Proc. of the European Safety and Reliability Conference (ESREL 2026)
Edited by José C. Matos, Paulo B. Lourenço, Michael Beer, Daniel Oliveira, Edoardo Patelli, Hélder S. Sousa, Rui A. Silva and Monica Santamaria
 Published by Research Publishing, Singapore.
doi: 10.3850/ESREL2026061419_esrel26-p27631-cd

Systematic Risk Management and Resilience in Military Supply Chains: A Regression-Based Mediation Study of the Lithuanian Armed Forces

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The research focuses on the issue of ensuring effective risk management in the supply chains of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, which are strategically sensitive to a wide spectrum of risks, including economic, political, logistical, and security threats. Disruptions in military supply chains can directly impair the operational capability and readiness of the armed forces, highlighting the necessity for a systematic and scientifically grounded approach to risk identification, assessment, and mitigation. The subject of this study is risk management within the Lithuanian national defence system's supply chains, and the primary objective is to develop a conceptual model for military supply chain risk management based on theoretical insights and empirical evidence.
To achieve this goal, a quantitative research design was employed using a structured questionnaire. The survey was administered to personnel across various branches of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, including the Defence Staff, Land Forces, Air Force, Navy, Logistics Command, Special Operations Forces, and other defence institutions. Respondents represented a range of positions from senior officers and managers to logistics specialists and technical staff with varying years of experience in supply chain-related roles. The collected data were analysed using the regression-based mediation approach to examine relationships among key variables, including organizational risk awareness, procedural maturity, technological application, leadership involvement, and resilience to disruptions.
After checking for data validity, a total of 327 valid responses were analysed. The research results revealed that effective risk management in military supply chains depends on several critical factors: organizational culture toward risk, systematic assessment procedures, technological integration, and inter-organizational collaboration. Based on these findings, a conceptual model for risk management was developed, emphasizing proactive risk identification, continuous improvement, and adaptive capabilities to enhance supply chain resilience in the Lithuanian Armed Forces. The study contributes both theoretically and practically to the modernization of defence logistics management.

Keywords: Military supply chains, risk management, defence logistics, supply chain resilience, organizational risk culture, military personnel, regression-based mediation.

1. Introduction

Military supply chains are fundamental to Lithuania's national defence: they integrate procurement, logistics, maintenance, and transport to sustain operational readiness and continuity of the defence system. Given their mission-critical nature, these chains exhibit heightened sensitivity to external disruptions, which necessitates rigorous analysis of both structural characteristics and risk drivers across economic, political, logistical, and security domains. Recent scholarship has mapped resilience, management strategies, and disruption impacts in military supply networks, underscoring the need for systematic risk identification, assessment, and mitigation grounded in scientific evidence (Lucas et al. 2024; Ekström, 2025).

A logical point of departure is resilience and crisis management. Evidence from the COVID-19 period shows that adaptive leadership, contingency planning, rapid route reconfiguration, and real-time monitoring helped military supply chains maintain continuity amid

profound uncertainty, yielding lessons directly transferable to civilian networks (e.g., food supply and transport). These practices—prioritizing critical resources and accelerating feedback cycles—reinforce preparedness and reduce downtime under stress. Complementing crisis response, everyday effectiveness depends on tight coordination of production schedules, inventory control, and transportation logistics; structured "learning from incidents" (LFI) systems have been proposed to institutionalize post-event learning and technical issue remediation in defence supply chains (Cantelmi et al. 2020; Urmston et al. 2024; Singleton, 2024).

Technological integration is a second cornerstone. Blockchain applications promise immutable, decentralized records that enhance transparency, provenance, and security across procurement, manufacturing, and transport—helping deter fraud and streamline complex transactions. Yet adoption remains contested: while case studies highlight potential gains in traceability and trust, scholars caution about confidentiality–transparency trade-offs and implementation barriers (e.g., interoperability, governance) that must be managed in defence contexts (Sobb et al. 2020; Cole et al. 2019). Dependence on imported raw materials and components compounds risk; policy analyses call for diversified, data-visible defence industrial bases and reduced foreign dependency to mitigate embargo, trade restriction, and geopolitical exposure (Korkmaz, 2024; GAO, 2025). Moreover, medical logistics exemplifies domain-specific complexity—where individualized practices and joint civil–military coordination are required to ensure timely availability of life-critical supplies under volatile demand and multi-domain operations (Daher, 2022).

