IMPACT OF E-RECRUITMENT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HR MANAGEMENT IN COMPANIES: THE CASE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Abstract: *Human resources play a significant role in a company as human capital affects the company's success and competitiveness. Effective HR management helps the company achieve its goals. Key HR activities in acquiring human capital are recruitment, training, and retention of employees. Finding the right employees is of great importance to a company and this process should be fast and efficient. E-recruitment, as an ICT-based process, can increase the efficiency of the recruitment process and HRM. Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) is struggling with strong migration processes, mostly the workforce since numerous youth and families are migrating to Europe. This affects the ability of companies to find new employees, retain existing employees and attract talented ones. The main aim of this paper is to investigate to what extent the companies in B&H use e-recruitment and how it affects the overall effectiveness of the HR management process. The paper is based on survey research conducted among 100 medium and large companies with developed HR departments in B&H. The results indicate that the companies are aware of the importance of HR for the company's success, they are aware of technological advances and the impact of ICT on the HRM processes, but they still do not rely only on e-recruitment in acquiring new talents and employees. However, the results also indicate that the e-recruitment process leads to the time and cost efficiency of the HR recruitment process.*

Keywords: *HRM, eHRM, Recruitment process, E-recruitment.*

JEL Classification M12 · M5 · M51 · M54

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management is one of the management functions with the most impact on organizational performance. Contemporary organizations are pressured to remain competitive in the market and improve their overall performances. Human resources and intellectual capital are crucial in achieving these goals. It is a common understanding among researchers and practitioners that human resources are the most important resource of a company and that efficient human resource management is the key to a company′s success. However, nowadays we are witnessing many changes in HR and they are mostly impacted by technological development, in the past couple of years by the global pandemic, etc.

The impact of modern technology (ICT, AI, etc) on HR practices is inevitable and overwhelming. According to consulting agencies, the market for HR technology will be worth around 30 billion USD. According to Butina "*the speed at which new HR tools are being created is breathtaking.... even though many companies are unable to jump on every new piece of bleeding-edge technology*". This is especially the case for companies in the Western Balkans.

Recent study conducted by the European training foundation in 2022 "*The future of work in the Western Balkans*" indicates problems related to the digitalization of work, human capital development, and HR management.

Finding the right employees is a challenging task for human resource managers. Therefore recruitment is one of the most important activities in human resource management. Many companies nowadays rely on modern recruitment techniques and tools (e.g. E-recruitment) to ensure numerous candidates, increase the possibility of finding the best employees and increase the efficiency of the human resource management process. Electronic human resource management (eHRM) and artificial intelligence (AI) can help to recruit and select qualified employees, increase individual retention rates, and decrease the time needed to replace employees (Johnson et al., 2021).

In this paper, we will present the research findings of a survey focusing on e-recruitment practices in companies in B&H. The paper is structured in five sections. The first section is the introductory part followed by the presentation of the theoretical background in the second section. The research methodology is presented in section three and the research findings are presented in the fourth section. The discussion of the research findings is presented in the fifth section along with the conclusions and recommendations for future research.

The main aim of this research is to provide the answer to the research question: *To what extent does e-recruitment impact the efficiency of the recruitment process in companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina?*

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Human resource management goals are part of organizational goals and must be compatible with them. Human resources management should discover talents, and develop and initiate human resources for the realization of the organization's goals, while at the same time, the work and personal engagement of employees does not represent frustration, but personal satisfaction. Recruitment as a fundamental function of the HR department is a process in which the right personnel for the organization is found through a series of steps. Employee recruitment is very important for the business of any company, especially since the contemporary labor market is driven by the con-

cept of "skills development" and there is an increased awareness among companies that recruiting process and finding the right candidate for a specific job is becoming more and more important.

The tasks of recruiting (acquiring) human resources are directly followed by planning tasks and represent a guideline for the further development of the human resources management function. Recruiting is the process of identifying, attracting, and providing qualified candidates, in a sufficient number that allows the organization to choose among several applicants, who meet the requirements of vacant positions. Human resource needs can be met in two ways: by hiring new people and developing the potential of existing ones.

