# DEVELOPMENT OF ONLINE MARKETING MIX STRATEGIES FOR BASKETRY PRODUCT ENTREPRENEURS IN CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

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# ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to investigate the market situation of basketry products in Pa Bong Community and to develop online marketing mix strategies for basketry product entrepreneurs in Pa Bong Sub-district Community, Saraphi district, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand. The sample group was the basketry product entrepreneurs in the community, consisting of 3 communities including Baan Sri kham Chomphu, Baan Pa Bong Luang, and Baan Theparam. The data were collected through community context inspection, focus group, in-depth interview, and related documents verification. The data were analyzed using content analysis and SWOT analysis techniques to find out the market situation of Pa Bong community's basketry products. The discovery of investigation on community context and market situation analysis, involved the results of the development of online marketing mix strategies indicated that the product strategy aspect ought to be emphasized towards improving and developing initiated products correspondingly the generation and currently achieved the consumer's requirement. Moreover, the co-trademark on the basketry product entrepreneurs in the community shall be advanced, for the pricing strategy aspect would be considered based on its value using pricing approach. The place strategy expands the sales channels into online market as the online stores through e-marketplaces and social media channels. The promotion strategy, product images shall be prioritized, they shall be presented obviously and attractively including enabled to appeal customers' attention. Advertising and storytelling through contentbased digital marketing shall be utilized to promote the brand and products of Pa Bong community to reach and attract the target customers.

Keywords: Strategy, Online Marketing Mix, Basketry Product

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#### INTRODUCTION

Online media has become increasingly important to our lives and the way businesses are run in the modern world as a result of globalization and technological growth. Whether using laptops, PCs, tablets, smartphones, or other electronic devices, modern customers may readily access the Internet. The ease and speed of modern technology have drawn customers' attention to the benefits of buying a variety of goods and services through more online channels. As a result, consumers are shifting their purchasing behavior from traditional trade to more online channels (Chaiyasit Jaroenwongwiwat, 2016). As a result, it forces companies to modify their marketing plans to suit the needs of the market. Applying digital channels to the marketing of goods or services in order to reach target customer groups is known as online marketing or digital marketing. Websites, mobile devices, social media, search engines, and other comparable channels are all used in this type of marketing (Investopia, 2022). Digital marketing is thought to be necessary for operating an online store or online business (ecommerce). Digital marketing will assist firms in efficiently reaching target customers in the online world (Brody Hall, 2021). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the size of the e-commerce market increased by an average of 42% annually between 2015 and 2019. After that, it raced to a record-breaking increase of 80% from the previous year in 2020, reaching a magnitude never before seen. As a result of consumers shifting their purchasing habits to online channels, the value of goods sold in stores fell by 11% (KKP Research, 2021). Currently, Thai government agencies place a high priority on the development of a policy to support online business as well as to encourage and promote all sectors to accept and speed up the adoption of electronic commerce (e-commerce), which is thought to be one of the key factors driving Thailand's economic growth (Thaigov, 2022). The agency that is directly responsible for electronic transaction development is the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA). Currently, ETDA has followed a plan to drive the development of electronic transactions (2018-2022), the 1st review edition, with a vision to be the "Leader of Change to Drive the Future Economy with Electronic Transactions" and the mission of the plan, is "Help Thai People Conduct Electronic Transactions (Go Online) for Better Opportunities and Life" (ETDA, 2021). Furthermore, the Ministry of Commerce, The Department of Business Development have supported and pushed Thai communities into the e-commerce market to help develop the potential of Thai community product entrepreneurs, expanding distribution channels into the online market by cooperating with Shopee, a large-scale e-commerce platform of the world under the Happy Buying Thai campaign. The government agencies have implemented the "U2T for BCG and Regional Development Project" in 7,435 sub-districts covering 77 provinces nationwide in addition to the COVID-19 outbreak's negative economic effects. It is an expansion of the "Integrated Sub-District Economic and Social Upgrading Project," which is significant. The goal is to use knowledge, technology, and innovation to boost the potential and competitiveness of the local BCG manufacturing and service industries. The U2T for BCG and Regional Development Project includes Pa Bong Sub-district in Saraphi District, Chiang Mai Province. Since the Pa Bong Sub-district used to be a forest-rich area, most communities have had a long-standing relationship with bamboo. A variety of household items are made of bamboo or other natural materials. Elderly people used to sharpen, hammer, and weave baskets and baskets for their personal use in their spare time before incorporating them into their everyday life and passing down the knowledge of bamboo basketry with delicate, beautiful, and distinctive patterns from generation to generation. The basket-making communities include: (1) Baan Chai Sathan, where home baskets and baskets are utilized, and where basketry has become an actual occupation for the people in the community. Finally, it is regarded as a production village of One Tambon One Product in the field of basketry, and there is a learning center as Huean Sompho Learning Center; (2) Baan Rong Don Chai, where baskets, steamed sticky rice baskets, and coiled bamboo products that are the local wisdom of Northern Lanna; (3) Baan Si Kham Chomphu, where baskets and bamboo lanterns are handicrafts in the village, there is a group of elderly bamboo basket makers. There is also a location where crafts are made and a residence where basketry supplies are kept; (4) Baan Pa Bong Luang is home to a collection of bamboo basket manufacturers, including the Bamboo House Collection, which was established to gather the goods made by the village's basket makers and passed down from grandparents to current generations, with a concentration on the creation of bamboo and rattan lamps. The Thawan Bamboo Weaving Collection is a group of manufacturers of baskets who initially began by weaving bamboos into wicker baskets and circular bamboo baskets. Later, it shifted to making rattan baskets, and its goods were improved to become lamps, room dividers, and furniture. Nowadays, it mainly concentrates on producing lights made of bamboo and rattan. Products are frequently modified to match the era in order to satisfy customers. The Thongsuk Lamp Group is a group of bamboo and rattan basketry lamp manufacturers. (5) Baan Theparam was transformed into a tourist village and encouraged the villagers to participate in activities together, particularly the promotion of basketry wisdom. There is a group of bamboo basket producers, specifically the Mae Kiew Khong Luang Group, the community's first large-scale basketry pioneers. Khong is a type of woven container for holding fish and other basketry items and the Theparam Handicraft Group assembles to gather items from the knowledge of basketry that are prepared by individual producers, individual sellers in various items like bamboo garlands, fans, and baskets, and displayed as in exhibitions or OTOP events. Although the Pa Bong Community has been making basketry products for a while, the majority of them still need to be marketed in their original form because there hasn't been any new product development or marketing that fits with the lifestyles of contemporary consumers.