Against this background, the present study examines risk management within Lithuanian national defence supply chains and develops a conceptual model. A regression-based mediation study was selected to examine the relationships among key variables, including organizational risk awareness, procedural maturity, technological application, leadership involvement, collaboration, and resilience. While recent SEM studies in Nordic defence contexts validate resilience antecedents, Lithuania's defence logistics remains underexplored empirically, particularly regarding the interplay of culture, technology, and governance (Elvemo, 2025).

2. Theoretical Framework

Military supply chains are essential for ensuring operational readiness and strategic continuity in national defence systems. However, their complexity and sensitivity to external disruptions expose them to multiple risk factors. Recent research highlights the need for integrated approaches that strengthen resilience through both structural and behavioural mechanisms. This section synthesizes theoretical and empirical insights into key determinants of resilience, focusing on five interrelated dimensions: organizational risk awareness, procedural maturity, technological application, leadership involvement, and resilience to disruptions.

2.1. *Lack of Resilience and Crisis Management Strategies*

Resilience is considered the cornerstone of military supply chain effectiveness, particularly during crises such as pandemics or geopolitical conflicts. Studies show that inadequate contingency planning and limited flexibility in rerouting, prioritizing resources, and deploying real-time monitoring systems can lead to severe operational inefficiencies (Urmston et al. 2024; Singleton, 2024).

Organizational adaptability and rapid decision-making are essential for mitigating risks, underscoring the need for proactive crisis management frameworks. Risk awareness reflects how well personnel and decision-makers recognize potential threats and integrate risk considerations into daily operations. Research indicates that a strong risk-aware culture enables early identification of vulnerabilities and timely responses to disruptions (Ekström, 2025). Without such awareness, organizations often fail to anticipate cascading crisis effects, resulting in operational inefficiencies and resource shortages.

2.2. *Challenges in Supply Chain Management and Optimization*

Efficient resource allocation depends on coordinated production planning, inventory control, and transportation logistics. Procedural maturity refers to the robustness and

standardization of risk management processes, including contingency planning, scenario analysis, and systematic monitoring. Mature procedures ensure consistency and reliability in decision-making, reducing uncertainty during crises. However, gaps in these areas persist, especially when systematic learning mechanisms such as Learning from Incidents (LFI) are absent. Cantelmi et al. (2020) argue that LFI models enhance organizational learning by identifying and correcting operational failures, thereby reducing downtime and improving readiness.

2.3. *Lack of Technological and Managerial Innovation*

Advanced technologies, particularly blockchain and real-time monitoring systems, are increasingly recognized as enablers of transparency, security, and efficiency in military supply chains. Sobb et al. (2020) and Cole et al. (2019) argue that blockchain can mitigate fraud risks and improve data integrity, while IoT-based solutions enhance visibility across logistics networks. However, implementation challenges such as interoperability and personnel training remain significant barriers to effective technological integration. Insufficient investment in research, development, and innovative management practices limits supply chain adaptability. Continuous improvement and leadership support for innovation are vital for enhancing flexibility and operational security (Ekström, 2025).

2.4. *Complexity of Military Logistics*

Military logistics often involves specialized items such as medical equipment, requiring tailored solutions distinct from commercial practices. Daher (2022) emphasize that managing these critical supplies demands precise coordination and adaptability, particularly in joint civil-military operations.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational resilience. Adaptive leadership during crises facilitates rapid decision-making, resource prioritization, and coordination across units. Singleton (2024) and Urmston et al. (2024) demonstrate that leadership commitment to risk management and innovation directly influences the success of resilience strategies, particularly under conditions of uncertainty.

2.5. *Sensitivity to External Disruptions*

Resilience is the ultimate outcome of effective risk management, encompassing the ability to absorb shocks, recover quickly, and maintain operational continuity. Lucas et al. (2024) emphasizes that resilience depends on a combination of organizational culture, procedural rigor, technological capabilities, and collaborative networks. In military contexts, resilience is not static but requires continuous improvement and adaptation to evolving threats.

