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THE STRATEGIES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN STRENGTHENING
STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE CHARACTER

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ABSTRACT

Discipline is an essential element of character education, playing a critical role in promoting academic achievement and a sense of responsibility among students. However, infractions of rules, lateness, and disobedience regarding school regulations still present common problems within the school environment. This article attempts to review strategies used by school counsellors to build the discipline of students through preventive services under the underpinning of Bandura's self-regulation theory. This qualitative research uses the literature review design to synthesize national and international journals, books, and other relevant official documents. National and international data were analyzed using a thematic analysis to identify patterns of preventive counselling strategies. The results indicate six significant strategies: orientation and information services, individual and group counselling, character-building programs, teacher role modelling, the use of educational rewards and punishments, and collaboration with stakeholders. A closer analysis through Bandura's theoretical framework shows how these strategies produce effects via the processes of self-monitoring, self-judgment, self-reaction, observation learning, and reinforcement that allow discipline to become an attribute internalized within character instead of temporary performances regulated by external control. The paper makes a theoretical contribution to the development of self-regulation-based models of preventive counselling and provides practical recommendations for teachers and schools to use as part of their practical intervention for GC in building an integrity-based and character-focused education climate.

Keywords: guidance and counseling, preventive counseling services, student discipline, self-regulation in education, character education

INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important tool for advancement of dignity in humanity and for changing people from backwardness. Education imparts people with critical thinking and new ways that help improve the individual and social life (Aliyyah & Marlina, 2025). Societal development in Indonesia is essentially aimed at the creation of an integral citizen this means that humans are not only the driving force of development but also the objective of the development itself (Srianita et al., 2025). This can be achieved if education is not only oriented toward academic achievements but also toward the development of the character of students. In this respect, discipline is one of the main values in character education, playing an important role in supporting student achievement, social behavior, and the development of personal responsibility. Discipline arises through the internalization of values like obedience and commitment, which over time become part of the habitual behavior showing adherence to the rules and regulations that are already in place (Mawaddah et al., 2025). This can be achieved if education is not only oriented toward academic achievements but also toward the development of the character of students. In this respect, discipline is one of the main values in character education, playing an important role in supporting student achievement, social behavior, and the development of personal responsibility. Discipline arises through the internalization of values like obedience and commitment, which over time become part of the habitual behavior showing adherence to the rules and regulations that are already in place (Jahro et al., 2024). The above-mentioned conditions eliminate the order of learning processes and injuries the efforts of schools toward the instillation of character values.

The results of the 2024 Education Integrity Assessment Survey, conducted by the Corruption Eradication Commission, depict that academic indiscipline in Indonesia is but a part of the wider global challenge facing the education system. In the survey, which involved 36,888 educational institutions and 449,865 respondents, some persistent weaknesses in academic discipline were found to include tardiness, absenteeism, and the normalization of dishonest practices such as bribery and plagiarism. These patterns are also seen to appear in many developing countries, particularly in contexts marked by institutional pressure for publication and weak enforcement of academic integrity. These findings are supported by international reports, including Machacek and Srholec 2022, which place Indonesia second in the global academic dishonesty ranking with 16.73%. This means the problem reflects a wider crisis of integrity in education, in which poor governance, lack of role models from educators, and instant-gratification culture together accelerate the erosion of academic values globally.

What this suggests is that some students still perceive rules as external pressure rather than internalized values, underlining the urgency of a more targeted prevention strategy through the role of guidance counsellors, with discipline instilled as part of ongoing character education (Magdalene et al., 2019). have stated, evidence from international studies supports this assertion. For instance, in Koibatek, Kenya (Salgong, 2019) documents that preventive guidance and counseling interventions using Adlerian and Bandura's theoretical frameworks systematically enhance student discipline in both primary and secondary schools a study done by (Khamala et al., 2025) highlights counselling as an effective alternative to address high levels of disciplinary offences, offering a preventive approach that promotes a more conducive learning environment..

This finding is further reinforced by international findings according to the study conducted by (Kasmayani, 2024) at SMP Negeri 1 Soyo Jaya, Indonesia. The study shows that the guidance and counselling services, that is, orientation, information, and individual and group counselling services, significantly enhance discipline of students by results reaching the 'good' category, that is, 67.95%. These findings reconfirm and validate the roles of a guidance counsellor in enhancing functions of discipline not only as a curative effort but also a preventive one, abating the occurrence of indiscipline. This becomes urgent because low levels of students' discipline directly debase learning quality, weaken school culture, and hinder broader goals of character education. Without strengthening discipline, character education cannot be fully achieved since through discipline, responsibility, order, and consistency are instituted into students' lives.

