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## STRATEGIES TO REDUCE MATERNAL AND CHILD MORTALITY RATES THROUGH “BUAIAN SERVICES” IN EAST JAVA

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### ABSTRACT

The Maternal and Child Mortality Rate in the last five years is still considered high, because it is below the national mortality rate. The East Java Provincial Government is trying to reduce this figure through the "buaian service" program in line with increasing economic growth. **This study aims** to assess the effectiveness of the strategies implemented by the Government of East Java to reduce maternal and child mortality. **The theory used** to analyze is the theory of reduction strategies which are classified into (1) advocacy programs, (2) social support, and (3) community empowerment. **This research** employs qualitative methods with interactive analytical techniques. The main focus is on the Government of East Java's efforts to develop new strategies to address the increasing maternal and infant mortality rates. The research occurs at the East Java Health Office and involves condensation, data analysis, verification, and conclusion techniques. **The study's findings** indicate a decrease in maternal mortality rates attributed to comprehensive support provided by health workers and community health volunteers throughout pregnancy and postpartum. Expectant mothers are hopeful that these maternity services will be able to effectively support and manage high-risk pregnancies in East Java with patience and care.

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**Keywords;** strategy reduction, maternal mortality rates, infant mortality rates, buaian services

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### A. INTRODUCTION

One of the priority policies of the East Java Provincial Government is improving public health. Specifically, within the health sector, there are five key areas that need strengthening in 2023 to reduce the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), stunting, and to improve the prevention and control of pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) and catalytic diseases. Reducing MMR, IMR, and stunting is a priority in health development, as outlined in Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020 concerning the National Medium-Term Development Plan for 2020-2024. According to data from the Center for Data and Information Technology of the Ministry of Education and Culture's Health Department, the MMR in East Java in 2022 was 499 cases. By January-June 2023, this number had decreased to 203 cases. The MMR in East Java in 2022 was 93 per 100,000 live births. Meanwhile, the national MMR in 2024 is expected to be 183 per 100,000 live births. Therefore, the MMR in East Java

is significantly lower than the national average. The East Java Provincial Government continues to work toward further reductions in the coming year based on the progress already made.

On the other hand, the IMR in East Java in 2022 was 3,172 infants. By July 1, 2023, this number had decreased to 1,502. The East Java Provincial Government has made various efforts to address this issue, such as encouraging the public to increase the number of prenatal visits to six during pregnancy, providing assistance to high-risk pregnant women, and conducting regular education on maternal and child health. To achieve these goals, all stakeholders in the field must work together to carry out extensive socialization and health awareness campaigns for the community.

Health encompasses physical, mental, and social well-being, enabling them to lead a productive social and economic life (Asyim & Yulianto, 2022). That demonstrates that assessing a person's health involves their physical, mental, and social aspects and their productivity. Health services are the efforts provided by the government and directly received by the community. The government has consistently worked to develop health services to deliver optimal and sustainable public health services. All actions taken by health workers to enhance and restore health aim to create a healthy society (Irwan, 2017). The utilization of health services is closely linked to access to health centers and hospitals (Ekawati & Andriani, 2022). The government continually strives to introduce improved health services to the community, mainly focusing on maternal mortality (MM) and infant mortality (IM) indicators. That shows that a person's health can be assessed not only in terms of physical, mental, and social factors but also in terms of production. Health services are services the government provides and receives directly from the community. The government has consistently developed health services to provide optimal and sustainable public health services. All actions initiated by health workers to improve and restore health aim to create a healthy society (Irwan, 2017). Health services are undoubtedly related to access to health centers and hospitals (Ekawati & Andriani, 2022). The government continues to provide better health service innovations to the community; this health service focuses on maternal mortality and infant mortality indicators.