Pandemics, natural disasters, and climate-related events pose significant threats to supply chain continuity. Effective mitigation requires not only technological solutions but also organizational preparedness, including scenario planning and capability testing (Lucas et al.2024).

These explanations indicate that these five variables are interdependent. Organizational risk awareness and leadership involvement create the cultural foundation for resilience, while procedural maturity and technological application provide structural and operational support. Together, they enable military supply chains to withstand disruptions and sustain mission-critical functions.

3. Aim and Hypotheses

Prior studies emphasize that military supply chains operate in environments characterized by uncertainty, complexity, and strategic sensitivity. While Organizational Risk Awareness provides the foundation for identifying vulnerabilities, its impact on Resilience to Disruptions is rarely direct. Instead, it is operationalized through organizational mechanisms and capabilities that transform awareness into actionable strategies. Three key mediators Leadership Involvement, Procedural Maturity, and Technological Application play distinct but complementary roles in this transformation.

Procedural maturity refers to the degree of standardization and sophistication in risk management processes, including contingency planning, scenario analysis, and systematic monitoring. Organizations with high risk awareness often develop mature procedures to ensure consistency and reliability during crises. Cantelmi et al. (2020) emphasize that structured learning systems, such as Learning from Incidents (LFI), enhance procedural maturity by institutionalizing lessons from past disruptions.

This procedural rigor mediates the relationship between awareness and resilience by reducing uncertainty and enabling rapid, coordinated responses.

Risk-aware organizations are more likely to invest in advanced technologies to mitigate vulnerabilities and optimize operations (Sobb et al., 2020; Cole et al., 2019). These technologies enable predictive analytics, fraud prevention, and dynamic resource allocation, which are essential for resilience. Thus, technological application mediates the effect of risk awareness by converting strategic insights into operational capabilities.

Leadership involvement is widely recognized as a critical enabler of resilience in military logistics. Risk awareness alone does not guarantee effective action; leaders translate awareness into strategic priorities, allocate resources, and coordinate responses across units (Singleton, 2024; Urmston et al., 2024). Leadership fosters a culture of adaptability and continuous improvement, ensuring that risk management principles are embedded in decision-making. Empirical studies confirm that leadership commitment mediates the link between risk perception and resilience outcomes by driving organizational alignment and responsiveness (Elvemo, 2025).

The primary aim of this study is to develop and empirically validate a conceptual model of risk management within the military supply chains of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. Specifically, the research seeks to investigate how key organizational and technological factors influence resilience to supply chain disruptions. Building on existing literature, the study focuses on five core variables: organizational risk awareness, procedural maturity, use of technology, leadership involvement, and resilience to disruptions. The proposed model examines both direct and indirect relationships among these variables. To test these relationships, a regression-based mediation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro, enabling systematic estimation of mediation effects and their significance (Hayes, 2017). The results are expected to provide evidence-based insights and practical recommendations for enhancing defence logistics management.

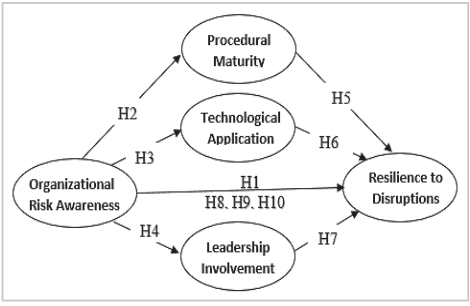

Fig. 1. Conceptual framework.

Based on the literature review and conceptual framework (see Fig. 1), the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Organizational Risk Awareness has a positive direct effect on Resilience to Disruptions.

H2: Organizational Risk Awareness positively influences Procedural Maturity (M1).

H3: Organizational Risk Awareness positively influences Technological Application (M2).

H4: Organizational Risk Awareness positively influences Leadership Involvement (M3).

H5: Procedural Maturity (M1) positively affects Resilience to Disruptions.

H6: Technological Application (M2) positively affects Resilience to Disruptions.

H7: Leadership Involvement (M3) positively affects Resilience to Disruptions.

H8: The relationship between Organizational Risk Awareness and Resilience to Disruptions is mediated by Procedural Maturity.