The researchers are therefore interested in examining the development of online marketing mix strategies for basketry product entrepreneurs in Pa Bong Community, Saraphi, Chiang Mai province in order to serve as a guide for the community in developing a new marketing style that is appropriate and in line with the needs of modern consumers. The findings of this study will help local business owners realize their full potential by enabling them to learn about and practice online marketing techniques on electronic platforms, as well as to introduce novel basketry handicraft products that stand out in the identity and wisdom of the neighborhood through online sales channels., and innovation will increase the value of the community's basketry products, local entrepreneurs will gain more income, and the community will grow sustainably.

# **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Participatory action research, or PAR, was used in this study. Community participation is required for the research's conduct, which focuses on qualitative research through gathering information from focus groups, interactive workshops, in-depth interviews, and community forums. The researchers then used the data they had gathered to plan and set up efficient support project operations. The following information pertains to the population and sample, research tools, data collecting, research sources, methodology, and research analysis, respectively:

## 1) Population and Sample

The population included the Pa Bong Basketry Group in Saraphi District, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand. It consists of Baan Chai Sathan Group, Baan Rong Don Chai Group, Baan Si Kham Chomphu Group, Baan Pa Bong Luang Group, and Baan Theparam Group. A selection criterion is a group of villages with spatial qualifications with the readiness to develop market potential and be able to pass on wisdom to future generations. As the sample in the research, the three communities were selected as sample groups since each community in Pa Bong Subdistrict municipal area has different potentials. They were Moo 3, Baan Sri Kham Chomphu Group, Moo 4, Baan Pa Bong Luang Group, and Moo 5, Baan Theparam Group to be a model group for development because such groups and communities have experiences and entrepreneurs' readiness and are center of basketry production. Furthermore, there have the availability of resources in the communities, local wisdom, and determined group leaders with good leadership potential to develop and upgrade to become a digital community enterprise in the future.