The recruitment process begins with the decision to hire new employees, that is, to fill vacant positions and collect data on potential candidates. Recruiting as a process is expensive and takes a long time, and in order to reach certain candidates, the organization must provide significantly more candidates than the organization lacks. Recruitment is a two-way process because two parties participate in it: the organization that needs to fill vacant positions and the candidate who is interested in establishing a working relationship with the organization.

The aim is to attract a qualified group of candidates from outside the organization for a specific, vacant position in such a number that will enable the organization to choose the best candidate. Fundamentally, there are two different ways of recruiting staff: internal within the company or external from the labor market. The internal labor market offers potential candidates according to the target group, from the same company's organizational parts, from different companies' organizational parts, or the entire company. On the external labor market, one can find groups of job seekers, those just starting their careers, and those who want to change jobs and are motivated to change.

Recruitment includes all those activities that in any way affect the number and qualifications of people who apply for a vacant position, as well as the probability that candidates (applicants) will accept the position, of course, provided they meet all the eligibility requirements (Figure 1).
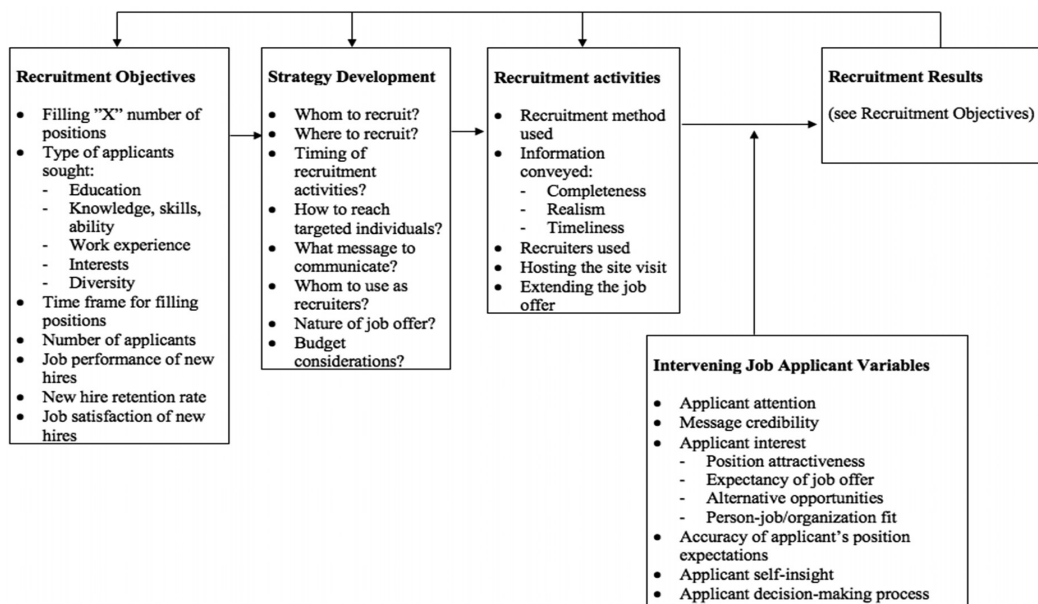

Figure 1. A model of the recruitment process (Breaugh, 2008)

An effective recruitment strategy implies practices aimed at finding the most willing candidates with appropriate competencies (Breaugh, 2008). Many authors believed that the purpose of recruitment is to find the largest possible number of candidates, others that the purpose of recruitment is to sell the organization to potential candidates in the best possible way (Singh & Finn, 2003; Wanous, 1992). It can be said that the most important aspect of recruitment is finding the right people for the right job.

According to Breaugh (2008), the recruitment process requires a systematic approach to achieving the goals of the recruitment process, which are defined in the first step of the process (Figure 1). Defining goals is crucial for choosing the right recruitment strategy, implementing activities, and optimizing recruitment results.