H9: The relationship between Organizational Risk Awareness and Resilience to Disruptions is mediated by Technological Application.

H10: The relationship between Organizational Risk Awareness and Resilience to Disruptions is mediated by Leadership Involvement.

These hypotheses reflect both direct and mediated relationships, consistent with prior findings that resilience is shaped by cultural, procedural, and technological dimensions supported by leadership engagement.

4. Methodology

To evaluate interactions among key variables and their impact on risk management in military supply chains, a quantitative research

design was applied. Correlational analysis and regression-based mediation were employed to examine direct and indirect relationships (Hayes, 2017). These methods captured complex interdependencies and identified the most influential factors shaping resilience in defence logistics.

The study analysed 327 valid responses from personnel directly involved in military supply chain risk management. Participants included logistics specialists both military and civilian within the Lithuanian national defence system, as well as representatives from external organizations performing critical logistics functions. Respondents were drawn from various units of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, including agencies, departments, divisions, and commands responsible for logistics operations. Data were collected between January and February 2025 via structured questionnaires distributed electronically and in paper format. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was assured to encourage honest responses.

The survey instrument was designed to measure five key constructs identified in the literature: organizational risk awareness, procedural maturity, technological application, leadership involvement, and resilience to disruptions. Items for each construct were adapted from validated scales in previous studies to ensure reliability and validity.

Organizational Risk Awareness (ORA) was measured using 5 items adapted from studies on risk perception and organizational preparedness (Ekström, 2025; Aven, 2016).

Procedural Maturity (PRM) was assessed through 5 items reflecting standardized risk management processes and continuous improvement practices, based on frameworks from Cantelmi et al. (2020), and ISO 31000 risk management standards for procedural rigor.

Technological Application (TAP) was measured using 5 items related to the adoption of advanced technologies such as blockchain and real-time monitoring, adapted from Sobb et al. (2020) and Cole et al. (2019).

Leadership Involvement (LIN) was evaluated through 5 items capturing leadership commitment to risk management and adaptive decision-making, based on Singleton (2024) and Urmston et al. (2024).

Resilience to Disruptions (RED) was measured using items reflecting the ability to absorb shocks, recover quickly, and maintain operational continuity, adapted from Lucas et al. (2024) and Elvemo (2025).

Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 5 “Strongly Agree”. Prior to full deployment, the questionnaire was pilot-tested to ensure clarity and reliability.

Data were analysed using the PROCESS macro for SPSS 30v, which was employed to test the hypothesized relationships and mediation effects within the proposed conceptual model. Specifically, Model 4 (parallel mediation) was applied to examine the indirect effects of Organizational Risk Awareness on Resilience to Disruptions through Procedural Maturity, Technological Application, and Leadership Involvement. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was used to estimate confidence intervals for indirect effects, ensuring robust inference. The analysis also included tests for direct effects and total effects, providing a comprehensive understanding of the mediation structure.

5. Results

The demographic profile of the sample revealed that nearly half of the participants (47.1%) worked in large organizations with 250 or more employees, while 39.4% were from medium-sized organizations (50–249 employees), 11.0% from small organizations (10–49 employees), and 2.4% from very small organizations (up to 9 employees). Regarding positions held, 46.8% occupied specialist roles, 43.4% managerial positions, 5.2% administrative roles, and 4.6% technical positions. In terms of experience in supply chain-related work, 32.1% reported seven or more years, 28.4% had five to six years, 16.8% had four to five years, while smaller proportions indicated two to three years (5.5%), one to two years (4.9%), or less than one year (11.9%). Only 0.3% reported no prior experience. These statistics confirm that the sample predominantly consisted of experienced professionals from medium and large organizations, ensuring robust insights into military supply chain risk management practices.

As preliminary examination descriptive data analysis and relationship assessment using Pearson’s correlation was performed on study constructs (Table 1).

Table 1. The preliminary analysis results on study variables.

