

Indonesian MSMEs' Survival Strategies in Facing Global Competition: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in the Indonesian economy. However, this sector is currently facing significant pressure due to increasing global competition. This study aims to analyze and assess the various strategies implemented by MSMEs in Indonesia to maintain their business sustainability in the era of globalization. The study was conducted using a Systematic Literature Review approach to eleven scientific articles published between 2020 and 2025. The results revealed that the main strategies used by MSMEs include utilizing digital marketing, developing innovative products, strengthening business connections, and improving managerial capabilities. These approaches have been proven to support business competitiveness and resilience in an increasingly competitive market. This study provides an important contribution to the development of MSME strategies, both practically and theoretically, and can serve as a reference in formulating MSME-based economic policies in the global era.

Keywords: MSMEs, Survival Strategies, Globalization, Digitalization

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the global economy and the increasing connectivity of international markets present both opportunities and challenges for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia. MSMEs themselves are a crucial foundation of the national economic structure. This sector contributes significantly to the country's economic growth, contributing approximately 60% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and providing approximately 97% of total employment in Indonesia. (Supriatal, 2025) With this strategic contribution, MSMEs play a key role in maintaining national economic stability, improving people's living standards, and encouraging equitable and inclusive economic development (Windusancono, 2021).

However, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia face significant challenges amidst the era of globalization and global economic integration. Multinational corporations and increasingly digitalized and export-oriented domestic businesses are two sources of global competition. MSMEs are required to be highly competitive, innovative, adaptable to technology, and able to forge strategic partnerships to expand their markets.

Various studies have been conducted to identify strategies that MSMEs can implement to address global pressures, such as product innovation, business process digitalization, human resource development, and collaboration. However, these research findings are widely scattered and have not been systematically compiled to provide a comprehensive picture of effective and relevant strategies for MSMEs in Indonesia.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify and synthesize research findings that address the strategies of Indonesian MSMEs in facing global competition. Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, researchers can evaluate current research trends, methodologies, key findings, and gaps, enabling them to make theoretical and practical contributions to the future advancement of MSMEs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

MSMEs

According to Law Number 20 of 2008 concerning Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises. "Micro businesses are productive businesses owned by individuals and/or individual business entities that meet the criteria of micro businesses. Small businesses are

productive economic businesses that stand alone, carried out by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of companies owned, controlled, or become part of either directly or indirectly of medium-sized businesses or large businesses that meet the criteria of small businesses. Medium businesses are productive economic businesses that stand alone, carried out by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of companies that are owned, controlled, or become part of either directly or indirectly by small businesses or large businesses with total net assets or annual sales results.

The criteria for MSMEs contained in Article 6 of Law Number 20 of 2008 are as follows:

- a. Micro Enterprises have a maximum net worth of IDR 50,000,000 excluding land and buildings where the business is located, with annual sales of a maximum of IDR 300,000,000;
- b. Small businesses have net assets of more than IDR 50,000,000 to IDR 500,000,000 excluding land and buildings for business premises with annual sales of more than IDR 300,000,000 up to a maximum of IDR 2,500,000,000;
- c. Medium Enterprises have net assets of more than Rp 500,000,000 up to a maximum limit of Rp 10,000,000,000 with annual sales of Rp 2,500,000,000 up to a maximum of Rp 50,000,000,000 (Mahaitin H Sinaga, 2024)

The definition of MSMEs according to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) based on the quantity of workers, is a small business that has a workforce of 5 to 19 people, while for medium businesses it has a workforce of 20 to 99 people. (Asri Setiyani, 2022).

MSME Strategies in Facing Global Competition

Various studies have been conducted to examine the strategies used by MSMEs to face global challenges. These include:

Research by (Sinta Aryani, 2020) stated that product innovation is a key strategy for winning the hearts of global consumers. MSMEs are required to continuously innovate so that the products they offer have added value and are able to compete in the international market.

(Lora Ekana Nainggolan, 2023) revealed that the use of digital technology, such as e-commerce, social media, and digital-based management systems, has become an effective solution for MSMEs to expand market reach and increase business efficiency.

