

Impact Of Social Media On Changing Consumer Behaviour In Daily Essentials During Post Covid Era: Influential Factors In Online Advertising

Pankaj Kumar Singh¹ & Aanchal Trehan²

1. PhD Scholar, Department of Fine Arts, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Fashion Design, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

*Corresponding author: Aanchal Trehan, Assistant Professor, Department of Fashion Design, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Email Id: trehanaanchal@gmail.com

Abstract

As the role played by social media is quite remarkable in this day and age, the study here as a whole enquires the factors responsible for changing consumer behaviors in the Covid-19 era under the influence of social media usage. The study is quantitative in nature where a total of 200 responses are gathered using a structured questionnaire. The analysis is done using t-tests, ANOVA, PCA and Regression analysis. The study pointed out three major aspects that are found to cause an impact on the purchase of daily essential goods during the pandemic. These three factors are highlighted in the form of Pricing Value, Convenience of Purchase and Hygienic and Safety. These three factors are seen to generate two significant regression models showing its impact upon the consumers regarding their perception about using social media for the purchasing of daily essential goods and the role played by advertisement in the process. The study focuses on the changing consumer behaviour with respect to the purchase of daily essential goods during the pandemic.

Keywords- Covid-19; Consumers; Essential; Behaviour; Social media; Advertising; Online.

1. Introduction

Consumer behaviour is a widely researched topic in the field of marketing. It offers the marketers with crucial information about the factors impacting their purchasing needs. In the beginning of 2020, with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic across the world caused a stir in the normalcy of individual lives. The major economies across the world have lost around 2.9 per cent in their gross domestic products in the year 2020 with the global GDP coming down 4.5 percent with an excessive loss in its economic output (Szmigiera, 2021). The spending habits of the consumers during the pandemic have seen drastic changes. While the

lesser amount of money has been invested by consumers in a number of non-essential items including jewelry, electronic items, make-up etc. These investment diversions are seen mostly in case of edible and non-edible items. The amount of money spent by consumers in the recent times is mostly on the food products as compared to those in other segments (Abe, 2020). In a study conducted by Mckinsey amongst the Indian consumers it is seen that around 76 per cent of them agreed to their careful cut back on purchases after the pandemic hit the world. It has also been found that more than the health concerns, it is the disruption happening in the daily ways of life that is bothering the consumers (Mehta et al., 2020). The new take away

from the pandemic is the consumers' learning to live with a smaller number of amenities. The number of consumers accepting these changes across the world is quite diverse. Although studies in the recent times have highly focused on determining the changing behaviour of consumers towards the markets and the available products, there lies a requirement for analyzing the different aspects of consumer behaviour further. This study is an attempt to determine the perspective of the consumers towards the purchase of daily essential items. The study further integrates the role of social media in the process. During the pandemic the users of social media saw significant rise in its numbers all across the world with the use time for these platforms increasing from 54 minutes daily before the pandemic to 65 minutes daily post pandemic era (Social media use during COVID-19 worldwide - statistics & facts, 2021). The role played by social media in the changing behaviour of consumers in the pre and post pandemic era would be an interesting topic to be explored. Moreover, focusing as the study is being focused in India, it is important to note that the population in the country is not uniformly divided. The social class in the country is categorized into upper high, high, upper middle, lower middle, poor and very poor or below poverty line (BPL) (Sikdar, 2015). The consumption of functional food depends a lot on the social attributes of an individual and in a country like India where there exists such large number of categories, it would be interesting to learn about the consumer behaviour exhibited. The study therefore, as a whole enquires the factors responsible for changing consumer behaviors in the Covid-19 era under the influence of social media usage.

