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Parent-Student Communication in Dhuafa Boarding School and Its Relation to Academic Achievement

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Abstract. *Dhuafa students in boarding schools face challenges in establishing quality communication with parents, which is important for their achievements. This study explores the quality and quantity of communication between parents and dhuafa students in boarding schools and the connection between parent-student communication and learning achievement. The research subjects comprised 12 students from SMP Cendekia Baznas (6 boys and 6 girls, grades 7-9). This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using NVivo 12 Plus. The results identified four main themes: communication mechanisms, communication schedules and duration, communication constraints, and the connection between communication and achievement. Students communicate with their parents through phone calls, chats, letters, video calls, and visits. Communication occurs once a week, either on Saturday or Sunday. Communication constraints include signal issues, financial limitations, distractions, parents' availability, and limited communication time. Parent-student communication in boarding schools is positively connected to learning achievement as it enhances motivation, fosters enthusiasm for achievement, and provides spiritual and moral support to students. However, suboptimal communication duration causes some students to feel there is no significant connection between communication with parents and their learning achievement.*

Keywords: *Boarding School, Cendekia Baznas Junior High School, NVivo, Qualitative.*

INTRODUCTION

Communication between parents and students is essential in supporting students' academic achievements. Positive parental communication has been found to support students' learning performance (Zulaekhah & Zubaidah, 2014). A systematic review by Asiyah and Safrudin (2020) also revealed that communication between parents and students strongly correlates with academic performance.

For dhuafa (economically disadvantaged) students who receive educational scholarships in the form of free schooling at a boarding school, communication with parents plays an even more crucial role because these students face the adaptation phase of living in a dormitory, far from their parents, and adjusting to the rules and rhythm of dormitory life (Rizkita, 2020). This is even more significant for dhuafa students who face additional challenges as scholarship recipients. Research by Musabiq et al. (2018) shows that the challenges of fulfilling scholarship recipient obligations can create psychological pressure for the recipients, leading to academic stress. This academic

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stress, in turn, impacts the students' psychology, which affects their academic performance (Ma, 2023). Research by Habibah et al. (2021) found that students with a tendency for stress had lower academic achievements, with a difference of approximately ± 0.03 points compared to students who did not experience stress. In such conditions, communication with parents becomes a crucial need for dhuafa students because communication serves as a medium for exchanging information and acts as parental support that can form a strong foundation for students to succeed (Damayanti, 2024).

However, at boarding schools, students are limited in their ability to communicate with their parents at all times (Ginanto et al., 2021) and can only communicate through mobile phones at scheduled times and meet with their parents once a month during visitation days (Arsita, 2015) or during school holidays (Sholihah et al., 2019). This leads to a *laissez-faire* communication pattern between parents and students. The *laissez-faire* communication pattern has minimal parental involvement in decision-making, as children are free to make decisions (Mareta et al., 2020). A study by Pabundu and Ramadhana (2023) identified the *laissez-faire* communication as the most common in boarding school environments.

In addition, parents from dhuafa families are often busy working to meet economic needs, directly impacting the frequency of communication with their children (Prasetyo & Abduh, 2022). Riany and Morawska's research (2023) also show that low-income families with poor communication among family members have a negative impact on children's competency achievements. On the other hand, good communication quality between parents and dhuafa students attending boarding schools is needed to improve their academic performance.

Previous studies on parent-student communication in boarding schools primarily focused on the role of communication in maintaining students' mental health (Saidah & Aminuddin, 2024), improving students' discipline (Sholihah et al., 2019), and shaping students' personalities (Haqani & Hidayat, 2015). Research on communication within low-income families and its relationship with children's academic competence (Riany & Morawska, 2023) has been quantitative and conducted only on families with children attending non-boarding schools. Therefore, until now, there has been limited qualitative research specifically exploring the role of parent communication in the academic achievements of dhuafa students in boarding schools, particularly regarding the unique academic and social challenges these students face.

Based on the above explanation, in-depth research into the role of communication between parents and dhuafa students in boarding schools concerning their academic performance is essential to explore. Thus, this study aims to explore the quantity and quality of parent-student communication in dhuafa boarding schools and examine the correlation between parent communication and the academic achievements of dhuafa students in boarding schools.