(Dinda Septiana, 2024) Revealing product adaptation to global consumer tastes and the right branding strategy are the keys to penetrating overseas markets.

In addition, Rahn, as a form of Islamic financing, plays a crucial role in supporting the sustainability of MSMEs, particularly in providing access to capital in line with Islamic principles. The concept of falah-oriented development emphasizes that incorporating Islamic values into the financing system, including through the rahn scheme, can significantly contribute to improving the welfare and empowering MSMEs (Windu anggara, 2024).

Furthermore, motivational factors and the availability of financial support significantly influence the growth of MSMEs, particularly among the younger generation. The presence of alternative financing schemes that are Sharia-compliant and free from usury, such as rahn, encourages young MSMEs to be more proactive and confident in developing their businesses (Zuhrinal M. Nawawi, 2022).

METHODS

Review Method

This study adopted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with data sources originating from reputable journal literature and already having an international standard serial number (ISSN), especially those published electronically with E-ISSN. The data collection process was carried out by online searches through the Google Scholar platform. The population in this study consisted of eleven indexed journals that focus on their studies of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia in the context of facing global competition, published by various scientific journal publishers.

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method itself is a systematic process for identifying, evaluating, and interpreting all available research evidence to answer specific research questions, as explained by (Barbara A. Kitchenham, 2007). This literature review is compiled systematically with reference to the original guidelines designed by (Barbara A. Kitchenham, 2007) as the main reference in implementing the SLR method.

Research Question

Research questions are designed to ensure that the systematic review process remains focused. The formulation of these questions refers to the PICOC framework, which includes five main elements: Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcomes, and Context, as proposed by (Barbara A. Kitchenham, 2007). Table 1 shows the PICOC structure of the research questions on the Systematic Literature Review: Indonesian MSMEs' Strategies to Survive in the Midst of Global Competition.

Table 1.
Summary of PICOC Strategies for Indonesian MSMEs in Facing Global Competition

Population	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia
Intervention	Implementation of various strategies such as product innovation, digitalization, partnerships, market expansion, increasing human resource capacity, and technology adoption
Comparison	MSMEs that do not implement a specific strategy or only focus on the local market
Outcomes	Increasing competitiveness, business sustainability, increasing global market penetration, turnover growth, and business resilience to external pressures
Context	Global competition in the era of the digital economy and free trade, especially in the creative industry, small manufacturing, and agribusiness sectors

The research questions developed in this study are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2.
Research Question in Literature Review

ID	Research Question	Motivation
RQ1	Which journal is most significant in discussing the strategies of Indonesian MSMEs in facing global competition?	Identifying key scientific sources that discuss MSME strategies as a basis for further research.
RQ2	Who are the most active and influential researchers on the topic of Indonesian MSME strategy?	Knowing the academic figures who are references in MSME studies in Indonesia.
RQ3	What are the main topics and research trends related to Indonesian MSME strategies in facing global competition?	Identifying dominant topics and directions of research development on MSMEs in the context of globalization.
RQ4	What methods are most frequently used in MSME strategy research in Indonesia?	Determine the methodological approaches commonly used to understand MSME strategies.
RQ5	Which method is the most effective in analyzing MSME strategies to survive in the global market?	Assessing the effectiveness of methods in generating strategic findings for MSMEs.
RQ6	What strategies do researchers propose to enable Indonesian MSMEs to compete globally?	Identify various adaptive solutions or strategies suggested in the literature.
RQ7	What kind of conceptual framework is used to explain the success of Indonesian MSME strategies in the global market?	Analyze the models or frameworks used as the theoretical basis for MSME strategies.

From Table 2 above, seven research questions (RQs) are formulated as a guide in conducting a systematic review of Indonesian MSME strategies in facing global competition.

RQs 1 to 3 focus on identifying journals, researchers, and dominant topics and trends in MSME-related studies. RQs 4 and 5 explore common and effective research methods used in analyzing MSME strategies. Meanwhile, RQs 6 and 7 are directed at exploring various strategies and conceptual frameworks proposed by researchers to enable Indonesian MSMEs to survive and compete in the global market. These questions serve as an important basis in compiling the literature review and analysis of the findings in this study.