The low quality of health services for mothers and children is characterized by a high maternal and infant mortality rate, which affects the economic and social decline of a country (Lestari, 2020). Maternal and infant mortality rates are critical indicators

for community welfare and population health. In Indonesia, the maternal and infant mortality rate is relatively high, at around 183 per 100,000 births. Several factors cause the high maternal and infant mortality rate in Indonesia. Direct causes of death include age, bleeding, and infection, while the indirect causes of death are due to delays in treatment and decision-making of hospital referral services (Fifi Musfirowati, 2021). The maternal mortality rate also affects the newborns. If the mother gives birth in an unhealthy state, it will also affect the baby, and the baby's chances of survival are lower. Other countries besides Indonesia are still struggling to face the risk of maternal and newborn deaths (Arif et al., 2020). Currently, the East Java government provides health services to reduce the soaring maternal and infant mortality rates.

Health service innovation is currently one of the programs needed by the government to become a solution to public health problems in the health sector (Mulianingsih, 2021). The East Java government is starting to provide efforts and strategies to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates. The maternal and infant mortality rate in East Java in the last five years is included in the criteria is relatively high. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many pregnant women to be infected with COVID-19, which causes pregnant women to be at higher risk (Aulya et al., 2021). This incident caused the maternal and infant mortality rate to increase dramatically. It can be seen that the maternal mortality rate in East Java reached 93.50 per 100,000 live births, and then the infant mortality rate reached 3,171 deaths. Jember Regency occupies the highest maternal and infant mortality rate, and Kediri City occupies the lowest. That is quite worrying for the health of mothers and babies in East Java. The East Java government strives to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates so that the MM and IM indices decrease in the following year. Government efforts for its citizens continue to be pursued, including launching various new Buaian Services.

The East Java government launched the Buaian service in 2021, and it has been running well, although it is still in the refinement stage. The Buaian service was launched as an effort to reduce the maternal and infant mortality rate, the percentage of which has still soared in the last five years and has not been able to reach the target that has been determined. This service is aimed at pregnant women so they can find out the mother's condition and whether it is included in the high-risk criteria. If the pregnant woman's condition is in good health, there is no need for detailed screening. One of the service's other components can help mothers-to-be conduct pregnancy evaluations independently. This Buaian service also involves 1,012 midwives and 302

obstetricians and gynecologists in 9 cities and 29 East Java Regencies. In the Buaian service, pregnant women will be assisted by pregnancy cadres to determine their pregnancy status development.

The strategy to optimize the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates carried out by the East Java government can impact or reform better health services. Health services will run well if supported by cooperation between stakeholders and the East Java government (Supriyanto, 2023). That will affect the success of a service program that is carried out to reduce maternal and infant mortality. The problem is that infant mortality in East Java is still relatively high even though the Buaian service program has been implemented to monitor the condition of mothers during childbirth and the condition of babies after birth. Based on this problem, this study aims to determine the success of the Buaian service program strategy carried out by the East Java Government in reducing the maternal and child mortality rate.

## **B. METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative method based on the phenomena at the research site. Qualitative research is conducted by collecting data and meeting directly with informants at the research site. Qualitative use often emphasizes descriptive analysis, and its analysis does not rely on statistical data. Qualitative research is descriptive research that examines social problems and specific circumstances, such as relationships, actions, attitudes, viewpoints, and the ongoing process and influence of these events.

The benefit of the research focus is that the analysis is more directed by the theoretical grid used. The focus of this research is a strategy to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates. The location of this research was the East Java Health Office, Jl. Ahmad Yani No.118, Ketintang, Gayungan District, Surabaya, East Java. The location of this study was selected because the East Java Provincial Health Office manages this Buaian Service, which was initiated as a surveillance platform for pregnant women who are included in the vulnerable category and need special attention.

Data collection techniques are essential in the research process to obtain accurate data. In this study, the data collection technique used interviews with health office staff and documentation. The researcher wants to know and interpret the results of

accurate research data accompanied by evidence from the Strategy for Reducing Maternal and Infant Mortality in East Java with the suitability of facts in the field. In this study, the data analysis technique used is interactive data analysis. To prove the correctness of the data, the researcher used data sources from interviews and documents. Then when the researcher conducts the analysis, the researcher matches the data obtained from one way by comparing it with another. This method in research analysis is called triangulation analysis.