#### 2) Research Resources and Data Collection

The data for this qualitative study were gathered from two different sources: primary data from community context surveys, in-depth interviews with key informants, interviews with local government agencies, focus groups, group activities with members of the community business group, and participant observation and information provision throughout the research process. In order for local business owners to transition to digital community companies in the future, business data collection and application were the main goals. The secondary data was gathered by conducting research and gathering information from books, academic texts relevant to research papers, websites, articles, journals, print media, the Community Learning Center, local attractions, as well as the minutes of group meetings that took part in the project. All data were combined to make sense of the study of research findings.

#### **3)** Research Instruments

1) Community forums are to study important information about the community's basketry business, including community marketing information, community products, community environment, and different contexts of the community. The gathered data will be evaluated, combined, and ready for research projects and business growth strategies for community basketry. This is done to assist and encourage basketry business owners in the Pa Bong Subdistrict community to become more prepared to run their enterprises and to help increase the community's capacity and potential for operating basketry business. Communities and associated organizations can incorporate local basketry items in the future to engage with local tourism.

2) In-depth interviews and focus groups have the target groups as the group chairman and representatives of the basketry entrepreneurs group in Pa Bong Sub-district, Saraphi District, Chiang Mai Province. Insights regarding marketing and internet marketing will be gathered in order to analyze, synthesize, and produce knowledge, which will then be merged with local basketry business owners.

3) Data analysis is to collect data on basketry entrepreneurs' sales operations and product line expansion, which will build knowledge together with marketing operations after group members have developed a marketing management process to a certain extent.

4) Three participatory workshop training projects are organized: 1) Data Study and Data Analysis for Marketing Development Project; 2) Digital Marketing Knowledge Training Project; and 3) Online Marketing Mix Strategies Development Project.

#### 4) Research Methodology

Operations and conducting research have the following steps:

Phase 1: Investigating the state of the community basketry business in Pa Bong Sub-district, the community's strengths and weaknesses, and the overall environment, including opportunities and threats, by researching pertinent documents from textbooks, research, the Internet, and related organizations such as the Pa Bong Sub-district Municipality Office. Additionally, it is to establish connections with and familiarity with the hypothetical entrepreneurs who would undertake research; Phase 2: Conducting In-depth interviews and organizing focus groups with related groups for gathering information about the potential of entrepreneur groups, problems and needs of the groups, current market management style of groups, and apply such information to conduct further research activities; Phase 3: Organizing participatory workshops such as Data Study and Data Analysis for Marketing Development Project; Digital Marketing Knowledge Training Project; and Online Marketing Mix Strategies

Development Project; Phase 4: Summarizing the research findings and outlining the findings are followed by listening to comments and recommendations from the community's basketry business community or other relevant organizations. After finishing the research project, the researchers collaborate with pertinent groups or agencies to develop strategies, a plan for marketing the community in a novel way, and a strategy for creating growth for community business groups. Additionally, it communicates study findings to relevant local businesses or groups of local businesses. This will enable the organization to use the information and recommendations gathered from the research for the further marketing growth of local businesses; Phase 5: Disseminating study data to pertinent agencies and the interested public via research papers and the Internet.

#### 5) Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using content analysis, and the internal and external environments of Baan Pa Pong Basketry Products, Saraphi District, Chiang Mai Province, were examined using the SWOT Analysis technique to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Using the information gathered from primary and secondary sources, online marketing mix strategies were then developed to give community organizations a competitive edge.

