

Predictors of Green Purchase Intention in Nigeria: The Mediating Role of Environmental Consciousness

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Abstract In spite of global awareness towards the environment and green marketing, evidences in Nigeria revealed that only 5% of the population is engaged in green purchase behavior. Nigerians are also facing problems such as inadequate green knowledge, lack of environmental consciousness, lack of government control, high price of green product and distrust towards green products. Hence, the objectives of this study are two-folds: (1) to examine the direct predictors (perceived green knowledge, perceived behavior control, green availability, green trust, and green price sensitivity) of green purchase intention and (2) to establish the mediating effect of environmental consciousness on the relationship between the above mentioned predictors and green purchase intention. This study uses quantitative method by distributing 150 questionnaires to lecturers in Nigerian universities. 102 datasets were returned representing 68 percent response rate. The screened data were analyzed using regression. The findings indicate that green availability is directly and significantly related to green purchase intention ($\beta=.355, p<.001$), while green price sensitivity is directly and significantly related to environmental consciousness ($\beta=.377, p<.000$). The relationship between green price sensitivity and green purchase intention is fully mediated by environmental consciousness. In conclusion, green purchase can be increased when there is abundance of green products. Nigerians also believe that high priced green products will increase their awareness towards environmental consciousness. Environmental consciousness plays a very significant mediating role in influencing the relationship between green price and green purchase intention.

Keywords Environmental Consciousness, Green Availability Green Trust, Green Price Sensitivity, Perceived Green Knowledge, Green Purchase Intention

1. Introduction

In this environmentally conscious era it is pertinent to understand issues which spur consumers to adapt to environmentally safe behaviour. The global warming has brought challenges in the way people live. This somehow has impacted consumers' purchasing behaviour and also led consumers into making environmental considerations on daily purchase of products in most regions of the world [1]. Consumers became increasingly apprehensive and aware of their importance in the society and how their environmentally propelled action and inaction will certainly affect their environment and well-being in the long run. This triggered the demand for environmentally safe products [2-4].

This continued to grow especially in developed countries [5, 6]. Natural (Green) Marketing reported over 200 USD billion market of lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) rose by 100% in 2010 and expected to rise four

times bigger by 2015 [7]. As environmental consciousness became stronger, the quest for green products continued to soar high; worldwide the consumers began to give considerations to the price of green products and are willing to pay extra [8] and how these products can be made available.

However, this is pronounced in a developing nation like Nigeria as little is known about "green". Nigeria still lagged behind on green issues as indicated by the low percentage (5%) of green product purchase [9-11]. This shows that there is a low level of green awareness among Nigerian consumers and the absence of environmental consciousness among her citizens which is depicted by poor waste management that mars the physical surroundings, business environments and worsening pollution scenario.

Aside this, although studies have been conducted in different context, especially in developed countries with different predictors of green purchase intention; these were however not examined in the Nigerian. Based on the assertion that variations exist in cultural, socio- demographic, geographical setting and complexity of consumer behavior, and also differences on the basis of market forces which can significantly impact demand and purchase behaviour towards environmental friendly products [12-14] the need to

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have this variables tested in Nigeria becomes fundamental

Additionally, the combination of these variables, (perceived green knowledge, perceived behavioural control, green price sensitivity, green availability, green trust and environmental consciousness) is rare. Besides, environmental consciousness was scarcely studied [15] and also used as a mediating variable in green purchase intention studies as review of extant literature revealed.

2. Problem Statement

Nigerian as a nation is challenged by the following issues which have been addressed as research problems in this study. They are inadequate green knowledge, lack of environmental consciousness, lack of government control, high price of green and distrust towards green products.

3. Objectives

Based on the above stated problems and extensive review of literature, the objectives of this study are categorized into two-folds: To examine the direct predictors (perceived green knowledge, perceived behavior control, green availability, green trust, and green price sensitivity) of green purchase intention and to establish the mediating effect of environmental consciousness on the relationship between green price sensitivity and green purchase intention.

4. Review of Literature

4.1. Green Purchase Intention

Studies on green purchase intention showed that intention is an influential predictor of green purchase behavior and strongly affects the likelihood of decision to buy [16]. Moreover, the theory of planned behavior by [17] explained that green purchase intention is a crucial element in ascertaining the real or actual buying behavior of an individual.