This research is expected to fill the existing knowledge gap, mainly since previous studies have primarily focused on parent communication in the context of regular school students and on students' psychological well-being, discipline, or personality development in boarding schools. Additionally, this study has the potential to provide new insights relevant to improving the quality of education for dhuafa students, as well as contributing significantly to the field of child development and education, particularly within the context of dhuafa students in boarding schools. By understanding this communication dynamic, effective strategies can be found to support the academic and emotional development of dhuafa students in boarding schools. The findings of this research can serve as a reference for parents, educators, and policymakers in developing better communication practices and supporting the educational success of dhuafa students. This study will address the following research questions: 1) What is the communication mechanism between

parents and dhuafa students in boarding schools? 2) What are the schedules and durations of parent communication with dhuafa students in boarding schools? 3) What communication barriers occur between parents and dhuafa students in boarding schools? 4) How is parent communication related to the academic performance of dhuafa students in boarding schools?

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The research participants comprised 12 students from SMP Cendekia Baznas, considered representatives of this study based on the desired diversity criteria. The 12 students are evenly divided, with 6 female and 6 male students from grades 7 to 9. Among the participants, 6 students reside on Java Island, and the other 6 students are from outside Java. Participants were selected purposively, meaning the participants were chosen based on specific criteria: gender (male/female), grade level (7-9), and location (Java or outside Java). This purposive selection ensured a diverse range of answers from all genders and students from both Java and outside Java, ensuring that each cohort, gender, and communication pattern based on the students' regional origins were proportionally represented.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews. In this study, the semi-structured interview approach allows participants to respond without being limited to predefined categories or answer options, opening up opportunities to uncover new or unexpected information (Riany et al., 2016). The data obtained from the interviews can be used to describe, analyze, and interpret conditions without directly observing the participants' environment (Have, 2004). Therefore, data collection through semi-structured interviews is sufficient to obtain data on the quantity and quality of parent-student communication and its relationship with the academic performance of dhuafa students in boarding schools. The specific questions asked during the semi-structured interviews are derived from the primary research questions and cover aspects such as how students communicate with their parents, the schedule and duration of communication, barriers encountered, and the impact of communication on students' academic performance.

Data collection took place in April 2024, with interviews conducted in the school environment, lasting between 4 to 14 minutes. The research was conducted following a protocol approved by an ethical review board for human subjects. Participation was voluntary, and they received a small token of appreciation for their involvement. The validity of the data was tested through peer review by two supervising lecturers. Data was validated through peer review, focusing on data coding, analysis, and credibility accuracy.

Data analysis used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was chosen because it focuses on identifying and understanding themes, aiming to understand individual experiences or perceptions of a condition and to explore the meaning of the collected data in-depth (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). The analysis was conducted using NVivo 12 Plus software, which involved five stages. The first stage was data preparation, where transcripts of the interview audio were created in Microsoft Word. The second stage was coding, where two types of coding were performed using NVivo 12 Plus: first, open coding, which involved creating codes freely from respondent statements, and second, axial coding, which involved creating new categories based on the codes generated from open coding. The third stage was thematic analysis, which involved searching for themes that emerged from the data, both visible and hidden. The fourth stage was data interpretation, where the themes were defined and interpreted so that each theme had a precise specification. The fifth and final stage was data presentation, where the analysis results were connected to research questions and literature. All

names mentioned in the data presentation in the article are pseudonyms. NVivo 12 Plus was used in the qualitative data analysis process because it allows the researcher to conduct systematic and efficient data analysis while offering high flexibility, enabling customization of the analysis tools to suit the specific needs of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the exploration of communication between parents and students of dhuafa boarding schools produced four main themes. The main themes are communication mechanisms, communication schedules and duration, communication constraints, and the relationship between parent communication and the learning achievement of dhuafa boarding school students.

Theme 1. Communication mechanisms

There are two sub-themes in the main theme of communication mechanisms: how students communicate with their parents and the communication devices students use to contact their parents.

How students communicate with their parents. Cendekia Baznas Middle School students have five ways to communicate with their parents: telephone, video call, WhatsApp chat, letters, and visits. The most frequently used method of communication by students is the telephone because it is the primary method provided by the school for students who want to communicate with their parents at home.