Search Strategy

In a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), a search strategy is implemented through several steps, starting with selecting digital databases, defining search keywords, and filtering relevant results. To ensure the information obtained remains relevant and up-to-date, the search focused on scientific publications from the last five years (2021–2025). Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, DOAJ, and Garuda are some of the data sources used.

To broaden the scope of the results, keywords were selected based on PICOC elements and the formulation of the research questions, such as "MSME strategy," "Indonesian MSMEs," "global competitiveness," "MSME challenges," and "global MSME competition." Using Boolean operators (AND, OR) and spelling variations and synonyms, the search string was then developed through the following steps:

- a. Identify the terms of PICOC and research questions.
- b. Selection of keywords in the title, abstract, and keywords.
- c. Adjustments to synonyms, antonyms, and alternative spellings.
- d. Query construction using Boolean operators AND and OR.

Search results were then filtered based on topic relevance, abstract availability, and full document accessibility. Selected publications were then further analyzed during the study selection stage.

Study Selection

Study selection was based on defined inclusion and exclusion criteria to filter the most relevant and high-quality articles to support the research topic. These criteria are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Inclusion and Exclusion

Inclusion Criteria	Academic studies that discuss the strategy, resilience, or competitiveness of Indonesian MSMEs in the global market In this study, only sources originating from indexed journal publications with ISSN or DOI numbers will be considered, while
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	references in the form of conference proceedings, theses, and dissertations will not be included in the analysis. Studies published in the 2021–2025 period Studies with strong empirical data or literature reviews
Exclusion Criteria	Studies that are not relevant to the context of Indonesian MSMEs Article is not indexed or not fully accessible Research using languages other than Indonesian or English will not be included in this study. Opinion-based studies without data support or in-depth analysis

Data Extraction

Data extraction was conducted to gather essential information from the selected primary studies. This process aimed to answer the previously formulated research questions (RQs). Seven properties were used to answer the research questions, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4.
Data Extraction Properties Mapped to Research Questions

Property	Research Question
Identification and Publication	RQ1, RQ2
Characteristics and sectors of MSMEs	RQ1
MSME Strategies in Facing Global Competition	RQ2
Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of MSME Competitiveness	RQ3
The Role of Government and Supporting Institutions	RQ3
Strategic Recommendations for MSME Sustainability	RQ4
Limitations and Further Research from Previous Studies	RQ4

Study Quality Assessment and Data Synthesis

A study quality assessment was conducted to ensure that the articles included in the research were credible and relevant to the research topic, namely the strategies of Indonesian MSMEs in facing global competition. The assessment was based on the clarity of the research objectives, the methodology used (quantitative or qualitative), the context of MSMEs in Indonesia, and the impact of MSMEs on survival strategies in the global market. This assessment also utilized empirical data, in-depth analysis, and published publications.

To facilitate understanding of trends, strategies, and key elements influencing the competitiveness of Indonesian MSMEs, data synthesis was conducted narratively, grouping findings based on research questions (RQs). The results were then presented in tables, diagrams, or thematic summaries. This method helped generate robust and comprehensive conclusions from a variety of primary study sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most Significant Journal Publications

In a systematic review of relevant literature, 11 scientific journals were identified that are most significant in addressing the topic of Indonesian MSME strategies in facing global competitiveness. These journals were selected based on their theoretical and practical contributions to the understanding of MSME strategies, as well as their timeliness. The majority were published between 2024 and 2025, demonstrating relevance to current economic conditions and market dynamics.