Past studies revealed that consumers who have high level of concern for the environment and are not skeptical about green products tend to portray positive attitude, norms and high degree of perceived behavioral controls. [18]. In affirmation to this, researchers who examined this variable have proved that it exerts strong and significant influence on actual purchase of green; this buttressed the fact that someone with positive intention is likely to go for the green product when compared with a person with low intentions [19].

This notwithstanding, the outcome of these studies cannot be globally generalized due to cultural, socio-economic, psychological and other factors which vary from region to region [20]. [21] also opined that demands and attitudes of consumers towards green products cannot be the same globally due to differences in culture and market factors. Equally significant here is the degree to

which consciousness and awareness about environmental problems is stirred up in different parts of the globe. [22] further stated that intention captures the motivational factors which impacts behavior.

4.2. Green Trust and Green Purchase Intention

Trust is one element that is fundamental in business and sustainable development and enhances long-term relationship between the owners of the business and their customers or client. The sets of beliefs, desire and accumulated assumptions over time which is directed towards a brand explains what trust stands for [23]. [24] allied their definition of trust from this point of view by saying that it is the willingness to rely on one object or person based on the belief or anticipation resulting from credibility, benevolence and ability about the environmental performance.

Many authors in the past acknowledged that green trust is a strong determinant of purchase intention [25-29]. These authors came up with a positive outcome which implied that there is significant relationship between trust and green purchase intention. Contrariwise, the study of [30] suggested that there is insignificant relationship between perceived brand trust and the intention to buy green mobile phone as the hypothesis was not supported. Thus, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H1: Green Trust is positively related to green purchase intention

4.3. Perceived Green Knowledge and Green Purchase Intention

Perceived green knowledge has been viewed as the ability of the individual consumer to define or identify certain symbols, concepts and behavior which are connected to environmental problems. It is also defined as how much the consumer feels he or she knows about environmental or green issues [31]. Basically, consumer's green knowledge will affect to a great extent what they do and what they purchase [32].

Previous studies have investigated green knowledge by surrogating the term with environmental awareness, environmental knowledge and ecological knowledge and the all outcomes were significant [33-41]. Supporting their findings [42, 43] put forward that understanding the issues which relate to environmental problems is important in producing a significant impact on consumer's purchase intention; furthermore, that when there is increased in knowledge, the consumer becomes more informed and knowledgeable and this raises high the possibility of the purchase intention [44, 45].

Following [46] findings, the author explained that since ecological knowledge influenced attitude, it was in turn significant in affecting the purchase intention for the green water saving product. However, [47] stated that though environmental knowledge was significant it had the lowest value amongst the other variables tested; this they attributed

to the low level of environmental knowledge among the sample examined. Based on this we therefore formulate this hypothesis.

H₂: Perceived green knowledge is positively related to green purchase intention

4.4. Perceived Behavioral Control and Green Purchase Intention

The concept of perceived behavioral control has been referred to as the degree of controlling one's own behavior [48] while [49] asserted that it reflects the individual's acumen of the effortlessness or difficulty of performing a given behavior. Portraying the extent of the relationship which exist between perceived behavioral control and green purchase, prior studies of [50-54] supported the fact that PBC plays a significant role in predicting behavioral intentions.

Moreover, [55] posited that consumers are likely to purchase green homes with available resources and opportunities. Likewise, [56] confirmed that price which is a financial resource available to the consumer can enhance green purchase intention; similarly, [57] emphasized on education of consumers on green consumption. In the case of [58, 59] they identified environmental consciousness and appearance consciousness, while concern for food safety, protection of the environment were seen as supporting factors which affect their purchase intention [60].

On the reverse, [61] declared there is insignificant association between perceived behavioral control and purchase intention; explaining further, they attributed this to the lack of information on the product and its availability. The reviewed literatures all laid part to congruence except one study [62]. Based on this therefore, the following hypothesis is stated.

H₃: Perceived Behavioral Control is positively related to green purchase intention

4.5. Green Price Sensitivity and Green Purchase Intention

The American Marketing Association defined price as the formal ratio that indicates the amount of money needed to acquire a given quantity of goods or service) [63]. Price premium according to [64] is the additional amount paid for product instead of the usual price; this could indicate consumer's willingness to pay for green product.