2. Review of Literature

According to a study by (Forbes, 2017), in case of emergencies such as Covid-19, individuals often undergo changes in their behaviour due to survival psychology influences. This is highly observed in case of natural disasters or

healthcare crisis. These changes in behaviour of consumers may often give rise to negative concerns regarding the purchase habits involving them. The changes are noticed in terms of investment decisions made by the consumers along with their buying behaviour. (Yoon et al., 2018) recognized panic buying as one of the important components when it comes to dealing with the survival psychology. It is referred to as condition where consumers after a disaster or even in terms of a perceived disaster move on to buy unusual number of products by thinking about the financial ups and downs to be observed in the market. In terms of the Covid-19 situation, observed that the main factors influencing panic buying includes fear of the unknown, the coping behaviour, social psychology and perception (Yuen et al., 2020). The implementation of panic buying techniques in such situations occurs as a criterion for minimizing the perceived risk. Another factor observed to a prime determinant of changing consumer behaviour during Covid-19 pandemic is the herd mentality. The concept basically provides the behaviors and thoughts of individuals in a society being matched without any coordination (Kameda & Reid Hastie, 2015). The herd mentality in times of Covid-19 can be seen to have an impact on consumer buying behaviors, stock prices as well the societal anxiety acting collectively. The study by mentions that panic buying, herd mentality and spending discretionally can help to align the consumers changing behaviour displayed during the times of the pandemic (Loxton et al., 2020). This shows that in case of a crucial situation like Covid-19, there occurs a change in the factors effecting consumer behaviour, hence,

H₀₁: There are specific factors that impact the purchase of daily essential goods in the post Covid-19 era

As seen from the introductory part, the increase in the usage of social media during the pandemic is quite evident. Due to the restrictions imposed on social and physical distancing the use of various media channels including those

of social media as a medium for acquiring as well as transmitting information has become highly functional (Liu, 2020). The role of social media especially in a time like this can cause high impact on individuals such as raising awareness about the situation and promoting healthy habits amongst the masses. According to a study by (Garfin et al., 2020), it is found that individuals during the Covid-19 period shifted towards the heavy usage of social media to receive guidance on the current happenings. While this act as a positive source during the time of crisis, it can also induce stress in individuals regarding the present conditions (Neill et al., 2021). The negative impact of social

media can be reflected through increased stress levels in individuals along with a mark of depression. Hence it becomes important to include the role of social media in the study and as online advertisements form an important part of the social media universe, the inclusion of it in the study becomes utmost essential (Horta et al., 2021; Sama, 2019)-

H₀₂: There is a significant role played by social media in enhancing the consumer behaviour changes during Covid-19

H₀₃: Online advertisement is related to consumer behaviour changes during Covid-19

Table 1- Summary of Literature Review Conducted

Authors	Method of Study	Findings
(Neill et al., 2021)	Quantitative	While the change in behaviour can act as a positive source during the time of crisis, it can also induce stress in individuals regarding the present conditions
(Garfin et al., 2020)	Quantitative	It is found that individuals during the Covid-19 period shifted towards the heavy usage of social media to receive guidance on the current happenings
(Liu, 2020)	Quantitative	Due to the restrictions imposed on social and physical distancing the use of various media channels including those of social media as a medium for acquiring as well as transmitting information has become highly functional
(Loxton et al., 2020)	Quantitative	The study by mentions that panic buying, herd mentality and spending discretionally can help to align the consumers changing behaviour displayed during the times of the pandemic
(Yuen et al., 2020)	Quantitative	A condition under psychology of survival is observed where consumers after a disaster or even in terms of a perceived disaster moves on to buy unusual number of products by thinking about the financial ups and downs to be observed in the market. In terms of the Covid-19 situation, observed that the main factors influencing panic buying includes fear of the unknown, the

		coping behaviour, social psychology and perception
(Yoon et al., 2018)	Quantitative	Panic buying is one of the important components when it comes to dealing with the survival psychology
(Forbes, 2017)	Quantitative	In case of emergencies such as Covid-19, individuals often undergo changes in their behaviour due to survival psychology influences.
(Kameda & Reid Hastie, 2015)	Quantitative	The concept of herd mentality basically provides the behaviors and thoughts of individuals in a society being matched without any coordination

The aspect of consumer behaviour is quite dynamic in nature. While consumer behaviour fluctuates based on a number of factors, one of such factors is the impact caused on the consumer behaviour in abroad (Cleveland & Bartikowski, 2018). There are evidences that suggest that consumers tend to change their behaviour with respect to the surrounded group of people which can often lead to changes occurring in the consumer behaviour due to their exposure to a totally different set of individuals (Laroche et al., 2000). The concept of individualism and collectivism in consumer behaviour indicates the adoption of either which leads to a change in behaviour experienced at a place abroad (Triandis, 2004). This serves as one of the important aspects of studying consumer behaviour and is able to generate quite interesting results.