In addition to defining the goal of the recruitment process, it is crucial for employers to choose the resources and methods of recruitment. In the literature, as well as in practice, three sources of recruitment are known: internal recruitment, external recruitment, and walk-in recruitment. The key advantage of internal recruiting is in finding the best candidates within the organization itself, which means that the potential candidate knows the organization and its culture well, and the recruitment costs are lower. On the other hand, attracting candidates from external sources allows refreshing the team of employees, and introducing new ideas and approaches. Studies investigating sources of recruitment have shown that companies most often use a combination of the three sources of recruitment given that no single source can be considered the most reliable.

When it comes to external staff recruitment, companies often use traditional and increasingly modern recruitment methods. Traditional recruitment methods (contacting employees for recommendations, advertisements through newspapers, etc.) in a business environment that is increasingly changing, where the demand for employees with the right skills dominates, where business is increasingly internationalized and influenced by global trends, are not sufficient for timely attracting a sufficient number of interested job applicants. Many companies today apply more modern recruitment methods or combine different recruitment methods (El-Gohary, 2012).

"*Every sector, every job, every function, was, is or will be disrupted by the Internet*" (Girard & Fallery, 2009; Kalika, 2000). The use of technology in the company's operations has also affected human resource management processes. These technological organizational changes have also affected recruiting and it has undergone a major change as a whole, with new technologies providing a fast, effective, and efficient way to find potential employees. In theory and practice, numerous opportunities and risks that may arise when using new recruitment technologies have been identified. Among other things, speeding up the recruitment process, automating routine tasks, and increasing objectivity, were seen as possibilities. The risk of discrimination, data distortion, and invasion of privacy are considered risks.

The use of the Internet has enabled the application of modern recruitment methods, primarily e-recruitment, i.e. electronic recruitment, in which the use of the Internet plays a key role. In the beginning, recruiting via the Internet was done only by publishing ads on this network, and after a certain time, the volume of Internet use for these purposes increased significantly, so today we have virtual worlds that give applicants a better introduction to the state of a company, thus giving them a better basis for an application. Today, it is common knowledge that any virtual ad gives better results and a much larger response than any regional printed newspaper. However, when publishing virtual ads, it is very important to choose the right place for the ad on the Internet, as well as its content and wording.

E-recruitment implies the use of the company's website, e-mail, online radio station, social networks, and similar, for the purpose of finding, attracting, evaluating, interviewing, selecting, and hiring suitable personnel. A number of studies point to various advantages of using e-recruitment, such as: reducing risks related to candidate information, qualifications, and experiences (Parry & Tyson, 2008), reducing the burden of using recruitment agencies, and reducing costs (Galanaki, 2002), increasing satisfaction by work, shortening the recruitment cycle (Gopalia, 2012), improving the consistency and efficiency of the recruitment process (El-Gohary, 2012), the application contributes to improved employee productivity, etc.

3.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Starting from the fact that the defined subject of the research in the paper is the impact of the application of e-recruitment on the efficiency of the human resources management process in Bosnian companies, a research hypothesis was formulated as follows:

H0:   *"The use of e-recruitment positively affects the efficiency of the recruitment process in companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina".*

The research variables are identified, namely, e-recruitment as an independent variable, and the efficiency of the human resources management process as a dependent variable, as well as indicators for measuring the aforementioned variables. The collection of primary data for the purposes of this research was carried out using the method of written examination, using a survey questionnaire as a data collection form.

The subjects of the research are production and service companies operating in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based on the 100 collected answers from the respondents, empirical research is conducted for the purposes of this paper. The survey questionnaire that was used in the research was designed in several parts, with the aim of collecting indicators for the identified research variables. The survey questionnaire included three sections, namely the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the use of e-recruitment, and the efficiency of the human resources management process. The collected data were statistically processed using the methods of descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.   RESEARCH FINDINGS

According to the results of the descriptive analysis, 91% of companies have been using the Internet in business for more than 9 years, 7% for more than seven years, and 2% for less than seven years. Moreover, 74% of the companies in the sample have been operating for more than 15 years, 9% for 10 to 15 years, and 6% for between 5 and 10 years. When it comes to the criterion of company size, 43% of companies have more than 100 employees, 20% have up to 50 employees, and 17% of companies have 50 to 100 employees.