“Usually, I call because the schedule has been set. So thank God I got the schedule.” (Muhammad)

The communication method by video call only occurs when students are not visited by their parents.

“For video calls, there is a program at the beginning of the month in Java, in Jabodetabek, which allows parents to come here to visit their children. Now, for those outside Java who are not visited, who usually call using a Nokia cellphone, if it is Sunday, for example, Sunday is a visit, it means that the schedule for calling on the day that is not visited, calls using a video call, not using a Nokia cellphone. So it is like a balance; you can still see your parents.” (Hanif).

Meanwhile, the method of communicating using WhatsApp chat is used by students when they need to communicate with their parents outside of the communication time provided by the school so that students contact their parents via the dormitory supervisor's cell phone or via the cell phone of the parents of fellow students who are visiting their children.

“... Then, for example, if a friend's mother comes to deliver things, usually I will chat (with her phone), then sometimes, if I am not visiting, I will video call or chat too.” (Zahra)

Letters are used when students want to communicate with parents outside the specified communication time. The process begins with students writing a letter containing information they want to convey to their parents. The letter is then submitted to the dormitory supervisor, who photographs it and sends it to the parents via WhatsApp.

“... And at most send a message, through the female teacher, send a letter, if it is not her schedule

to call, then send a letter to the female teacher.” (Rahmi).

Visiting is the only primary way of communication or communication that is done face to face without going through an intermediary media. Visiting has the school's schedule, and visiting is intended mainly for students from Java, especially from areas not too far from the school, such as Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi, and Bandung.

“Yes, with this visitation, once a month. If there is a chance, mother will visit during the holidays. If not, then no.” (Farhan)

At Cendekia Baznas school, students can communicate with their parents via telephone, chat, video call, and visits. This method of communication is commonly found in other boarding schools, such as in the study by Sholihah et al. (2019), which stated that communication between parents and boarding school students can be done during the return schedule, visiting time, or telephone and SMS via dormitory mobile phones. Uniquely at Cendekia Baznas school, there is a communication mechanism specifically created to accommodate the communication needs of students from various regions in Indonesia namely once a month, when students from Java can be visited by their parents, students from outside Java are allowed to make video calls with their parents at home.

Students use communication devices to contact their parents. The school provides two communication devices: non-android mobile phones and Android mobile phones. Non-android mobile phones are used for telephone calls, while Android mobile phones are used only for video calls. Non-Android mobile phones are the primary devices for student' communication with their parents. However, for 7th-grade students, Android phones are the primary device used in the first year of students at school. In subsequent years, Android phones can only be used during video call schedules.

“When I was in 7th grade, I still used a cellphone like this (android). The maximum Android could make calls was up to 30 minutes. But now that I am in 8th grade, it is a Nokia cellphone.” (Bani)

Communication technology in the form of mobile phones allows students to communicate remotely with their parents through voice and video calls. This technological advancement makes it easier for students to maintain relationships with their parents, primarily through social media such as WhatsApp, which has a video call feature, allowing students to chat and see their parents' faces in real time. Istiqomah et al. (2021) stated that the current social media makes it easy for parents to stay in touch with their children. With the communication device facilities provided by the school and current technological advances, students who attend boarding schools can still communicate with their parents even though they are separated by distance.

Theme 2. Communication schedule and duration

Exploration of communication schedule and duration produced two sub-themes: communication schedule and communication duration.

Communication schedule. The telephone communication schedule is set weekly, every Saturday or Sunday in the first to third week of each month. Telephone calls can be made from 12.00 to 21.00 on Saturdays and from 08.00 to 21.00 on Sundays. Meanwhile, the visiting schedule

and video calls are carried out simultaneously once a month.

"From Saturday, from 12 to 9 pm. Then Sunday from 8 am to 9 pm." (Fiqri)

"I only visit once a month..." (Daffa)

Duration of communication. The duration of telephone communication depends on the device used. The duration of telephone calls with non-android mobile phones ranges from 20-30 minutes, but most respondents (n=9) said a maximum of 20 minutes. Meanwhile, video calls with Android mobile phones can last 15, 30, and 40 minutes. The duration of visits varies; some students are visited by parents starting at 08.00-16.00, 09.00-16.00 and 12.00-16.00.

