muathe (2019) assessed the impact of strategic

management on county performance, and their study found that environmental scanning had a positive impact on Turkana County government performance. Kumar (2021) evaluated the relationship between environmental scanning and performance in Indian pharmaceutical companies. The study found that environmental scanning has both positive and significant impacts on performance. It was concluded that monitoring, analysis and evaluation led to improved corporate performance. It is suggested that management has a well-thought-out plan to facilitate short- and long-term business operations.

Inferential Statistics

Environmental Scanning and Performance of Referral Hospitals

This relationship was tested using the hypothesis, which read, “There is no significant relationship between environmental scanning and performance of referral hospitals in Kenya”

Model Summary for environmental scanning

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.609 (a)	0.260	0.251	0.77886

A regression study to see if environmental scanning was a significant predictor of organizational effectiveness. R of 0.609, indicating a substantial positive link between environmental scanning and performance at Kenyatta National Hospital. As a result, the goodness of fit for the regression between environmental scanning and performance was acceptable. The variance R squared value of 0.260 indicates that environmental scanning accounts for 26.0 % of performance decisions. Other factors, including but not limited to environmental scanning, could account for the unexplained 74.0%.

ANOVA for environmental scanning and Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.168	1	12.168	27.228	0.000(b)
	Residual	33.656	101	0.448		

Total 48.815 102

The table above displays the overall model significance. The f - statistics of 27.228 and p value of 0.000 show that the overall model was significant. This implies that environmental scanning is a crucial factor in Kenyatta National Hospital's performance.

Regression Coefficients Results of environmental scanning and Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	Constant	1.377	0.445		3.068	0.005	0.485	2.289
	Environmental scanning	0.688	0.115	0.609	5.248	0.000	0.383	0.709

The Table shows that environmental scanning adds considerably to the organizational performance of Kenyatta National Hospital because the p-values for the constant and gradient are less than 0.05. As a result, any positive unit change in environmental scanning is set to influence Kenyatta National Hospital's organizational performance at 60.9%. The regression model explaining the results in table is given by **Y= 1.377+0.688 ENS.**

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that environmental scanning has a significant impact on organization performance at KNH. The study concludes that environmental scanning is a significant predictor of organizational performance and any positive unit change in environmental scanning is set to influence Kenyatta National Hospital's organizational performance at a rate of 0.609.

Referral hospitals play a critical role in providing specialized healthcare services to patients in Kenya . In order to ensure the effective management and performance of these hospitals, it is

essential to have a robust environmental scanning system in place. Environmental scanning involves monitoring, analyzing, and interpreting external factors that can impact the operations and performance of hospitals.

The study recommends an established Environmental Scanning Framework that encompasses various dimensions, including political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors. Assign a dedicated team within each referral hospital responsible for conducting regular environmental scans and analyzing the findings. Establish a centralized data collection system that gathers relevant information from both internal and external sources, including government agencies, research institutions, and international organizations. Develop partnerships with academic institutions and research centers to access up-to-date data on emerging healthcare trends, technological advancements, and best practices from around the world. c. Utilize advanced data analytics tools and technologies to process and analyze the collected data effectively.

Foster collaboration with governmental bodies, regulatory agencies, and policymakers to exchange information and insights on healthcare policies, regulations, and potential changes that may impact the referral hospitals. Engage with community organizations, patient advocacy groups, and other relevant stakeholders to gather insights on societal needs, expectations, and concerns related to healthcare services. Provide comprehensive training programs for hospital staff on environmental scanning techniques, data analysis, and interpretation to ensure a consistent understanding and implementation across all referral hospitals. Foster a culture of continuous learning and professional development by organizing workshops, seminars, and conferences focused on environmental scanning and its application in healthcare management.

Incorporate the findings from environmental scanning into the strategic planning process of each referral hospital to identify potential opportunities and threats. Develop contingency plans and strategies to address the identified challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities. Establish a reporting mechanism that requires each referral hospital to submit regular reports summarizing the findings from their environmental scans and the actions taken based on those

findings. Implement a monitoring system to track the progress and effectiveness of the environmental scanning initiatives, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.

Allocate adequate financial resources to support the implementation of the environmental scanning framework, including data collection, analysis tools, training programs, and stakeholder collaborations. Ensure the availability of skilled personnel, such as data analysts and environmental scanning experts, to facilitate the effective implementation of the framework. By implementing these policy recommendations, referral hospitals in Kenya can enhance their environmental scanning practices and improve their overall performance. A comprehensive and systematic approach to environmental scanning will enable hospitals to proactively identify and address potential challenges, capitalize on emerging opportunities, and align their strategies with the evolving healthcare landscape. Ultimately, this will contribute to the delivery of high-quality healthcare services and better health outcomes for the residents of Nairobi.

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