In case of changing consumer behaviour as well as the role of social media in the Covid-19 situation has been the prime focus of researchers in the field of health, marketing, finance etc. in the recent times. While trying to address the changing behaviors in consumers, the study includes the purchase of essential daily items as these are stated to be of utmost importance for individuals in the present times. The active role of social media would be analyzed in the course of this study as well.

3. Statement of Problem

The problems identified during the literature reviews conducted for the study are listed below-

1. The emergence of the global pandemic has brought about a number of challenges in the lives of the consumers as well as the marketers. The conventional methods of

functioning have seen drastic changes in the recent times and the researchers require addressing these problems urgently to make it easier for the marketers and the consumers to blend in together and provide the desired items to them. In this study the changing behaviour of consumers in the purchase of daily essential items is enquired as it has been stated by researchers to be the main investment for the consumers post the Covid-19 emergence.

2. It has also been established that social media plays an important role in changing consumer behaviour especially during the pandemic because individuals have made their online presence even stronger during the lockdown phases. Therefore, the research combines two very important aspects during the Covid-19 situation i.e., changing consumer behaviour towards daily essential goods and the role played by social media and integrates into identifying the factors that play the most significant part in the process.

4. Research Objectives

The objectives set for the purpose of the study are as follows-

1. To determine the factors influencing the changes in consumer behaviour towards the purchase of daily essential goods in the post Covid-19 era
2. To explore the role played by social media in enhancing the consumer behaviour changes in these times
3. To identify most influential factors in online advertisement related to consumer behaviour changes in these times
4. To provide the marketers with certain implications for the future

5. Research Methodology

The study is based on quantitative approach where empirical evidences are taken for arriving at the results of the study. For the purpose of collecting primary data, a structured questionnaire is designed from the previous literature. The questionnaire includes a 5-point rating scale enquiring about consumer buying behaviour during the pandemic. The study has collected a total of 200 responses from consumers using social media in their day to

day lives. Judgment sampling is used to identify the consumers using social media. These responses are entered and analyzed using SPSS. A number of statistical analyses including t-tests, one way ANOVA, principal Component Analysis and Multiple Linear Regression is used. The results of the study are given below.

6. Data Analysis & Interpretation

The demographic profiles of the respondents are mentioned below-

Table 2- Demographic Representation

Demographic Variable	Frequency
Gender	
Male	39
Female	161
Age Group(in years)	
18-24	30
25-34	80
35-44	40
45-54	40
Above 55	10
Education Level	
Undergraduate	20
Graduate	90
Post Graduate	50
Earning Status	
Earning	140
Non-earning	60
Marital Status	
Married	110
Unmarried	90
Widow	11
Separated	20

The questionnaire designed included a total of nine statements including factors influencing the consumer behaviour during the Covid-19 period in buying daily essentials consumer

goods. These statements have been analysed using Principal Component Analysis to determine the number of underlying factors involved.

Table 3- Component Loadings

	Component			Uniqueness
	1	2	3	
I like to get the best deals when buying the daily essential goods post Covid-19 era	0.764			0.306
I find it important for the prices of the daily essential goods to be cheap post Covid-19 era	0.619			0.481

Table 3- Component Loadings

	Component			Uniqueness
	1	2	3	
I compare prices when buying daily essential goods post Covid-19 era	0.545			0.323
I make an effort to buy the best quality when buying daily essential goods post Covid-19 era		0.482		0.220
I am concerned with the amount of time taken to shop for daily essential goods post Covid-19 era		0.746		0.281
I find the appearance of the products to be important when buying daily essential goods post Covid-19 era		0.752		0.105
I am concerned about the country of origin of the products when buying daily essential goods post Covid-19 era			0.840	0.170
I pay the safety aspects as quite important when buying daily essential goods post Covid-19 era			0.887	0.279
I find the health aspects quite important when buying daily essential goods post Covid-19 era			0.881	0.153