"Because the time given is usually 20 minutes. If it is a visit (video call), it can usually take more than 40 minutes because the person being visited is not allowed to call again. Because they have been visited." (Fiqri)

"Usually, if you visit here, it is from nine o'clock until after Dzuhur or not until before Asr or after Asr. If you visit with your brother, it is from nine o'clock until two o'clock ..." (Zahra).

Students at the dhuafa boarding school cannot constantly interact directly with their parents, but they still have the opportunity to communicate at times determined by the school. Research conducted by Afifah and Rachmiate (2024) explains that the distance between parents and children does not hinder effective communication as long as the communication schedule is organized regularly and consistently.

There is a difference in the duration of communication between users of non-Android mobile phones and Android mobile phones. Communication via non-android mobile phones is scheduled for all students, while communication using Android mobile phones is only for students whose parents do not visit them, so the number of Android phone users is fewer than that of non-Android phone users. Additionally, the duration of visits varies depending on the distance each parent must travel to reach the school.

Theme 3. Communication Barriers

The exploration results of the communication barriers theme identified six sub-themes: signal issues, financial constraints, privacy, time limitations, misalignment between student and parent schedules, and barriers from parents.

Signal Issues. The communication barrier most often mentioned by students was signal issues (n=5). These signal problems occurred not only for students from outside Java but also for students from Java. Signal issues caused communication to be disrupted, and in some cases, students were unable to communicate with their parents at all.

"The biggest problem is the network. It is hard to get a connection here. So, my mom's voice keeps cutting off." (Anissa)

"He is from Papua, and even every week, he could not make a call because of poor signal or the provider's signal not working, and the signal kept disconnecting. So, he could not connect, and it took a few weeks to get through finally." (Bani)

Financial Constraints. Financial constraints became one of the barriers to communication between parents and students. Among the financial issues raised by students was that their parents

did not have enough money to buy phone credit to make calls or visit the students. As a result, students sometimes could not communicate with their parents due to these limitations.

“For example, there was a time when there was no credit. At that time, my mother did not have any credit. Then I tried writing a letter, and when I asked, ‘Why did you not call?’ she said, ‘I have not bought credit yet.’ Oh, it is okay, she said ‘we will talk next week.’” (Daffa)

“My mother also cannot come here because she does not have the money.” (Anissa)

Privacy Issues. Another barrier mentioned by the respondents was the lack of privacy and the presence of distractions from the surrounding environment. This caused communication to become uncomfortable, non-conducive, and unable to proceed optimally.

“When I talk to my parents, friends are around, and it feels like it is not a private conversation. We want to talk privately with our parents, but suddenly, a friend shows up, and it is so awkward that I end up not talking. I will just tell them next week if I remember.” (Ami).

“Another barrier, aside from the signal, is my sibling. When I am talking, they can be disruptive.” (Dewi)

Time Limitations. Time limitations also became a barrier mentioned by the respondents. They felt that the duration of time that was set was not enough for them to communicate optimally with their parents.

“When using communication tools like a mobile phone, there is a time limitation, according to the rules here at SCB.” (Bani)

Misalignment of Communication Schedule. There was also a barrier related to the misalignment of communication schedules between parents and students. This was caused by the students' busy activities or their parents' work schedules extending late into the night, making the predetermined communication schedules challenging to utilize fully.

“Sometimes, we cannot make a call because there is an event, like a competition or something outside.” (Ami)

“Also, my mom has not come home from work yet. Sometimes, she gets home later.” (Farhan)

Parental Barriers. Respondents also mentioned that sometimes parents forget or are late in making calls, so communication time becomes very limited. Parents sometimes do not pay attention to the schedule provided by the dormitory supervisors, meaning the communication time has passed, and the students cannot communicate with their parents during that week.