Construct	Descriptive		Discriminant Validity		Correlations				
	M	±SD	CR	AVE	ORA	RED	PRM	TAP	LIN
ORA	3.09	0.626	0.861	0.611	**0.782**				
RED	3.07	0.632	0.866	0.631	0.584**	**0.794**			
PRM	3.46	0.799	0.876	0.697	0.667**	0.620**	**0.835**		
TAP	3.04	0.752	0.898	0.719	0.713**	0.712**	0.683**	**0.848**	
LIN	3.07	0.745	0.895	0.743	0.883**	0.741**	0.671**	0.861**	**0.862**

Notes: Organizational Risk Awareness (ORA), Resilience to Disruptions (RED), Procedural Maturity (PRM), Technological Application (TAP), Leadership Involvement (LIN). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Square roots of the AVEs (**diagonal values**).

5.1. *Direct effect Assessment Result*

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the direct effect of Organizational Risk Awareness (ORA) on Resilience to Disruptions (RED) while controlling for the mediators Procedural Maturity (PRM), Technological Application (TAP), and Leadership Involvement (LIN). The model explained a substantial proportion of variance in RED ($R^2 = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 2. Regression of resilience to disruptions on organizational risk awareness and three mediators.

Predictor	β (stand.)	p-value	95% CI	Result (H5-H7)
H1: ORA	0.73***	0.000	[0.67, 0.81]	Accepted
H5: PRM	0.07	0.076	[-0.01, 0.11]	Rejected
H6: TAP	0.17***	0.000	[0.09, 0.21]	Accepted
H7: LIN	0.01	0.590	[-0.11, 0.19]	Rejected

***. significant at the p<0.001

Standardized coefficients indicated that ORA exerted a strong positive direct effect on RED (β = 0.73, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. In contrast, PRM (β = 0.07, $p = 0.08$) and LIN (β = 0.01, $p = 0.59$) were not significant predictors of RED, whereas TAP showed a small but significant positive effect (β = 0.17, $p = 0.001$). These findings partially support H5–H7, with evidence for TAP but not for PRM or LIN (see Table 2).

5.2. *Effects of ORA on Mediators*

Regression analyses confirmed that ORA positively predicted all three mediators: PRM (β = 0.62, $p < 0.001$), TAP (β = 0.68, $p < 0.001$), and LIN (β = 0.65, $p < 0.001$). These results support H2, H3, and H4, indicating that organizations with higher risk awareness tend to exhibit greater procedural maturity, technological application, and leadership involvement.

5.3. *Mediation Analysis Result*

Bootstrapped indirect effect estimates (5,000 samples, 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals) revealed that the indirect effect of ORA on RED through TAP was positive and statistically significant (indirect effect = 0.09, 95% CI [0.02, 0.18]), confirming H9. Indirect effects via PRM (0.04, 95% CI [−0.01, 0.10]) and LIN (0.03, 95% CI [−0.02, 0.09]) were positive but not significant, leading to rejection of H8 and H10. Thus, TAP appeared as the primary mediator linking ORA to resilience.

Moreover, tests of interactions indicated that the effect of TAP on RED was moderated by ORA ($F = 5.98$, $p = 0.02$), as was the effect of LIN ($F = 4.70$, $p = 0.03$). PRM × ORA was not significant ($F = 0.05$, $p = 0.82$). These findings suggest conditional indirect effects for TAP and LIN, implying that their influence on resilience strengthens at higher levels of ORA (see Fig. 2).

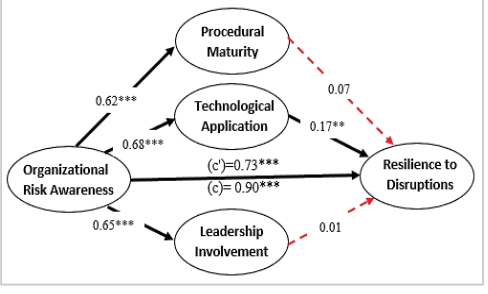

Fig. 2. Path coefficients and their significance.

All in all, Organizational Risk Awareness had a strong total effect on Resilience to

Disruptions (c = 0.90, 95% CI [0.84, 0.96]) and remained substantial even after accounting for mediators (direct effect c′ = 0.74, 95% CI [0.61, 0.85]), indicating that risk awareness is both an independent and mediated driver of resilience (see Fig. 2). This large direct effect highlights that enlightening risk awareness should be a strategic priority in military supply chains, as it enables rapid threat recognition and decision-making even before procedural or technological mechanisms are activated.