Note. 'varimax' rotation was used

A total of three factors are generated from the PCA conducted. The first factor is based on the price and available deals of the daily essential goods during Covid-19, the second one is best on the convenience of buying these goods and the third is related to the hygienic and safety concerns of the purchase. Therefore, the three factors from here on are named as Pricing Value, Convenience of Purchase and Hygienic & Safety.

While these three variables are treated as independent factors, the dependent variables include the Perception about social media consisting of five factors and the Impact of Online Advertising consisting of eight factors. The relationships between these two dependents and three independent variables will be analyzed using two multiple linear regression models. The results are mentioned below.

Table 4- Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Overall Model Test			
				F	df1	df2	P
1	0.357	0.127	0.114	9.51	3	196	<.001

Table 5- Model Coefficients –Perception about social media

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	P
Intercept	2.2030	0.4906	4.490	< .001
Pricing Value	-0.0281	0.0556	-0.506	0.613
Convenience	0.2842	0.0564	5.039	< .001
Hygienic & Safety	0.2708	0.0675	4.012	< .001

Interpretation- The above two models show that when the Impact of Social Media is examined on the shopping behaviour of consumers towards essential goods, it is found that a statistically significant model is generated with an adjusted R square value of 0.114. The model co-efficient table show that out of the three independent variables considered only two has an impact on the consumers perception

about the use of social media in buying essential goods. The two factors of Convenience and Hygienic and Safety are seen to have a significant impact on the perception of consumers towards the use of social media in buying daily essential goods. These two factors causes a variance of 11.4 percent on the perception of social media.

Table 6- Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Overall Model Test			
				F	df1	df2	P
1	0.407	0.166	0.153	13.0	3	196	< .001

Table 7- Model Coefficients - Impact of Online Advertising

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	P
Intercept	5.6048	0.1657	33.82	< .001
Pricing Value	0.0302	0.0188	1.61	0.109
Convenience	-0.1111	0.0190	-5.83	< .001
Hygienic & Safety	-0.1052	0.0228	-4.62	< .001

Interpretation – Moving on the consideration of effectiveness of online advertising on the buying behaviour of consumers shows that there is a significant model generated with 0.153 adjusted R square. The second table shows that the use of online advertising is mostly done with respect to the Convenience attribute and the Hygienic & Safety concern. A variance of 15.3 percent is seen which shows

that this model is somewhat better as compared to the previous one.

The study with respect to the five factors in total conducted a t-tests and ANOVA to see if there is any significant mean difference based on the demographic factors of the respondents. The results are as follows-

Table 8- Independent Samples T-Test- Gender

		Statistic	df	P
Pricing Value	Student's t	1.616	198	0.108
Convenience	Student's t	0.973 ^a	198	0.332
Hygienic & Safety	Student's t	-3.579	198	<.001
Perception about social media	Student's t	-0.833 ^a	198	0.406
Impact of Online Advertising	Student's t	1.275 ^a	198	0.204

^a Levene's test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

Table 9- Independent Samples T-Test- Earning Status

		Statistic	df	P
Pricing Value	Student's t	-0.307 ^a	198	0.759
Convenience	Student's t	9.724	198	<.001
Hygienic & Safety	Student's t	-2.664 ^a	198	0.008
Perception about social media	Student's t	0.607 ^a	198	0.545
Impact of Online Advertising	Student's t	-5.793	198	<.001

^a Levene's test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

Table 10- Kruskal-Wallis- Age Group

	χ^2	df	P
Pricing Value	18.1	4	0.001
Convenience	41.5	4	<.001
Hygienic & Safety	26.6	4	<.001
Perception about social media	48.8	4	<.001
Impact of Online Advertising	50.0	4	<.001