“Usually, with a Nokia phone, it is not us who call; it is the parents who call. So sometimes, if they forget, the parents do not get to make the call.” (Daffa)

“Ustadzah (The supervisor) applies a rule that the calling time should not be 20 minutes. But, for example, my time is from 4 to 4:20. Then my mom calls at 4:15, so the time is only 5 minutes.” (Aisyah)

“Usually, we get a schedule, right? Before calling. But usually, the parents have not checked it. They have not checked what time it is.” (Arina)

Communication Barriers Faced by Students at Dhuafa Boarding School. Most communication barriers faced by students at the dhuafa boarding school (n=5) were related to signal issues. In locations with limited internet access, communication barriers in the form of poor signals frequently occur (Nurhaliza et al., 2023). In addition, respondents also revealed financial constraints and misalignment of communication schedules between students and their parents. Similar barriers were found in research by Afifah and Rachmiatie (2024), which stated that unstable signals, differing busyness, and time differences between parents and children often hinder long-distance communication with intermediary media. This finding is also consistent with the research by Putri et al. (2024), which identified that long-distance communication barriers typically involve signal disturbances and financial limitations related to credit and internet quota costs.

Theme 4: The Relationship Between Parent-Student Communication at Dhuafa Boarding School and Academic Achievement

The exploration results regarding respondents' perceptions of the relationship between parent-student communication and academic achievement produced two sub-themes: 1) parent-student communication at Dhuafa Boarding School is related to academic achievement, and 2) there is no relationship between parent-student communication at Dhuafa Boarding School and academic achievement.

Parent-Student Communication at Dhuafa Boarding School is Related to Academic Achievement. Respondents who stated that communication with their parents is related to the academic achievements they achieve explained that during communication, their parents provide motivation and encouragement to study (n=7), urge them to achieve good results (n=3), offer spiritual support through prayers (n=3), provide prayers to help them achieve success (n=1), give moral support (n=1), and help students feel calm and relieved after communicating with their parents, which enables them to focus more on their studies at school (n=2).

"Because every phone call, sometimes the child at the boarding school feels bored, tired, or lacks motivation. Because they see the same environment every day, it becomes boring. So, usually, every time they call, parents give advice or motivation like, 'Stay motivated in your studies,' 'Just enjoy the learning process, and later you will reap the rewards.' So, what the parents say usually drives the child to be more diligent and enthusiastic in studying." (Fiqri).

"Usually, when I get bored here, I am encouraged and prayed for, which adds motivation to achieve success here." (Fajri)

"Before every exam, I always ask for my parents' prayers, and Alhamdulillah, every exam, the results are always good, and I believe it is truly help from Allah and definitely also from my parents' prayers." (Hanif).

"There are times when my grades drop, and I feel sad, but my parents always say, 'It is okay if your grades drop, as long as it is your own effort, and you did not cheat.' My dad always reminds me, 'It is okay if your grades drop. The important thing is your manners and character. I put you in this school for that, not because I want you to win trophies or awards, but because it is just a bonus. The most important thing is your manners and character. If you come home and do not bring that, I will be upset, even if you only bring awards. I will only be happy for a moment.' That is what he says. So, trophies and awards are just bonuses. What is important is to have good manners and character." (Anissa)

"It does have an impact because sometimes I get worried. How is my mom at home? How is my

younger sibling? Sometimes I feel uneasy. So, when I get a phone call, I feel calm, and when school starts on Monday, I feel relieved again.” (Muhammad)

No Relationship Between Parent-Student Communication at Dhuafa Boarding School and Academic Achievement. One respondent stated that they did not feel any relationship between communication with their parents and their academic achievement at school. However, the respondent did not provide a reason for making this statement.

“Hmm ... There is none.” (Aisyah).

The findings regarding the relationship between parent-student communication and academic achievement in this study support the results of the systematic review by Asiyah and Safrudin (2020), which states that positive communication between parents and children can enhance the child's academic performance. On the other hand, poor communication patterns can result in a decline in academic performance. In this study, the positive communication students perceive about academic achievement includes motivation to excel, spiritual support, and encouragement to study from their parents. This finding indicates that parents who provide motivation, attention, and support create a positive relationship between their communication and the student's academic performance. This is also in line with the research by Mustika and Rakhmad (2020), which states that parental communication in support, attention, and advice can increase students' motivation in their education, ultimately impacting their academic achievement.