In the total sample, 60% of companies operate exclusively on the domestic market, 37% of companies operate both domestically and on the foreign market, and only 3% of companies operate exclusively on the foreign market, with the fact that 7% of companies were founded through a partnership with a foreign investor, and 11% exclusively by foreign capital.

The results of the descriptive analysis of the responses related to the use of recruitment sources indicate that 23% of companies use only one recruitment source (dominantly an external re-

cruitment source), while 77% use a combination of different recruitment sources. Also, the results show that electronic media and the Internet are used in combination with other methods of recruitment, and 26% of companies use the Internet as an exclusive source of recruitment. (Table 1).

Table 1. Used source of employee recruitment

Source of employee recruitment	Frequency (%)
Internet	26
Consultants (headhunters)	9
Print media	12
Electronic media	23
Employment agencies	18
Employee recommendations	22
Partnership with higher education institutions	12

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the sources

The approach of 56% of companies is that changes in the global economy are changing the sources of recruitment they use, and 59% of them believe that it would be useful to replace traditional sources of recruitment with electronic recruitment. Companies use electronic recruitment services in the form of employment portals, social networks, their own websites, and other services, as well as their various combinations. The following table shows the number of companies that use individual electronic recruitment services when recruiting employees, and different combinations of two, three, or more of them.

Table 2. Individual and combined services of electronic recruitment of employees used by companies

Electronic recruitment employees services	Frequency (%)
Employment portals	24
Social networks	14
Own website	10
Other	17
Employment portals, social networks	9
Employment portals, own website	3
Employment portals, other	3
Social networks, own website	4
Social networks, other	1
Employment portals, social networks, own website	14
Employment portals, social networks, own website, and other	1
Total	100

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the sources

In order to determine the frequency of use of each individual service, based on the data shown in the previous Table, the number of companies that, individually or in combination with other services, use individual electronic employee recruitment services was calculated. The obtained results are presented in Table 3.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that employment portals and social networks are the two electronic recruitment employees services that Bosnian companies use most often. Social networks, as well as when it comes to sources of recruitment in general, and electronic recruitment services, are used in the form of individual social networks, or different combinations of two, three, or more of them.

Table 3. Individual electronic recruitment employees services used by companies

Electronic recruitment employees services	Number of companies
Employment portals	54
Social networks	43
Own website	32
Other	22

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the sources

Table 4. Descriptive indicators of general attitudes about employee recruitment channels

Item	Average	Mode	Standard deviation
Our employees are very important to our company.	4,43	5	0,935
Our company pays special attention to finding competent, professional, and capable employees who fit into our environment.	4,12	5	0,988
Our company has a website with a recruitment portal where potential candidates are offered relevant employment information.	3,08	1 and 5	1,574
On our website for each open position, the candidate can upload his application, biography, and other required data.	2,83	1	1,688
Our company hires recruitment agencies through outsourcing.	2,27	1	1,448
Online recruitment portals filter candidates before sending applications to our company.	2,42	1	1,505
Our company conducts final tests and the selection of candidates based on the recommendation of the online portal.	2,66	1	1,571
Our company continuously posts job ads on social networks.	3,10	5	1,592
Our company often communicates with candidates through social networks.	2,52	1	1,382
Our HR department scans the social media profiles of the applied candidates to determine if their personality fits the company and its organizational culture.	2,61	1	1,510

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the sources

The results show that the respondents expressed a high degree of agreement with the statement "*Our employees are very important to our company*", where 86% of the respondents answered in the zone of agreement with the above (22% of the respondents answered "I agree" and 64% of them "completely agree"). "*Our company pays special attention to finding competent, profession-al, and capable employees who fit into our environment*" - 77% of respondents answered "agree" and "completely agree". On the other hand, the lowest degree of agreement was expressed for the statement "*Our company often communicates with candidates via social networks*", with only 20% of the respondents agreeing to a greater or lesser extent, and "*Our company engages recruit-ment agencies through outsourcing*", with which a lesser or greater degree of agreement was re-corded only in 23% of responses.

The advantages of electronic recruitment in production and service companies were investigated through a total of fifteen questions in the third part of the questionnaire. According to the results of the research, the most effective method and the greatest time saving, according to the opin-

ion of 49% of respondents, are electronic recruitment methods. 45% of respondents point out that these are traditional, as well as 6% other methods of recruiting employees. According to 62% of respondents, traditional recruitment methods should be completely replaced by electronic recruitment methods.