Consumers often complain of high prices of green products. [65, 66] affirmed that consumers have the notion that green products are highly priced in comparison to conventional ones. Though concern for the environment will induce green purchase decision, high price can inhibit the actual purchase where consumers are price sensitive [67, 68]. Even so, the discussions on the studies of previous researchers have thrown light on the relationship between green price and purchase intention. The studies carried out by [69-74] confirmed that green price significantly influenced purchase intention of consumers. In the same

manner, [75] agreed that price is positively associated with purchase intention for green sheltered homes; arguing this out, they opined that the stronger the intention, the higher the willingness to pay.

This notwithstanding, [76] did not find support in the studies discussed earlier; agitating that price does not inhibit the formation of green purchase intention especially where subjective norm prevails over the subjects. Hence, we therefore formulate this hypothesis.

H₄: Green price sensitivity is positively related to green purchase intention

4.6. Green Availability and Green Purchase Intention

Green availability entails making the product available or accessible. Consumer's perceived green availability is how easily he/she thinks the product can be obtained [77-79]. Non-availability of green products can negatively affect the intention to buy especially if there was initial motivation for the product [80, 81]. Most often, the availability of products in designated channels and adequate information on location can enhance consumer's effort to locate and make purchases [82].

In order to determine the impact of this variable on purchase intention, the findings in the few literatures reviewed presented insignificant results [83-85]. Expounding on their result, the authors claimed that availability was not a strong factor to affect purchase intention in Malaysia [86, 87]. Similarly, [88] explained that the young female consumers are very much aware of the high quality of organic food products, its benefit to their health and safety in consumption so they look for the products, thus the insignificant relationship in the context of study. Based on this the hypothesis below is formulated

H₅: Green Availability is positively related to green purchase intention

4.7. Environmental Consciousness and Green Purchase Intention

Environmental consciousness as one of the variables selected for this study has been considered by different authors to indicate the level of alertness consumers or a society have towards environmental problems. [89] for instance saw it as the element of belief system which refers to specific emotional factors that affect their inclination to partake in pro-environmental behavior. Environmental consciousness can be manifested through certain behavior [90]. Subsequently, [91] is also of the opinion that consumers will be spurred to purchase environmentally safe products if they are convinced that the product is essential in curbing environmental problems. Such behaviors may be translated into environmental problem conscious behavior [92, 93] and can subsequently become part and parcel of one's everyday life style activities [95, 96].

This construct however though sometimes referred to as environmentally significant behavior, environmentally friendly behavior and environmentally responsible behavior

[97] has limited studies in which its relationship with green purchase intention was tested. In the study by [98]; they confirmed that lifestyle-based investigation of environmentally conscious consumers is an area which is widely not explored, not only in green but in none-green area.

The review of extant literature indicated a hand full of studies [99-103]. Considering these studies, their findings revealed that environmental consciousness is a positive predictor of green purchase intention. Buttressing their finding, they declared that individual's sensitivity to the different environmental problems and their perceived usefulness in environmentally friendly activities can influence proactive environmentally conscious behaviors. Thus this hypothesis is formulated.

H₆: Environmental consciousness is positively related to green purchase intention

4.8. Mediation of Environmental Consciousness

Even though [104] examined environmental consciousness in their study, it was investigated as a

dimension of consumer values and was mediated by consumer attitude towards buying organic body/hair care product. A positive relationship equally ensued portraying the fact that environmental consciousness significantly affected attitude and attitude was found to positively influence green purchase intention. This study considers price as the value of green product and also, attitude is denoted by environmental consciousness.

The outcomes from the two studies were found to be positive. Thus following the outcome of these studies, the following hypotheses were formulated

H₇: Green price sensitivity positively relates to environmental consciousness

H₈: Environmental consciousness mediates the relationship between green price sensitivity and GPI

5. Proposed Research Model

Based on the literature review above, we proposed a research framework for this study as in Figure 1.