The researcher uses a data analysis approach with an interactive model to collect and retrieve accurate and realistic data. An interactive analysis model has various data components, including data condensation, data display, conclusion, and validation of findings. However, this research is temporary because it is likely that in this study, there will be research developments while in the field. This interactive model study tries to analyze and observe the Buaian service running to overcome the increase in maternal and child mortality rates in East Java.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Birth Rate and Maternal Mortality Rate During Childbirth in East Java**

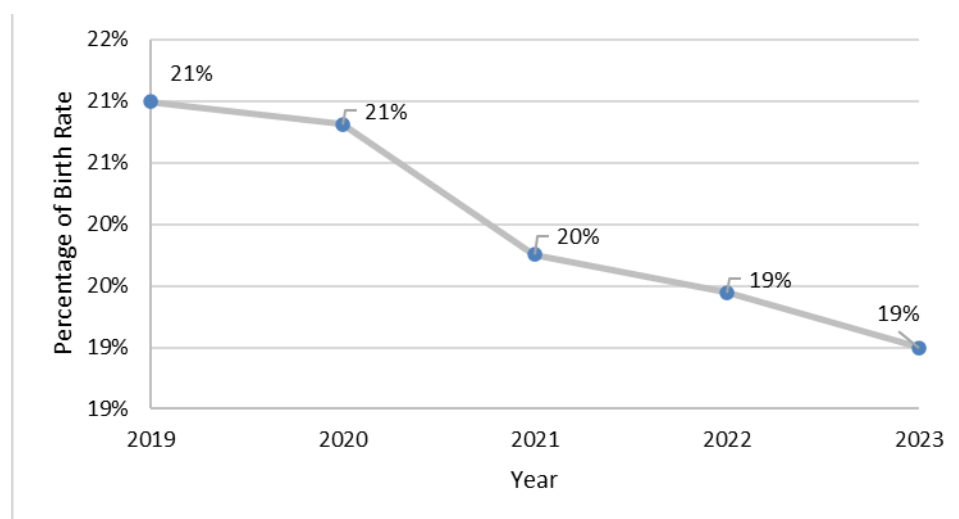
Maternal birth and mortality rates are essential in measuring reproductive health and maternal health service systems in a region, including East Java. The Birth Rate refers to the number of live births that occur in 1,000 women of reproductive age (ages 15-49) in one year. An increase in the birth rate tends to have an impact on an increased risk of maternal mortality, especially if the maternal health care system is inadequate to handle the high number of births. The level of accessibility and quality of maternal health services affects maternal birth and mortality rates. If access to maternal health services is limited or of poor quality, then the risk of maternal mortality tends to be higher, regardless of the birth rate.

The significant maternal mortality rate during childbirth shows that the government has not paid full attention and maximized the strategy that has been launched; it will have an impact on the welfare of mothers in our country and is still far from the expected figure. It is also related to the condition of the baby who is born; if the mother's condition is weak, it will have an impact on the baby and cause death to the baby. Infant death can be caused by several factors, one of which is congenital since the child is born, which is obtained from parents. The strategic steps that the

government has designed to reduce maternal and infant mortality can be redeveloped through policies and other ways of overcoming the problem of maternal and infant mortality.

The number of people in several East Java regions is increasing yearly due to fertility. Components of fertility include employment, education, and mating age. A factor that can affect the shift in the quantity and composition of a country's population is fertility. Fertility behaviors, such as a person's generally attractive actions, can be used to study and research birth problems. The birth rate in East Java is still in the category of ups and downs every year, as seen in Figure 1.

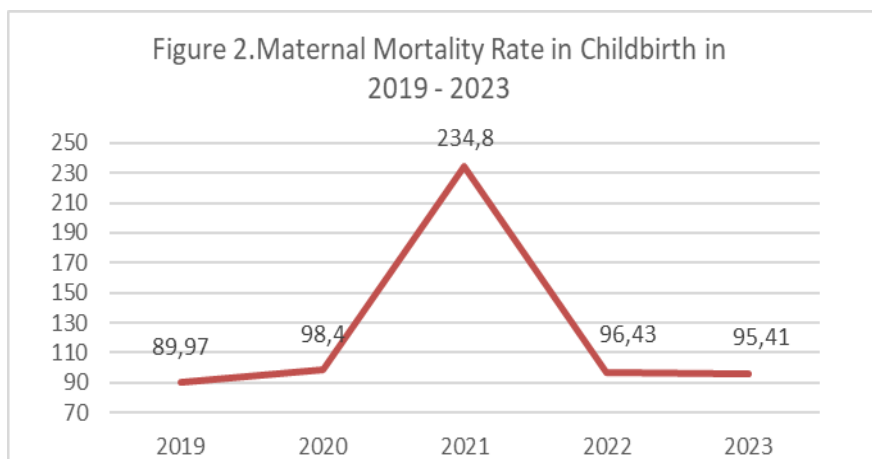
**Figure 1. Percentage of Birth Rate in East Jawa in 2019 - 2023**