#### **RESEARCH RESULTS**

#### The Results of Basketry Products Market Situation Analysis of Pa Bong Community Using SWOT Analysis Technique

The analysis of strengths revealed that 1) Products made by the local population in Pa Bong Sub-District have distinctive basketry patterns such two-dimensional, three-dimensional, flowing water, and back-flowing water patterns. They are excellent as well. They distinguish the community's crafts and show off the distinctiveness of the Pa Bong community's crafts; 2) The basketry product line of the Pa Bong Sub-district Community is diverse. Local entrepreneurs have ideas or creativity in developing basketry products based on local knowledge in new ways, such as basketry baskets tied to the lace edge, cylinder weaved bag basketry baskets, woven bag basketry products, Japanese patterned basketry baskets, various patterns of bamboo basketry garland from bamboo, and colors, etc. Customers now have more options when selecting basketry products. Entrepreneurs can also cater to the demands of special customization. If customers want to order basketry products in the style they choose, for instance, hotel customers ordering rattan lights they themselves designed and allowing the operator to produce in accordance with the design; 3) Entrepreneurs are dedicated to and eager to grow community business marketing, which includes enlarging distribution channels to be more varied and capable of reaching more consumers in order to produce cash for the community. They have taken part in a number of interactive workshops to advance the community's understanding of the market for basketry products, such as sales training exercises on e-commerce platforms and digital marketing training for community business owners; and 4) Pa Bong Sub-district is well-known and has a strong reputation for basketry.

The analysis of weaknesses found that: 1) More bamboo is required since it is a crucial component of the raw materials utilized by local business owners to make baskets. Currently, bamboo planting in public spaces typically doesn't develop and the size isn't in the required proportion due to the unfavorable environmental conditions. As a result, the business owners must purchase bamboo from different vendors, possibly by changing the raw material to rattan; 2) Occasionally, especially when the business receives sizable customer orders, production capacity cannot keep up with demand. This is because there aren't many basketry makers in the area; for instance, certain business groupings only have one or two. As a result, it takes longer to complete each order. As a result, customers might have to wait a while if fresh orders are received. Additionally, the majority of the area's basketry business owners now are from the middle-aged and senior groups. Because the younger generation is not interested in handicrafts,

products are unable to apply technology to successfully sell their goods. However, today's entrepreneurs are starting to employ QR Code payments or online bank transfers; and 4) Many community-based sellers of basketry items need their branding in addition to a lack of marketing communication and product branding to become known to their target customers.

The analysis of opportunities showed that: 1) Government organizations have assisted local business owners with funding for a variety of programs, including the U2T Project and the U2T for BCG Project. The Saraphi District Community Development Office and the Pa Bong Subdistrict Municipality, however, have consistently promoted the basketry goods produced locally. Additionally, they stand ready to assist local business owners and offer guidance; 2) More channels for product distribution are now available to businesses thanks to the development of technology. Customer contact is, however, simpler. Consumers think highly of the online product distribution methods that use social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok or e-marketplace platforms like Shopee and Lazada. 3) Thai consumers have grown more interested in acquiring and supporting local goods, thus these sales platforms can also be used as channels by business owners to advertise their goods or carry out marketing communications to target customers. This leads to a trend of "Local Pride" and a trend of interest in "Local Lover," where the majority of consumers saw that quality and ease in purchasing were crucial considerations in acquiring products. Since customers currently choose to acquire products through online channels more often, particularly in the COVID-19 pandemic condition, local products could be distributed online to reach more consumers.

The analysis of threats revealed that: 1) The COVID-19 pandemic situation has caused the distribution of basketry items in the community to decline; orders from local consumers and orders from customers overseas have both been disrupted as a result of lockdown measures in various nations. The decrease in orders also had an impact on local business owners. Additionally, during the epidemic, such circumstances led to a shortage of prospects for business owners attending trade shows; 2) There is fierce competition due to the abundance of basketry firms on the market, particularly in online distribution channels. Additionally, a lot of companies use e-commerce platforms to offer basketry goods, providing customers more options. Therefore, if the community's products lack a distinctive character, do not distinguish themselves from rivals, are outmoded, or have excessive prices compared to the benefits they would provide to customers. These cause the company to lose its competitive advantage and render it incapable of surviving in the market.

#### The Results of The Development of Online Marketing Mix Strategies for Basketry Product Entrepreneurs in Pa Bong Sub-district Community, Saraphi District, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand.