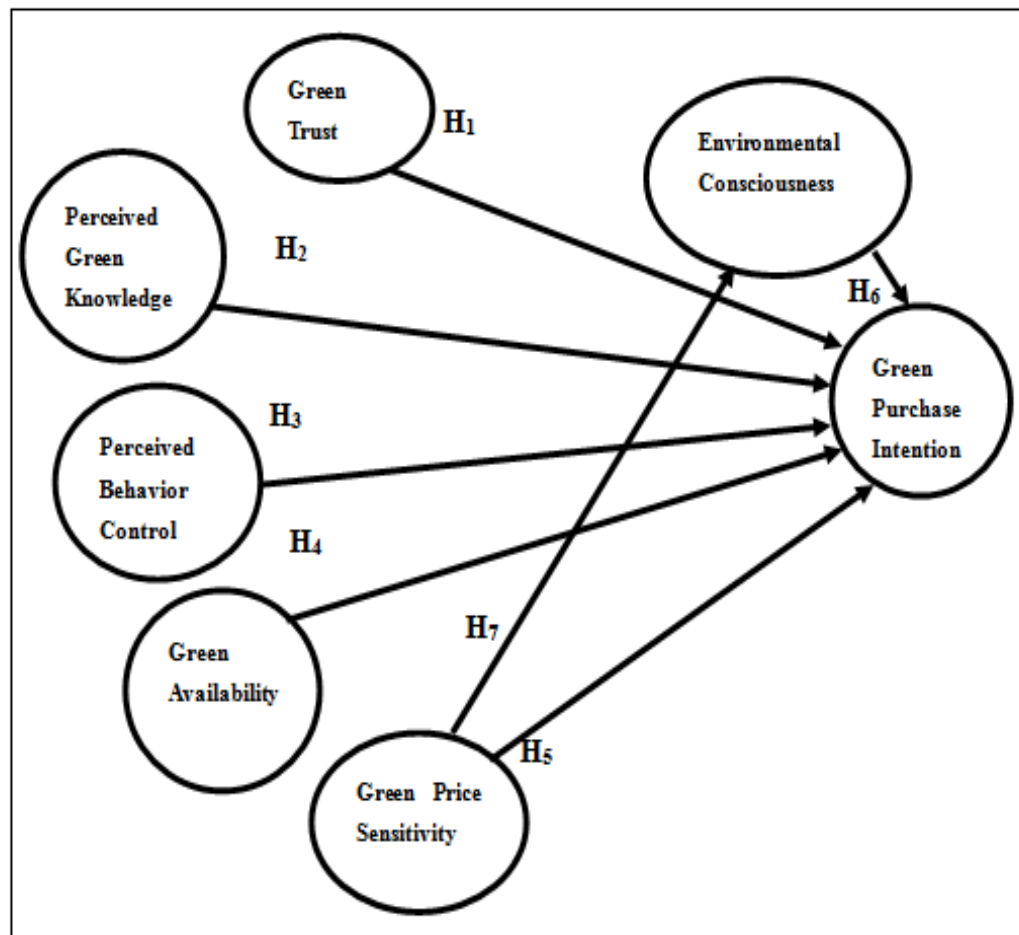


Figure 1. Research Framework

6. Methodology

Research design uses the survey method for collection of data due to its credibility to gather a vast range of appropriate facts which can be depended on upon as respondents have limited options stated in the questionnaire [105]. The quantitative method was adopted and 150 questionnaires were distributed to lecturers in Nigerian universities. 102 datasets were returned representing 68 percent response rate. The screened data were analyzed using regression.

The constructs' measurement used comprises of five independent variables which are Perceived Green Knowledge (PGK, 12 item), Green Availability (GAV, 6item), Green Price Sensitivity (GPS, 9item), Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC, item) and Green Trust (GT, 6item). The study included one mediating variable which is Environmental Consciousness (EC, 6item), and one dependent variable, Green Purchase Intention (GPI, 6item). Measurement scale is a fundamental tool when it comes to deciding on a particular statistical test. Constructs can be measured and conveyed in different scales, but the most frequently used measurement scale in social and behavioural science studies is the Likert scale, [106]. Mostly, Likert-type scale is preferred because it is easy to analyse statistically (Jackson, 2009). Seven-point Likert scale was chosen for this study (1-strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Somewhat Disagree; 4-Neutral; 5-Somewhat Agree; 6-Agree; 7-Strongly Agree).