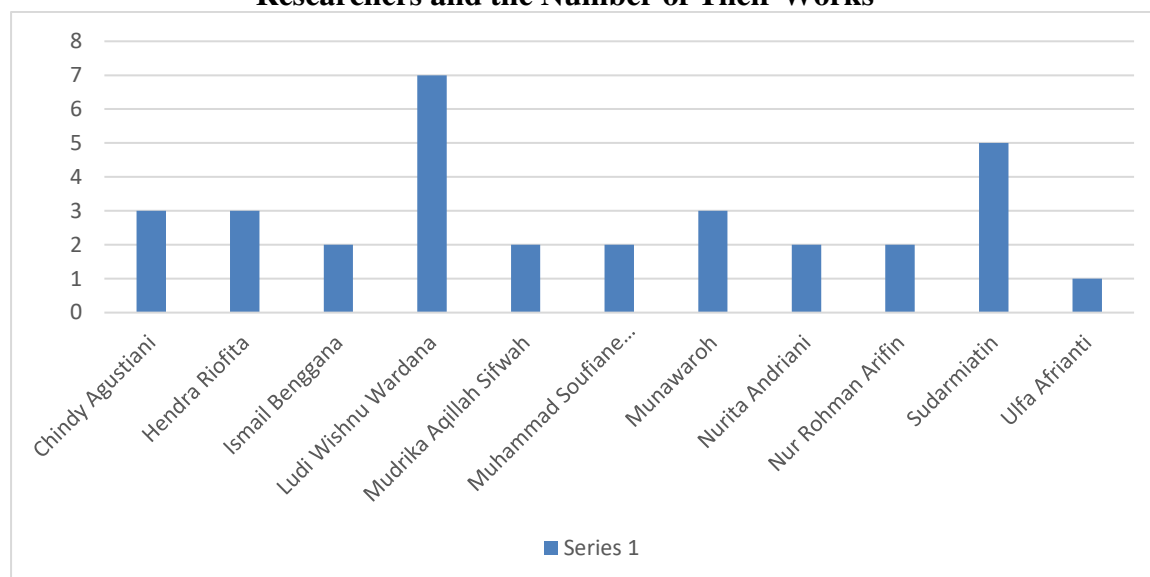
Each identified journal examines a different approach to improving the competitiveness of Indonesian MSMEs, ranging from digitalization and product innovation to government policy and business transformation, to marketing and export management. The table below summarizes these journals, along with the publisher and year of publication:

Table 5.
Significant Journal Publications

No.	Publisher Name (Publication)	Category and Year
1.	Nusantara Economics and Entrepreneurship Journal	e-ISSN: 2986-6197 (2024)
1.	Problems and Perspectives in Management	e-ISSN: 1810-5467 (2024)
2.	International Review of Management and Marketing	e-ISSN: 2146-4405 (2025)
3.	E-Bis Journal: Economics and Business	e-ISSN: 2622-3368 (2024)
4.	IJIRSS: International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies	ISSN: 2617-6548 (2025)
5.	Oikos-Nomos: JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS STUDIES	e-ISSN: 2747-0059 (2023)
6.	Trending: Journal of Economics, Accounting and Management	e-ISSN: 2962-0813 (2025)
7.	Masharif al-Syariah Journal: Journal of Islamic Economics and Banking	e-ISSN: 2580-5800 (2024)
8.	ECONOMIST: Journal of Economics and Business	e-ISSN: 3047-2229 (2025)
9.	Journal of Management Accounting, Tax and Production	e-ISSN: 3025-7786 (2024)
10.	Multidisciplinary Scientific Research Journal	e-ISSN: 2118-7451 (2024)

Most Active and Influential Researchers

Figure 1.
Researchers and the Number of Their Works



Based on a systematic analysis of eleven scientific journals discussing the strategies of Indonesian MSMEs in facing global competition, several researchers were identified who consistently contribute to this study. The most active researcher is Mudrika Aqillah Sifah, with a total of seven scientific papers discussing MSME development strategies, particularly in the context of innovation, digitalization, and competitiveness. Second place is occupied by Sudarmiadin with five scientific papers, many of which explore strategies for entrepreneurship education and MSME business management.

Meanwhile, Cindy Agustiani, Hendra Riokra, and Munawaroh each have three publications, demonstrating significant contributions in the areas of marketing, financial management, and MSME adaptation to global competition. Other researchers, such as Ismail Bengana, Ludi Wishnu Wardana, and Ulfa Afriani, have also contributed, albeit with fewer publications.