5.4. *Conceptual Model for Risk Management*

Based on study results, a conceptual model for risk management was developed to strengthen resilience in the Lithuanian Armed Forces' supply chains. It focuses on proactive risk identification, continuous improvement, and adaptability, highlighting the strong impact of Organizational Risk Awareness on resilience. Cultivating risk awareness is a strategic priority, enabling organizations to anticipate threats and respond effectively before procedural or technological measures are needed.

Fig. 3. Conceptual model for risk management.

To operationalize these insights, the model integrates three key factors (see Fig. 3):

- The first factor relates to risk awareness and identification programs because it focuses on systematic risk assessments, scenario planning, and continuous training to ensure personnel can identify vulnerabilities and respond proactively.
- The second factor focuses on using advanced technologies such as predictive analytics, real-time monitoring, and automated resource allocation to transform risk awareness into fast, data-driven actions. These tools improve resilience by reducing reaction time and enhancing decision accuracy.
- Third factor relates to leadership-driven risk management. Leadership ensures risk awareness becomes action by promoting continuous improvement, prioritizing risk in planning, and coordinating resources during crises (see Fig. 3).

By combining these elements, the model turns risk awareness into actionable strategies, ensuring military supply chains stay agile, adaptive, and resilient within uncertainty.

6. Discussion

This study examined how Organizational Risk Awareness (ORA) influences Resilience to Disruptions (RED) in military supply chains, both directly and through organizational mechanisms. The findings provide strong empirical support for the conceptual model and offer nuanced insights into the pathways through which risk awareness translates into resilience.

Consistent with prior research emphasizing the strategic role of risk perception in complex environments (Singleton, 2024; Urmston et al. 2024), ORA demonstrated a large and statistically significant direct effect on RED. This underscores that organizations capable of identifying vulnerabilities and anticipating threats are inherently better positioned to withstand disruptions. However, the persistence of a strong direct effect even after controlling for mediators suggests that risk awareness is not merely a precursor to resilience but also an independent capability that shapes organizational priorities and decision-making.

The analysis confirmed that ORA positively predicts Procedural Maturity (PRM), Technological Application (TAP), and Leadership Involvement (LIN), supporting hypotheses H2–H4. These findings align with Cantelmi et al. (2020), who argue that structured learning systems and standardized processes enhance organizational preparedness. Similarly, Sobb et al. (2020) and Cole et al. (2019) highlight that technological investments enable predictive analytics and dynamic resource allocation, critical for resilience in volatile contexts. Leadership involvement, as emphasized by Elvemo (2025), remains essential for translating awareness into coordinated action and resource mobilization.

Contrary to expectations, PRM and LIN did not exhibit significant indirect effects, while TAP emerged as the primary mediator linking ORA to RED. This suggests that technological capabilities are the most effective mechanism for operationalizing risk awareness in military logistics. Advanced technologies facilitate real-time monitoring and adaptive responses, reducing the latency between threat detection and mitigation. The non-significant mediation via PRM and LIN may reflect contextual constraints: procedural improvements and leadership engagement, while valuable, may require longer time horizons to influence resilience outcomes.

Moderation analyses further revealed that the effects of TAP and LIN on RED are amplified at higher levels of ORA, indicating conditional indirect effects. This finding resonates with contingency theory, which posits that organizational capabilities yield greater benefits when aligned with strategic awareness. In practical terms, technology and leadership interventions are most impactful in organizations that already prioritize risk management as a core competency.

7. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that Organizational Risk Awareness (ORA) is a critical determinant of Resilience to Disruptions (RED) in military supply chains. ORA exerts a strong direct effect on resilience and indirectly influences RED primarily through Technological Application, while Procedural Maturity and Leadership Involvement play more limited roles. These findings highlight that risk awareness alone is insufficient; its impact depends on the organization's ability to convert strategic insight into operational capabilities, particularly through technology integration. For defence logistics, prioritizing advanced technological solutions alongside robust risk assessment frameworks offers the most effective pathway to enhance adaptability and continuity in high-risk environments.

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