The effectiveness of electronic recruitment by the respondents was evaluated through four different segments: the cost segment, the segment of the easier finding of workers, the segment of the quality of the candidate's responses, and the segment of the quality of the application. The effectiveness of electronic recruitment for each of these segments was assessed by assigning a grade from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Descriptive statistical indicators of respondents' responses are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive statistical indicators of evaluation of electronic recruitment effectiveness.

Segment of effectiveness rating	Average	Modus	Standard deviation
Effectiveness of electronic recruiting for the cost segment	3,71	3	1,149
Effectiveness of electronic recruitment in the segment of an easier finding of candidates	3,77	3	1,072
Effectiveness of electronic recruitment for the segment of the quality of received candidate responses	3,29	3	0,977
Effectiveness of electronic recruitment in the application quality segment	3,37	3	1,012

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the sources

According to the obtained results, the effectiveness of electronic recruitment is to the greatest extent reflected in the segment of easier findings of candidates and the segment of costs, and less intensively in the segment of the quality of the application and the quality of the candidate's responses.

As can be noticed, the highest degree of agreement among the respondents, when it comes to the advantages of electronic recruitment, was shown in the statement "*Electronic recruitment allows us to publish detailed descriptions of the jobs we are looking for online for candidates in the country and abroad*", where 66% of the respondents responded with a lower or complete degree of agreement, and the statement "*Electronic recruitment enables the reduction of financial and administrative costs*" where 59% of respondents confirmed their agreement. On the other hand, the lowest degree of agreement within the group of statements related to the advantages of electronic recruitment was recorded with the statement "*By using electronic recruitment, we achieved a lower level of employee turnover in our company*", to which only 38% of respondents agreed.

In order to give general conclusions and ensure the conditions of comparison between individual claims, descriptive statistical indicators were calculated for this group as well. The obtained results are presented in Table 6.

The results of the descriptive analysis, when it comes to this group of statements, show that the arithmetic means are in the interval between 3.20 and 3.85, and the dispersion indicators of the answers are in the interval between 1.048 and 1.231. Average values in the amount of over 3.00 for all nine statements show that the responses of the production and service companies included in the research are in the "zone of agreement" with all nine advantages brought by electronic recruitment of employees, although in some cases the intensity of agreement is lower and in others higher.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of the results on the advantages of electronic recruitment of employees

Statement	Average	Modus	Standard deviation
Electronic recruitment enables our company to achieve a competitive advantage.	3,42	3	1,075
Electronic recruitment allows us to publish detailed job descriptions online for candidates at home and abroad.	3,85	4	1,048
Electronic recruitment allows us to reduce the number of employees in the HR department.	3,53	3	1,159
Electronic recruitment enables the reduction of financial and administrative costs.	3,76	3 and 5	1,046
With electronic recruitment, we achieve greater flexibility at work.	3,68	5	1,145
Electronic recruitment enables us to shorten the recruitment and selection cycle.	3,50	3	1,210
Electronic recruitment is a great aid in decision-making and enables the reduction of errors in human resource management.	3,46	3	1,132
Electronic recruitment enables the reduction of subjectivity in the personnel selection process.	3,64	3	1,097
By using electronic recruitment, we achieved a lower level of employee turnover in our company.	3,20	3	1,231

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the sources

By ranking the obtained arithmetic averages, it is concluded that the greatest advantages brought by the electronic recruitment of employees are reflected in the opening of the possibility of publishing detailed job descriptions that companies are looking for online for candidates in the country and abroad, reducing financial and administrative costs, achieving greater flexibility at work and reducing subjectivity in the personnel selection process. Electronic recruitment allows companies to reduce the number of employees in the human resources department and shortens the recruitment and selection of candidates.

As the last three advantages of electronic employee recruitment, according to the average value, companies see help in decision-making and the possibility of reducing errors in the management of human resources, achieving a competitive advantage, and reducing the level of employee turnover.