However, perceptions regarding the lack of a relationship between parent-student communication and academic achievement were also found in this study. Although the respondent did not provide the reason behind their perception, based on the findings in the communication barriers theme, the respondent mentioned that sometimes parents were late in calling compared to the scheduled time, which limited the communication duration. This may impact the quality of communication between the parents and the student, which might have led to the perception that there was no connection between parent communication and academic achievement. This perception is likely a result of the less-than-optimal quantity of communication and the lateness of the parents' calls, which may also indicate a lack of attention to the child. As a result, the respondent felt that the communication did not significantly impact their academic performance.

The lack of communication duration and the minimal attention perceived from parents make students feel that they do not receive enough motivation or encouragement to study, leading them to believe that communication with their parents is not related to their academic success. Rini et al. (2020) state that parental attention to children can contribute to the child's success in academic achievement. Parents who show attention by encouraging their children to study can maintain the child's enthusiasm to improve academic performance. This is supported by Astuti and Handayani (2017), who reveal that parental attention is an external stimulus that can influence students' academic achievement. Thus, insufficient communication duration and low parental attention can weaken the positive potential of communication in influencing students' academic achievement.

The positive communication and academic achievement findings were observed in both male and female students. Both male and female students received positive communication from their parents, including motivation and prayers for success in school, leading both male and female students to feel a connection between parent communication and academic performance. One male student and one female student also reported feeling relief after communicating with

their parents, which they considered related to their academic achievement. This shows that male and female students received the same treatment from their parents. Moral support was only found among female students, which may be because female students are considered to be more emotionally sensitive than male students. As a result, parents provide moral support to ensure that their daughters do not feel discouraged when their academic performance declines. According to the study by Khusnia et al. (2023), it was found that female children have a higher level of emotional sensitivity compared to male children, making them more sensitive to events related to their feelings. Although only female students stated that there was no relationship between parent communication and academic achievement, this was also attributed to insufficient communication time between the parents and students.

The findings of this study have implications for schools, parents, and policymakers in improving the quality and quantity of parent-student communication at the Dhuafa Boarding School. Schools must provide sufficient communication time so students can communicate with their parents without being rushed. Parents are expected to improve the quality of communication by paying attention and supporting their children during communication. Meanwhile, policymakers should focus on improving communication access and technological infrastructure in areas with poor signal coverage, providing communication subsidies for dhuafa families who send their children to boarding schools, and developing educational programs for parents to build positive communication with their children. Implementing these findings is expected to improve the academic achievement of dhuafa students at the boarding school.

A limitation of this study is that the findings cannot be generalized to all dhuafa students in other boarding schools, as this is a qualitative study. The exploration of information is still limited because the research sample consisted only of students, so future research should also consider the perspective of parents. This study only examined the relationship between parent communication and dhuafa students attending boarding schools, so future research should compare the relationship between parent communication and dhuafa students in boarding schools with those attending regular schools.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the quality and quantity of communication between parents and Dhuafa students in boarding schools are influenced by various mechanisms, the communication schedule and duration set by the school, and the barriers faced by the students. The quality of communication is demonstrated through multiple available mechanisms, such as phone calls, video calls, chats, letters, and visits. These mechanisms allow students to remain connected with their parents despite the distance. Quality communication is marked by providing motivation, spiritual support, moral reinforcement advice, and emotional attention from the parents. However, the quantity of communication is still limited by the duration set by the school. Phone calls are scheduled only once a week with a maximum duration of 20 minutes, while video calls and visits are conducted monthly. This limited duration is often insufficient to meet students' communication needs with their parents.

The relationship between parent communication and students' academic achievement is reflected in two perspectives. Most students feel that communication with their parents positively connects to their academic achievement, such as increasing motivation to study, encouraging them to perform well, providing emotional tranquillity, receiving prayers from parents, and reinforcing their moral values. On the other hand, some students do not feel a connection between parent

communication and their academic performance, suspected to be due to the suboptimal quantity of communication and the minimal attention felt by parents.

The limitation of this study is that the findings cannot be generalized to other Dhuafa students in boarding schools because the research method used is qualitative. Additionally, the perspective of this study is not holistic, as the participants are only from the students' perspectives, so the information gathered is limited.

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