According to studying the community context and analyzing the market situation of basketry products in Pa Bong Sub-district Community, the researchers have developed an online marketing mix strategy. The details are as follows:

**Product Strategy**, the community of Pa Bong can continue to expand its existing basketry items to create new ones, such purses and lanterns. Bamboo is a crucial raw material utilized in the creation of both goods. In order to suit the needs of contemporary customers, the researchers and product designers planned and designed woven bags to be items with contemporary designs that combine local wisdom with modernity. Figure 1 illustrates how it also aids in the creation of value addition for the goods in the Pa Bong neighborhood. Therefore, a crucial product strategy is to present other basketry products that current entrepreneurs already have while also offering unique basketry products. Even though some

organizations have a brand, brand communication still requires more precision. The entrepreneurs' group's efforts to build their brands have a big impact on how distinctive and valuable the Pa Bong Community's basketry items are. The backdrop of the entrepreneurs' group is suited for the brand development in the form of a co-brand as Umbrella Brand. Distributing goods under co-branded products will assist the basketry products of entrepreneurs in the Pa Bong Sub-district to be known more widely and more quickly because the entrepreneurs' group in the neighborhood is made up of both large and small groupings. The co-brand is brand-named "Bamboo Forest by Pa-Bong basketry village" or "Bamboo Forest" for short. The color of the logo is a green background to convey nature. The image of the bamboo and strokes that look like a weave pattern are essential elements of the logo. Both the meaning of the name and the various elements in the brand reflects the identity of the Pa Bong Sub-district Community that is associated with bamboo forests and weaving, as shown in Figure 2.



Fig 1 Photos of Bamboo Woven Bag Fig.2 Co-Brand of the Pa Bong Sub-and Bamboo Lanterns district Community

**Price strategy**, determining the price must consider the cost factor. A significant cost of the Pa Bong Sub-district community basketry products consists of raw materials and labor costs. Most entrepreneurs usually set the selling price of their products by adding the required profit from markup on cost. The selling price of the product is low because the entrepreneurs' groups do not add highly high profits. Instead, they add additional profit from raw materials and labor costs. When the basketry products of the Pa Bong sub-district community gain more value from the product development process, branding appropriate, and marketing communications, including expanding sales channels to new markets through online platforms, the entrepreneurs can set higher product prices. It is a value-based pricing strategy that must be appropriate across all online sales channels. Different selling prices in different sales channels could have a negative impact on the business. In addition, selling products on online platforms often has a selling fee, including transportation costs. Therefore, the group of entrepreneurs must consider such expenses in setting the selling price.

**Place strategy,** distributing the Pa Bong Sub-district Community basketry products will be distributed selectively by choosing online sales channels with the potential and qualifications appropriate for the products and business target groups. Then, as illustrated in Figure 3, the business owners use the online platform's sales channels to construct an online storefront. These sales channels include 1) those in the e-marketplace, like Shopee and Lazada, and 2) those in social media, like Facebook and Instagram. Using internet platforms as sales channels can assist business owners quickly reach their target market. Moreover, a number of tools will make it easier to distribute goods to vendors on numerous platforms, particularly online marketplaces. The local business owners still need to increase their production capacity nonetheless, in order to manage their inventories. If the market demand for a product exceeds its production capacity and there is a shortage of inventory, business owners must adjust their

marketing strategies to address the issue of product shortage that could harm their company's reputation and level of customer service, such as pre-order distribution (Pre-Order).



Fig 3 Development of Distribution Channels through Social Media Platforms

**Promotion Strategy,** the distribution of products through online channels, the product image is the top priority for entrepreneurs in digital marketing communications. Since the products are available online, the customers need help to physically touch or see the product like in an offline store or physical store. Therefore, the presentation of product samples must be clear, beautiful, and attractive, as shown in Figure 4. Advertising and creating brand stories through content marketing via digital media is still essential in promoting brands and products in the community to be well known. Examples of content creation include Social Media Content Marketing, which is the creation of content by posting text, graphics, or videos through social media channels that are business distribution channels, such as interesting content presentation via Facebook Page or Instagram, the content presented may be in the form of telling the story of the brand and products of the Pa Bong community that are unique to the locality. However, content marketing must be suitable for the communication channels and target audiences.