Based on all of the above, it can be stated that the results support the basic research hypothesis and the conclusion that the application of modern recruitment methods has a significant impact on the effectiveness of human resource management in Bosnia and Herzegovina companies, primarily on easier access to job seekers, the cost-effectiveness of the process, shortening of the cycle and consistency of the recruitment process.

In order to examine the relationship between modern recruitment methods and the effectiveness of human resources management, two variables were defined. The first variable represents the application of modern recruitment methods, and its operationalization was carried out through four dichotomous indicators:
• use of the Internet,
• use of social networks,

- use of the employment portal and
- use of the company's website.

On the other hand, the second variable represents the effectiveness of human resources management, and its operationalization was carried out through five indicators:
- the effectiveness of the process for the cost segment,
- effectiveness in the segment of easier access to candidates,
- effectiveness in the segment of the quality of received answers from candidates,
- effectiveness in the application quality segment,
- effectiveness in the segment of shortening the recruitment cycle.

With the survey questionnaire, the above indicators were measured through a five-point Likert response scale, and for the purposes of this part of the research, respondents' answers were categorized into two groups, in such a way that the answers "insufficient", "sufficient" and "good" represent ineffective, and the answers "very good" and "excellent" effective process in the observed segment. Given that it is about categorical data, the relationship between these variables was investigated through the chi-square test of independence, taking into account Yates' continuity correction, bearing in mind that each of the individual indicators has two categories, so the table in which the categories of one indicator are crossed with the categories of the second indicator results in a 2x2 table.

The results are presented in the following table which provides an overview of only a key part (significance of the chi-square test), based on which the existence of a relationship between the observed categorical variables was assessed. At the same time, the table shows only statistically significant results, i.e. results with a significance value of 0.05 or less. In all other cases, the obtained results did not show statistically significant chi-square test results.

Table 7. Chi-square test results

	Costs	Easier access to candidates	Quality of received answers from candidates	Application quality	Recruitment cycle shortening
Internet usage	0,040	0,015			0,015
Use of social networks			0,045		0,003
Use of employment portals	0,012	0,037			0,043
Use of the company's website					

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the sources

The obtained results confirmed the set central research hypothesis, given that they show that there is a connection between:
- the use of the Internet and the effectiveness of human resources management in the cost segment, easier finding of candidates and shortening of the recruitment cycle,
- the use of social networks and the effectiveness of human resources management in the segment of the quality of candidate responses and shortening the recruitment cycle, and
- the use of employment portals and the effectiveness of human resources management in the cost segment, easier finding of candidates, and shortening of the recruitment cycle.

5.   CONCLUSION

Keeping in mind the impact that technological development, especially the development of information and communication technologies and the Internet, has on business operations, but also on our daily lives, it is quite expected that companies must adapt to these new trends. Socio-economic trends in Bosnia and Herzegovina have significant consequences on the labor market. Therefore, it is not easy for companies to find suitable personnel.

Research results indicate that employers find it increasingly difficult to find staff with certain competencies, knowledge, and skills, that less than expected candidates apply for vacancies, often finding themselves in the situation where they are forced to hire staff who do not have the formal education or experience required for certain job positions. Therefore, it is necessary for companies to reconsider their recruitment process and create an approach that will enable attracting the largest number of quality prospective employees.

E-recruitment enables the combination of different communication channels and access to a much larger number of potential candidates, compared to traditional forms of recruitment through advertisements in newspapers, on the radio, etc. Especially members of Generation Z or Y spend much more time online, so electronic recruitment is more adequate for that generation of prospective employees.

In recent years, Bosnian companies have recognized the importance of adequate organization of functional human resources management, and especially the importance of recruiting employees in the human resources management process. According to the results of the conducted research, B&H companies use the benefits of electronic recruitment (especially social networks, employment portals, and the Internet), which results in the rationalization of costs and time of the recruitment process and human resources management functions. There is an opportunity for improvement in the development of its own applications and a web portal through the company website for managing the recruitment function, in order to optimize the recruitment process.

Although the research sample was of sufficient size, it is necessary to take into account the limitation of the research resulting from the sample size, and future research should be focused on a larger number of companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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