Research Topics

In the fields of business economics and strategic management, research on the strategies of Indonesian MSMEs to survive global competition is crucial. Based on a systematic analysis of eleven selected scientific journals, research focused on MSME strategies in facing global competition falls into five main topics:

1. Evaluating the impact of digital transformation on the performance and competitiveness of Indonesian MSMEs in the global market

2. to discover the role of product and service innovation in increasing the sustainability of MSME businesses amidst global competition
3. evaluating the trade expansion strategies of MSMEs worldwide
4. examines how digital marketing and the use of online platforms such as social media influence the development and visibility of MSMEs
5. combining human resource empowerment strategies, management capabilities, and digital business networks to build MSME resilience against the pressures of globalization.

Table 6.
Topics, Methods, Research Results

No.	Researchers	Topics	Method	Results
1.	(Abdulloh, 2024)	Product Innovation and Marketing Management	Survey Quantitative	Product innovation and the use of social media as an effective marketing channel increase sales of food and beverage MSMEs in Surabaya.
2.	(Dorojatun Prihandono, 2024)	Digital Transformation and Digital Marketing Strategy	Studies Quantitative	Digital transformation and digital marketing strategies significantly improve the performance of MSMEs in Indonesia in facing competitive market competition.
3.	(Nur Rohman Arifin, 2025)	Absorptive Capacity and Innovation Strategy	PLS-SEM Quantitative	Absorptive capacity and innovation strategies have a positive impact on MSME performance, which is mediated by the application of open innovation.
4.	(Muhammad Rizky, 2024)	Global Market Expansion Strategy	Qualitative Case study	MSMEs face challenges in global market expansion, including product adaptation and understanding export regulations; the right strategy can increase competitiveness.
5.	(Cindy Augustie, 2025)	Strategic Capabilities and Export Performance of MSMEs	Quantitative (PLS-SEM)	Technological capacity, network competence, and market knowledge significantly improve the

				export performance of Indonesian MSMEs.
6.	(Gisheilla Evangelista, 2023)	MSME Digitalization Strategy	Literature Study	MSMEs are required to utilize digital technology to improve efficiency in business operations and strengthen competitiveness amidst the current digital era.
7.	(Muhammad Rudi Saputra Pratama, 2025)	Digital Transformation	Systematic Literature Review (SLR)	Digital transformation is key to the success of MSMEs in entering international markets, supported by technological infrastructure and an adaptive organizational culture.
8.	(Ulfa Afrianti, 2024)	Digital Marketing for MSMEs	Systematic Literature Review (SLR)	Social media such as Instagram and Facebook Ads have proven effective in increasing the reach, interaction, and turnover of MSMEs.
9.	(Mulawarman, 2025)	MSME Survival Strategies in the Online Market	Systematic Literature Review (SLR)	Offering a comprehensive strategy based on innovation and digitalization, as well as the importance of multi-party collaboration (government, private sector, academics) in supporting MSMEs to go global.
10.	(Mudrika Aqillah Sifwah, 2024)	Digital Marketing	Case study	The use of digital marketing increases the competitiveness of MSMEs and expands market reach. However, issues such as resource constraints and technological adaptation still need to be addressed.
11.	(Dinda Septiana, 2024)	Global Marketing Strategy	Quantitative Regression	Global marketing strategy has a significant positive effect on sales growth, market expansion, and brand image of MSMEs.

Based on an analysis of 11 selected journal references, it was found that the strategies implemented by Indonesian MSMEs to survive global competition can be categorized into five

main focuses. First, digital transformation is a crucial foundation for supporting business sustainability. The use of information technology, such as digital platforms and online-based systems, has helped MSMEs increase efficiency and expand market reach.

Second, innovation in products and services is a central strategy. MSMEs that are able to create product updates tailored to consumer needs have an advantage in surviving and competing in a constantly changing market.

Third, a focus on developing export markets also emerged as an important theme. Research by (Cindy Augustie, 2025) revealed that understanding the international market, global networking capabilities, and mastery of technology are the main factors in supporting the export performance of MSMEs.