Table 11- Kruskal-Wallis- Education Level

	χ^2	df	P
Pricing Value	54.76	3	<.001
Convenience	52.67	3	<.001
Hygienic & Safety	8.63	3	0.035
Perception about social media	20.81	3	<.001
Impact of Online Advertising	2.88	3	0.411

Table 12- Kruskal-Wallis- Marital Status

	χ^2	df	P
Pricing Value	43.2	5	<.001
Convenience	82.1	5	<.001
Hygienic & Safety	49.0	5	<.001
Perception about social media	70.8	5	<.001
Impact of Online Advertising	57.5	5	<.001

Interpretation-

The results show that in case of age group and marital status there is a significant mean difference amongst the categories of users are seen in case of all the five variables considered. For the education level division except for the impact of online advertisements all the other factors have significantly different mean scores. Hygienic & Safety in case of gender is significantly different while for earning status, convenience and impact of online advertising have mean score differences.

Hence, summarizing the three alternate hypotheses it can be stated that all of them can be accepted.

7. Conclusion

The study pointed out three major aspects that are found to cause an impact on the purchase of daily essential goods during the pandemic. These three factors are highlighted in the form of Pricing Value, Convenience of Purchase and Hygienic and Safety. These three factors are seen to generate two significant regression models showing its impact upon the consumers regarding their perception about using social media for the purchasing of daily essential goods and the role played by advertisement in the process. The conceptual framework derived from the study is given below-

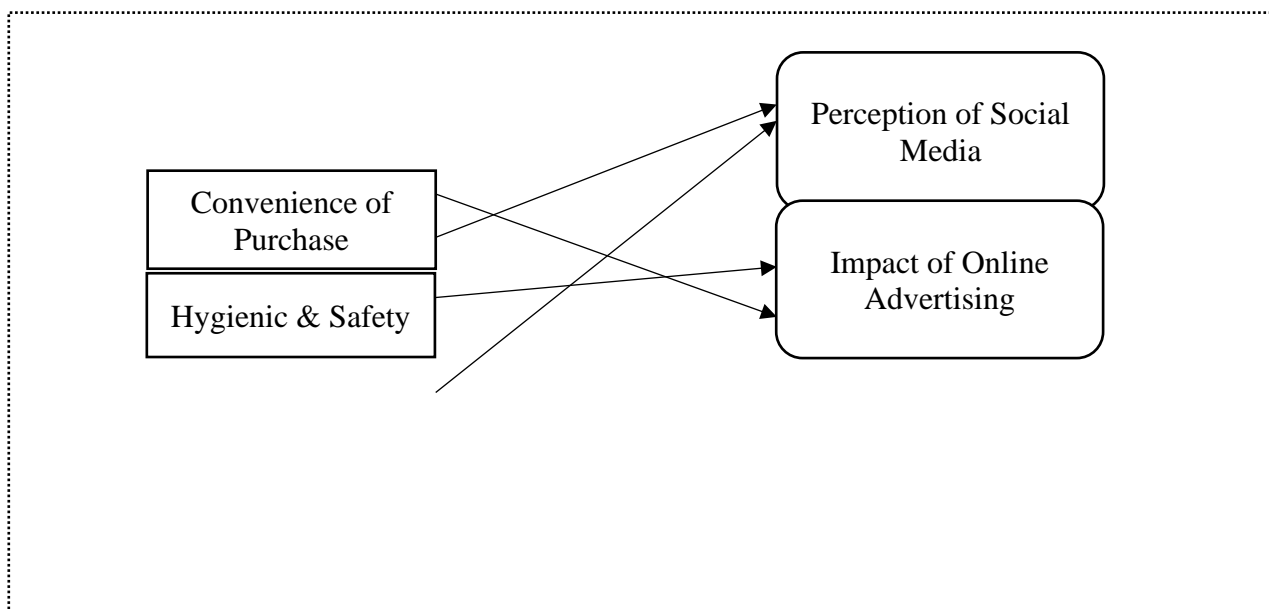


Figure 1- Conceptual Model

As the last objective laid down for the study includes prescribing of certain implications from