Fig 4 Examples of the Pa Bong Sub-district Community Basketry Products Photos

# **DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

The study of the market situation of the Pa Bong Sub-district Community basketry products as strengths showed that the basketry products of the community are unique, exquisite, and beautiful and can represent the community's identity as well. Manufacturer groups have expertise in production and creativity in developing new products based on local wisdom, including developing products that meet specific customers' needs. This is consistent with Varinthorn Tarasansombut (2017), that studied product strategy of community enterprise entrepreneur in Ampawa, and it is in accordance with Yupapon Chaisena, Anantapron Puttassa and Chatrachada Wirotrat (2022), who studied development of management strategies to create competitive advantages of community enterprises of weaving group, Ban Kut Wah, Kalasin province., it was found that community enterprises had wisdom, knowledge, and expertise in producing products of group enterprises. Due to a manpower shortage, the basketry group in the Pa Bong sub-district community has not enough production capacity to meet the demands of all of its customers. This is in line with research by OTOP management expert Parichart Benrit (2008) and Kritsana Dararuang's (2015) revealed that one issue brought on by the

group's environment was the group's inability to meet demand due to labor shortages in the manufacturing process. Regarding opportunities and risks, the data showed that government

agencies encouraged local entrepreneurs so that the community could recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic scenario. It is consistent with J. Q. Cheong (2022), who studied a global analysis of the COVID-19 Assistance Program for Small Business., it was found that the disease's spread had a significant impact on small businesses. As a result, government agencies in many nations are looking for ways to assist small businesses in their respective nations in recovering from these impacts.

The results of the development of online marketing mix strategies for basketry product entrepreneurs in the Pa Bong sub-district community indicated that community entrepreneurs should develop products in new ways that combine traditional and modern wisdom to meet the needs of today's customer groups. The findings are in line with Archabaramee Maneetrakunthong and Tarida Baikasem (2020), who studied market development towards Thailand 4.0 model to premium OTOP of bamboo handicrafts: Ban Pa Bong community, Saraphi, Chiang Mai. It became clear that while the basketry products of the Pa Bong subdistrict community had patterns updated to fit the time and demands, the community's strengths had not changed. Additionally, developing a joint brand will hasten the spread of awareness for the basketry goods produced by local business owners in the Pa Bong sub-district. It is consistent with the findings of Manop Chum-um and Ardchawin Jaikaew (2020), whose investigation into the brand architecture, commercial strategy, and inventive marketing tactics of Makiang products in the Chiang Mai province revealed that co-brand names could facilitate more effective and efficient marketing public relations. In terms of pricing strategy, it was discovered that value-based pricing, which adds value to items through marketing initiatives, can produce returns and profits for local business owners. According to Tatyana Netseva-Porcheva's (2011) study Value-Based Pricing - A Success Factor in the Competitive Struggle, the pricing of goods is based on the value that consumers would obtain from the products. It is important for a company to succeed and have a competitive advantage. It has been discovered that digital marketing is essential to business nowadays in terms of distribution channel strategies and marketing promotion. To answer to the needs of contemporary consumers and keep up with the changes, local business owners must adapt by extending their online sales channels, including advertising and promoting community basketry items through content marketing via digital media. It is consistent with Sawita Yousukkee and Orakanang Nuancharoen (2022), who studied the digital marketing communications for increasing awareness of OTOP Inno-life (Nawatvidhi) in Ban Phu Khae consists of the development of online distribution channels, advertising, public relations with content, and digital media design with contemporary graphics.

#### RECOMMEDATIONS

Developing competitive advantages would be an important marketing plan for manufacturers of basketry goods in the Pa Bong sub-district. The entrepreneur groups should elect group representatives to act as the primary coordinators in bringing the basketry products of each entrepreneurs' group in the Pa Bong Sub-district Community to launch online distribution channels under the community brand as Bamboo Forest by Pa-Bong Basketry Village in order to enable the aforementioned marketing strategies to be used effectively. Additionally, there ought to be agents for managing online marketing, such as taking customer orders, providing customer care online, managing public relations, creating content to market products, and delivering goods, among other things. Continuous monitoring and performance evaluation should be done once the strategy has been put into place. The appropriate local agencies should also develop a strategy to assist modern marketing for entrepreneurs selling basketry products in the neighborhood, including assistance with trademark registration to help strengthen the neighborhood brand and establish credibility for the basketry products made in the Pa Bong Sub-district Community.

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