Fourth, digital-based marketing strategies are very helpful in reaching a wider audience. Utilizing social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook Ads has proven effective in introducing products and accelerating business growth. (Ulfa Afrianti, 2024)

Fifth, research shows that synergy between human resource strengthening, management adaptation, and engagement in the online business ecosystem is a crucial new approach. (Mulawarman, 2025) emphasized that MSMEs that are active in the digital ecosystem tend to be more resilient in facing competitive pressures.

Thus, MSME survival strategies cannot be implemented in isolation. An integrated approach is needed, involving the use of technology, continuous innovation, market expansion, digital promotional strategies, and internal capacity building to create sustainable business resilience in the global era.

Research Methods

The authors used various research approaches to examine MSME strategies in facing global competition, although most chose a quantitative approach. This approach is considered effective for objectively measuring the relationship between variables such as product innovation, digital marketing strategy, networking capabilities, and increased competitiveness. Through surveys and statistical analysis techniques, researchers can draw strong, data-based conclusions.

The most frequently used statistical analysis techniques include multiple linear regression, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), and Partial Least Squares (PLS). Research such as that conducted by (Cindy Augustie, 2025) shows how strategic variables such as technological capacity, network competence, and market knowledge mutually influence

MSME export performance. This method allows researchers to evaluate the complex relationships between variables in greater depth.

Some studies combine a survey approach with case studies or field observations to examine MSMEs' adaptive strategies contextually. For example, research (Muhammad Rizky, 2024) on food and beverage MSMEs in Sidoarjo using quantitative data obtained through questionnaires and enriched with descriptive analysis to describe the innovation practices and challenges faced by MSMEs directly in global competition.

Three of the eleven journals use the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, namely the Journal of Works (Muhammad Rudi Saputra Pratama, 2025), (Mulawarman, 2025), and (Ulfa Afrianti, 2024). This approach involves analyzing relevant previous articles to identify the dominant patterns and strategies used by MSMEs in the context of digitalization and online markets. SLR is a useful method for formulating a literature map and developing a conceptual synthesis of findings.

Although not dominant, a number of studies also incorporate qualitative elements through interviews or observations to complement quantitative approaches. These techniques are used to delve deeper into MSMEs' perceptions of global competition, the obstacles they face, and the rationale behind their strategic decisions. This integration serves to explain statistical results within a more comprehensive social and economic framework.

Overall, the methodologies used in these journals demonstrate a tendency to use quantitative approaches to obtain robust empirical evidence. However, the flexibility of the methods, tailored to each author's research objectives, demonstrates that understanding MSME strategies extends beyond numbers to encompass interpretations of the realities and dynamics of Indonesian MSME businesses.

CONCLUSION

A systematic review of eleven journals shows that Indonesian MSMEs face various challenges in navigating global competition, such as the development of digital technology, changing consumer preferences, and pressures from the international market. To address these challenges, MSMEs have adopted various adaptive strategies, including the use of digital technology, innovative product development, and strengthening business governance. These strategies have proven effective in increasing the resilience and competitiveness of MSMEs amidst global dynamics.

External factors such as government-backed regulations, easy access to financing, and the availability of technology-based training and mentoring significantly influence the success of MSMEs' plans. Furthermore, internal business capabilities, including market knowledge, managerial capacity, and business networking skills, also play a crucial role in determining the long-term success of adapting these strategies.

This research has significant theoretical and practical benefits for MSMEs, academics, and policymakers. It emphasizes the importance of synergy between business innovation, digital transformation, and cross-sector collaboration as a foundation for strengthening the sustainability of MSMEs amidst global competition. Collaborative efforts across stakeholders are essential to ensure MSMEs can grow competitively and sustainably.

As a recommendation, future research should develop a quantitative approach or conduct more in-depth field studies to empirically explore the impact of strategy implementation. Furthermore, it is important to examine differences in strategies based on business sector or MSME scale to ensure that formulated policies are more targeted and can be effectively implemented by MSMEs in various regions.

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