7. Findings

7.1. Descriptive Statistics of Constructs

The mean of green price sensitivity is the highest ($\mu = 5.516$) while the lowest mean of perceived behavior control ($\mu = 5.016$) is the lowest (Table 1). The standard deviation ranges from 0.80 to 1.02, indicating small acceptable variance from means.

The reliability of instrument is tested through the use of Cronbach alpha (SPSS). All 102 data sets were entered into SPSS spreadsheet ready for validation [107]. Constructs were found to have reliable Cronbach alpha value above 0.80. Following the opinion of [108] Cronbach reading of

0.60 is also within the acceptable limit. Hence, the reading for each of the constructs selected is indicated on (table 1).

7.2. Demographic Profile

Demographic profile indicated that (81.4%) of the respondents are male while (18.6%) are female, indicating that the male are the majority. Most of the respondents are lower level staff of the university as statistic revealed (62.7%) while heads of departments and other senior staff both have (13.7%). As shown from the data, educational statistics indicates that (30.4%) are workers having first degree, those with additional qualification have (41.2%) and those with the lowest qualification have (26.5%). The residential result showed that (70.6%) are from the urban area while (29.6%) are from the sub-urban. Following the result on income, the monthly take home shows that (38.2%) fall within low income and only (8.8%) with high income. The remaining are in the category of middle income. Age wise, majority of the respondents are within the range of 36-40, (24.5%).

7.3. Regression Results

Following the analysis made the result of the standardized beta coefficient and p value of the relationships are presented in table 2. As indicated the Table, the relationship between green availability and green purchase intention ($\beta=.355$; $p\text{-value}=.001$) is positively and significantly related. All the other predictors are not significantly related to green purchase intention which are green trust, ($\beta=.206$; $p\text{-value}=.060$), green perceived knowledge, ($\beta=.076$; $p\text{-value}=.527$), perceived behavioral control, ($\beta=.148$; $p\text{-value}=.200$) and green price sensitivity ($\beta=.062$; $p\text{-value}=.531$). Hence, only H4 is supported.

Alternatively, green price sensitivity has direct significant relationship with environmental consciousness ($\beta=.377$; $p\text{-value}=.001$). Thus, H8 is supported. Other predictors seem to have insignificant relationship with the mediating variable environmental consciousness (green trust: $\beta=.031$; $p\text{-value}=.789$; perceived green knowledge: $\beta=.035$; $p\text{-value}=.783$; perceived behavioral control: $\beta=.213$; $p\text{-value}=.081$; and green availability: $\beta=.201$; $p\text{-value}=.069$). Nonetheless, the relationship between environmental consciousness and green purchase intention shows a significantly positive relationship ($\beta=.636$ $p\text{-value}=.000$).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Construct	No of items	Min	Max	Means	Std Dev	Cronbach Value
X1: Green Trust	6	2.67	7.00	5.457	.89758	0.903
X2: Perceived Green Knowledge	12	2.64	6.55	5.177	.80180	0.934
X3: Perceived Behavioral Control	6	2.67	7.00	5.087	.87620	0.920
X4: Green Price Sensitivity	9	2.50	7.00	5.516	.90668	0.952
X5: Green Availability	6	2.00	7.00	5.103	1.01827	0.961
M: Environmental Consciousness	6	3.00	7.00	5.296	1.01336	0.880
Y: Green Purchase Intention	6	2.67	7.00	5.458	.89758	0.827

Table 2. Summary of Regression results to test direct and mediation hypotheses

Variable	X → Y(β , pvalue)	X → M	M → Y	X→M → Y	Status
H1: GT → GPI	.206 (.060) NS			.217 (.036) S	
H2: PGK → GPI	.076 (.527) NS			.064 (.570) NS	
H3: GPS → GPI	.062 (.531) NS			.068 (.490) NS	
H4: PBC → GPI	.148 (.200) NS			.075 (.494) NS	
H5: GA → GPI	.355 (.001) S			.285 (.005) S	significant
H6: EC → GPI			.636 (.000) S	343 (.000) S	significant
H7: GPS → EC		.377 (.000) S			significant
GT → EC		.031 (.789) NS			
PGK → EC		.035 (.782) NS			
PBC → EC		.213 (.081) NS			
GA → EC		.201 (.069) NS			
H8: GPS→EC→GPI					Full mediation
GT→EC→GPI					No mediation
PGK→EC→GPI					No mediation
PBC→EC→GPI					No Mediation
GA→EC→GPI					No mediation

According to [109], the outcome of the mediation reveals that only green price sensitivity is fully mediated by environmental consciousness. Environmental consciousness does not intervene between the other predictors (perceived behavioral control, perceived green knowledge, green availability and green trust) and the dependent variable.