the findings of the study, it can be stated that out of the three independent variables, Hygienic & Safety is seen to cause a significant impact on both use of social media and the effect caused by online advertising. The pricing value interestingly is found to have no impact at all on generating perceptions about the use of social media for purchasing daily essential goods as well for advertising. Therefore, with respect to the current situation, along with the aspects of convenience and pricing advantages, sellers of essential goods must focus on highlighting their safety protocols and hygienic rules followed in the production and delivery process. Moreover, the factor is seen to be influenced with respect to the various demographics of the respondents. Therefore, with the use of technology i.e., social media and online advertisement, it is urgent that the demographic segmentation strategy is applied for better performance of the firms.

References

1. Abe, S. (2020). Market trends and D2C opportunities in the COVID-19 landscape. . The AdRoll Blog.
2. Cleveland, M., & Bartikowski, B. (2018). Cultural and identity antecedents of market mavenism: Comparing Chinese at home and abroad. *Journal of Business Research*, 82, 354–363. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.09.012>
3. Forbes, S. L. (2017). Post-disaster consumption: analysis from the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 27(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09593969.2016.1247010>
4. Garfin, D. R., Silver, R. C., & Holman, E. A. (2020). The novel coronavirus (COVID-2019) outbreak: Amplification of public health consequences by media exposure. *Health Psychology*, 39(5). <https://doi.org/10.1037/hea0000875>
5. Horta, P. M., Matos, J. de P., & Mendes, L. L. (2021). Digital food environment during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in Brazil: an analysis of food advertising in an online food delivery platform. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 126(5), 767–772. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007114520004560>
6. Kameda, T., & Reid Hastie. (2015). Herd behaviour. In *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioural Sciences*. John Wiley & Sons.
7. Laroche, M., Saad, G., Kim, C., & Browne, E. (2000). A Cross-Cultural Study of In-Store Information Search Strategies for a Christmas Gift. *Journal of Business Research*, 49(2), 113–126. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(99\)00008-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(99)00008-9)
8. Liu, P. L. (2020). COVID-19 Information Seeking on Digital Media and Preventive Behaviors: The Mediation Role of Worry. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 23(10). <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2020.0250>
9. Loxton, M., Truskett, R., Scarf, B., Sindone, L., Baldry, G., & Zhao, Y. (2020). Consumer Behaviour during Crises: Preliminary Research on How Coronavirus Has Manifested Consumer Panic Buying, Herd Mentality, Changing Discretionary Spending and the Role of the Media in Influencing Behaviour. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, 13(8). <https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm13080166>
10. Mehta, S., Saxena, T., & Purohit, N. (2020). The New Consumer Behaviour Paradigm amid COVID-19: Permanent or Transient? *Journal of Health Management*, 22(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972063420940834>
11. Neill, R. D., Blair, C., Best, P., McGlinchey, E., & Armour, C. (2021). Media consumption and mental health during COVID-19 lockdown: a UK cross-sectional study across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. *Journal of Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-021-01506-0>
12. Sama, R. (2019). Impact of Media Advertisements on Consumer Behaviour. *Journal of Creative Communications*,

- 14(1), 54–68.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0973258618822624>
13. Sikdar, M. (2015). Socioeconomic classification of Indian population: A conceptual update for Biomedical Research. *Biolife*, 3(3), 769–770.
 14. Social media use during COVID-19 worldwide - statistics & facts. (2021, May 19). Statista Research Department. Statista.
 15. Szmigiera, M. (2021). Impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the global economy - Statistics & Facts. Statista.
 16. Triandis, H. C. (2004). The many dimensions of culture. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 18(1), 88–93.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2004.12689599>
 17. Yoon, J., Narasimhan, R., & Kim, M. K. (2018). Retailer's sourcing strategy under consumer stockpiling in anticipation of supply disruptions. *International Journal of Production Research*, 56(10).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00207543.2017.1401748>
 18. Yuen, K. F., Wang, X., Ma, F., & Li, K. X. (2020). The Psychological Causes of Panic Buying Following a Health Crisis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(10).
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17103513>