(Source: Processed by Researcher, 2024)

The research results in Figure 1 show that the birth rate in East Jawa in 2019 and 2020 is at a high percentage of 21%, and then there will be a decrease to 19% in 2023. The decrease in the birth rate is positively related to people's behavior toward understanding family planning programs (Kramer et al., 2021). In addition, maternal education has a significant effect on the desire to give birth both directly and indirectly (Zhu et al., 2024). Thus, the low birth rate shows the level of awareness of mothers about giving birth with careful calculations.

The Buaian Service implemented in East Jawa has helped pregnant women monitor the health of their mothers and babies. Thus, this Buaian service can reduce the number of maternal deaths during pregnancy and childbirth. The study's results related to the mortality rate of childbirth mothers can be seen in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Maternal Mortality Rate in Childbirth in 2019 - 2023**

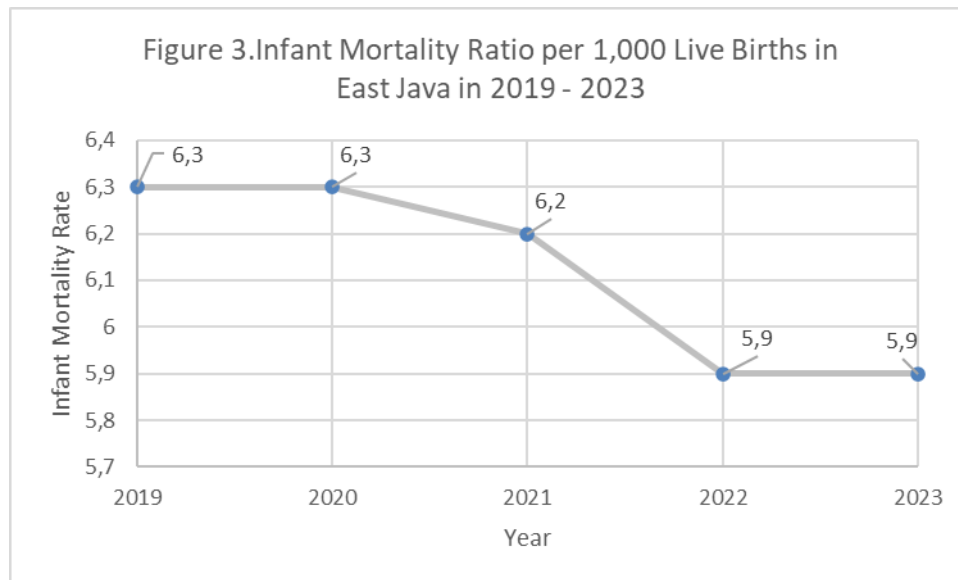
(Source: Processed by Researcher, 2024)

Based on Figure 2, the maternal mortality rate in 2021 was confirmed to reach 234.8 people per 100,000 live births, including the high category. The cause of the high maternal mortality rate is due to the Covid-19 outbreak. After the COVID-19 outbreak subsides or conditions return to normal, the maternal mortality rate also returns to normal. Many pregnant women should have given birth at a referral health facility but instead gave birth at a primary health facility. There are several regencies/cities with a high number of births. They give birth with the help of baby shamans to increase their numbers compared to the previous year. The restriction on pregnancy examination visits, which should be 100% of pregnant women's visits, has been reduced by around 96.2%, so screening for high-risk pregnant women is less than optimal. There are three cities with high maternal deaths, namely Jember, Banyuwangi, and Pamekasan Regencies.