8. Discussion

Observations made based on results of the research hypotheses stated to examine how green trust, perceived knowledge, perceived behavioural control, green availability and green price sensitivity positively related to green purchase intention, only H₄ and H₈ were supported. The result of H₄ which stated that green availability is positively related to green purchase intention contradicts previous studies [110-112] in which they declared that green availability has insignificant relationship with green purchase intention. This study however revealed that the relationship is positive. This could be attributed to the fact that green availability is an issue in this study and denotes that if green availability increases, the level of GPI becomes strong. Similarly, H₈ supports the results of [113-115] The following hypotheses, (H₁, H₂, H₃, H₅) were all were not supported. Contrary to [116-119], green trust in this study has insignificant relationship with green purchase intention but supported the study of [120]. This explains further the claim that customers globally are skeptical about green products [121, 122] and the Nigerian society is not an exception. In the same vein, the result of perceived behavioral control supported the study of [123].

In addition, the result of perceived green knowledge

countered the findings of [124-127] posited that perceived knowledge influenced green purchase intentions significantly. The out- come of this construct from this study nonetheless make clear the situation of Nigeria regarding green knowledge which is still in infant stage since the phenomenon is not widespread yet [128]. Thus in this study, PGK has insignificant relationship with green purchase intention.

The mediation result however supported the findings in [129] and also the relationship between environmental consciousness and green purchase intention is significant; thus in line with [131].

9. Research Implication

The study provides a detailed framework for understanding predictors of green purchase intention and also serves as an impetus for identifying environmentally conscious consumers. During this global warming menace and environmental conscious era, green product gives ample opportunity for green marketers and for intending investors in the Nigerian market. However, it is fundamental to arouse the environmental consciousness of the citizens.

One of the findings suggests that green availability significantly affects green purchase intention. Taking a stand from this viewpoint, marketers and investors seeking to explore market opportunities in Nigeria can gain grounds by making green brands available in Nigerian markets.

Knowledge in general is believed to be the features that can impact the entire phase of decision making in an individual [130] and consumers will make purchase choices

based on their perceived knowledge whether they have the right information or not [131]. The out from this study revealed that green knowledge did not influence green purchase intention; this suggests that consumers are not well informed about green products in Nigeria. It becomes pertinent to educate they society on the benefits and attributes of green and the consequences of consumer's pro-activeness in protecting their environment and their well-being. Creating special promotional appeals targeted at potential and existing green consumers will heighten green purchase intention.

Moreover, marketers of green have a role to create confidence in the public about green products as consumers globally have formed skepticism about green products by doubting its greenness. Nigerian consumers no doubt are no exception judging from the findings. There is need to emphasize the green attributes, benefits and greenness of green products over conventional brands.

Government role in establishing and enacting policies on green agenda, thereby instilling the consciousness about the environment in its citizenry cannot be over emphasized. Government support and imitative on green will strengthen green purchase intention.

On the whole, this study suggests explicitly why it is just not enough to perceive the intention in consumers in a society, rather it is worthwhile to identify green consumers [132] and also know which factors strongly influences the green purchase intention. This will inform the marketer on how to rightly position the product and the right appeal and channel to use in disseminating promotional message.

10. Conclusions

The outcome of this study based on the analysis using regressions has shown that one of the predictors (green availability) has positive relationship with green purchase intention. It also proved that environmental consciousness fully meditated the relationship between green price sensitivity and green purchase intention. Thus, green availability will strongly enhance green purchase intention. However, government can boost green knowledge through educative campaign programs and enforcing green agenda. Consequently, enhanced knowledge on green products will correct the biased impression on green. Principally, consumers will always desire maximum satisfaction from consuming the products they are willing to pay for in their bid to protect the environment and their well-being.

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