Furthermore, the case of maternal mortality has an impact on the increase in infant mortality rates. Research data related to the ratio of infant mortality to live births is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. Infant Mortality Ratio Per 1,000 Live Births in East Java in 2019 - 2023**



(Source: Processed by Researcher, 2024.)

Based on Figure 3, from 2019 to 2023, the number of newborn mortality ratios in East Java has decreased slightly. This figure reached (6.3 per 1,000 live births in 2021), and (5.9 per 1,000 live births in 2023). The decrease in infant mortality ratios is decreasing and continues to be monitored by the Health Office. In 2022, there were 3,171 infant deaths in East Java, with the highest number in Jember Regency, Probolinggo Regency, and Surabaya City. Based on the cause of death, low birth weight infants (LBWI) accounted for 36% of cases in neonatal age and asphyxia at 29.55%, while diarrhea accounted for 19.86% of cases in post-neonatal age.

Efforts to reduce infant mortality are the government's way of serving the community. Services are a series of actions to meet the needs of the community through activities that are regular and sustainable in society (Syah, 2021). Government services are either carried out directly or through cooperation with other parties to provide goods or services to improve the community's quality of life and welfare. Health services are services organized by the government to serve public health. Health services strive to ensure citizens have access to good health services (Mustofa et al., 2017). The government's responsibility is to provide access to health services to all levels of society.

The government's efforts in developing health services are a form of improving the quality of health for the community equally. One of the current health service



organizational units expected to improve health services are health centres and hospitals (Hasrillah et al., 2021) Health centers and hospitals are responsible for providing comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable health services. The Community Health Centre is a health service institution that prioritizes preventive and promotive efforts to improve the best public health services in its area (Fari et al., 2021). The health center also conducts first-class individual health care and community health initiatives.

Promotive and preventive health services generally receive priority in the health service system. Promotional services aim to prevent disease by preventing individuals from getting sick and seeking to improve public health. There are levels of categories related to health services, namely (1) outpatient health services, (2) follow-up examination and inpatient health services, (3) health services become complex and assisted by specialist doctors. The government has mandatory authority that health workers must carry out regarding providing health services at least the primary health level (Budo et al., 2020). Essential health services include maternal and child health, family planning, vaccinations, medication or treatment, mental health services, and preschool-age child health.

Services in the health sector must have health service standards that, in the future, can help realize and build health services. To realize public health in prevention, healing, and rehabilitation efforts so that every community can obtain the best health and be equally fair, health development seeks to increase the knowledge, willingness, and ability of every community to live a healthy life. So, every region in Indonesia must have a minimum standard of service; the set standards will help the government realize the vision for Indonesia to be healthy. The vision stated in the health ministry regulation will run if health workers, the community, and the government can run in harmony with the goals to be achieved to improve advanced health services.

### **Strategies to Reduce Maternal and Child Mortality Through Buaian Services.**

Strategy is essential for leaders, entrepreneurs, and organizations (Novi, 2022). The broad meaning of strategy can be seen as an effort made by an individual or group to develop a plan to achieve the intended goal. Every year, the definition of strategic concepts increases and evolves. Strategy also requires coordination between teams to run according to the plans and principles agreed upon by the organization's

members (Rachmawati & Rahayu, 2021). Managers can rely on a strategy for business tactics and competitive maneuvers to meet consumer needs and achieve organizational goals. The key to achieving the plan's goals is strategy. The leader's ability to design a plan is critical to the success of a plan that has been designed. Government strategies can be described in several component indicators, namely (1) program advocacy, (2) social support, and (3) community empowerment (Yuningsih, 2019

### **Program Advocacy**

Advocacy aims to persuade local decision-makers to support a cause and offer a way to get around it. The East Java Health Office has conducted a campaign with stakeholders about the issue of increasing maternal mortality as a top priority, and it has been followed up. This advocacy is aimed at several stakeholders who support the existence of this Buaian service, such as the Governor and Deputy of East Java, Mayors in the East Java region, and Doctors. The governor of East Java has appreciated the Buaian service because health workers and volunteers know the safety of pregnant women's conditions.

The advocacy of the Buaian service program has received full support and positive responses from stakeholders because, with the Buaian Service that can help monitor the condition of pregnant women in this vulnerable category, the percentage has decreased. Therefore, continuous cross-sectoral collaboration and advocacy are needed to increase the strategy of the Buaian service program and make it more optimal. Stakeholders are committed to accelerating the decline of AKI/AKB in East Java.

Advocacy for this Buaian Service program continues to be encouraged and constantly monitored by the local government. The health offices in Jember Regency and Banyuwangi Regency hold monthly counseling sessions for this Buaian service. In addition to monitoring the development of pregnancy in vulnerable mothers, health workers also monitor the growth and development of babies and toddlers because, in the district, there is still stunting and malnutrition; the second problem is still severe.

## **Social Support Program**

In the Buaian service program, involving hospital staff, community health center staff, and local health cadres in advocacy activities to get social support can make them more successful. In an important sense, this community leader lies in his role as a role model for the local community. They can help health workers in their efforts to improve their health, but only the first convey this to high-risk pregnant women, likewise with health cadres in their role as conveyors of messages for health workers both at integrated service posts and community health centers.

The health cadres are tasked with assisting and monitoring pregnant women's health needs. Pregnant women believe in the help of health cadres and medical personnel available at the Buaian service. At the Buaian service, pregnant women can consult for 24 hours to convey what they need and education about pregnancy. Then, health cadres and health workers are not only secondary targets; they are also primary targets for efforts to prevent maternal mortality in Buaian services. In the home environment, the main focus of health promotion is on family members who have health problems, such as mothers, infants, children, adolescents, and the elderly. The Buaian service provides services to communicate with Obstetricians and gynecologists in the area of pregnant women and mothers with vulnerable conditions or a history of diseases during pregnancy; of course, they are supervised by cadres and health workers.

## **Community Empowerment**

Community empowerment is to increase individuals' self-awareness, determination, and capacity to identify, confront, uphold, maintain, and improve their well-being (Hikmawati, 2022; Syamsi & Lalla, 2024). Community empowerment is strengthened by the presence of health workers who know the potential of high-risk pregnant women. Therefore, health workers who continue to carry out health counseling activities for pregnant women must focus on caring for pregnancy and safe childbirth by involving husbands so that their spouses are pregnant and are aware of pregnancy and childbirth danger signs and pregnancy care. The cadres continue to accompany and monitor food nutrition during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum. These high-risk pregnant women are supervised by one cadre per pregnant woman. This high-risk pregnant woman assistance activity has been running for four years,

and this Buaian service can help pregnant women, health cadres, and medical personnel find out the actual condition.

The government's current strategy aims to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates. The maternal and infant mortality rate needs special attention from the government (Puspitasari, 2024). So, the government needs to plan and issue a new strategy to reduce the death rate. Maternal death refers to the occurrence of death during pregnancy, childbirth, or the postpartum phase, especially within 42 days after giving birth, regardless of the duration or state of the mother's pregnancy. Maternal death can occur as a result of problems that arise during and after pregnancy and childbirth (Nuria et al., 2019). Most of these problems arise during pregnancy and are treatable or preventable. Other problems may exist before but get worse during pregnancy, especially if the woman does not get treatment. That is caused by any cause directly related to or exacerbated by the pregnancy condition or the intervention.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The Buaian service is a health service launched by the East Java government to educate pregnant women related to pregnancy, monitor the health of high-risk pregnant women, and reduce maternal mortality rates. The study results show that the Buaian service has been able to help high-risk pregnant women. It is proven that the maternal mortality rate has decreased with the help of stakeholders who continue supporting this Buaian service. Thus, the level of use of this Buaian service can improve health services. Second, the response from the East Java government and health workers from the community health center also fully assisted pregnant women. So this shows that the government has realized how vital better health is for high-risk pregnant women. That can be proven by high-risk mothers getting full assistance from health cadres until they go through childbirth and the postpartum period. It is hoped that pregnant women will be able to help and control pregnant women who are in the high-risk category in the East Java region in the future with patience and full attention.

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