To reinforce the analysis of the strategies adopted by guidance counsellors in fostering student discipline, there should be a well-established theoretical perspective. In essence, Bandura's (1991) self-regulation theory provides an explanation of the degree to which individuals can control their behaviour in accordance with their personal standards and those social norms that exist. By self-monitoring, self-judging, and self-reacting, students are not only called upon to obey the rules when supervised but also to act with discipline of their own accord (Salgong, 2019). This is supported by (Panadero, 2017) who added that self-regulation involves several dimensions: cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and affective; all of which contribute to better learning and character development. The reinforcement of student discipline can be framed within Lickona's model of character education. According to Lickona, character education consists of three dimensions-moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action-through which discipline represents the concrete manifestation of consistent moral action. Therefore, it appears that the combination of Bandura's and Lickona's perspectives sets out a solid theoretical basis for designing preventive means through which the counsellor will be able to foster discipline in ways illustrative of how disciplinary behavior in character values is developed from the merely external compliance into internalization.

Drawing on these conditions, the purpose of the present study is to explore strategies guidance counsellors adopt to improve student discipline with the use of a preventive guidance approach. The originality of the present study lies in the systemic preventive framework that integrates a global and local perspective to tackle the discipline crisis. Contrasting existing studies that are mostly curative and limited to interventions targeting students alone, the present study identifies points of counselling strategies that equally put into focus restoration of educators as role models. The present study also aims to locate what forms of preventive services match specific indicators of student discipline. Findings from this study yield theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this research further develops an integrated preventive guidance and counselling model, enriching character education and educational psychology. Practically, this provides operational guidelines to counsellors and schools on how to implement value-based and internalized discipline strategies and also makes policy recommendations to stakeholders on how to restore integrity and quality in education.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach. The research design was a literature review that systematically analyzed scientific publications on preventive counselling services in strengthening student discipline. Data sources came from national and international journal articles, scholarly books, and official documents, indexed, peer-reviewed, and relevant to the topic of research. Eligible related literature was selected based on source and subject, and data were extracted on general information on publications, including date of publication, focus of research, counselling strategies used, and the principal findings. Data analysis was done using thematic analysis. The stages of data analysis followed the pattern of familiarisation, initial coding, code grouping, review, and final formulation of themes that resulted in strategic patterns of preventive services employed by the counsellors in guidance and counseling to reinforce student discipline (Braun & Clarke, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Discipline as Part of Character Education

Character Education: Character education is one of the programs initiated by the Indonesian Government using educational institutions, starting from young childhood through to higher educational levels (Febriandari, 2017). Character Education: Character education is one of the programs initiated by the Indonesian Government using educational institutions, starting from young childhood through to higher educational levels. According to (Santrock, 2015), character education is a direct instruction given to students for the purpose of teaching moral values to resonate in students with the right potential for effective behavior. It is also a preventive approach for wrong behaviors to occur. Character education can be developed formally or informally through either institutions like schools or even social media platforms used for the transmission of values.

It is important to note that the word character is derived from the word *charassein*, which means “to carve.” Building character is like carving gemstones or hard metal into distinctive forms to distinguish one person from another (Smith & Eberly, 2021). Specifically for the Indonesian context, the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language defines character as something that is psychological, moral, and social, making it distinct for everyone. Moreover, the Ministry of National Education identifies the 18 key values of character building, of which are: piety, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, patriotism, appraisal of achievement, communication skill, love of peace, love of reading, environmental awareness, social care, and responsibility. Of these values, discipline is one of the core elements that must be developed, especially through the guidance counselor, to produce students who are not only intelligent but also of good moral and social character.

Forms of Preventive Counselling Services for Strengthening Student Discipline

This section discusses the thematic analysis of the literature reviewing different approaches to preventive services that have been undertaken by guidance and counselling teachers to enhance student discipline. Orientation and information services on disciplinary values, individual and group counselling regarding the internalisation of disciplinary norms, and preventive guidance programs aimed at developing

responsibility and fostering adherence to the school's rules all prove to be efficacious components of the strategic approach. Moreover, the teachers in their roles as role models would further reinforce exemplary behaviour in the students. This therefore critically analyses perspectives from the national context to the international in order to have an all-inclusive statement of relevance and effectiveness of these strategies.

Table 1. Analysis of Preventive Guidance and Counselling Approaches to Strengthen Student Discipline

No	Title and Author(s)	Focus of Analysis	Main Theme of Guidance & Counselling Strategy	Key Findings	Category
1	Influence of Guidance and Counselling on Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Delta State (Egenti, 2019)	Effect of guidance and counselling on student discipline in Nigeria	Individual and group counselling, nondirective approach, therapeutic intervention, dynamic group interaction	Guidance and counselling positively influence student discipline	Preventive and corrective
2	The Role of Guidance and Counseling in Enhancing Student Discipline in Secondary Schools in Koibatek District (Salgong et al., 2016)	Approaches and service status of guidance and counselling in strengthening student discipline in Kenya	Dynamic group interaction, one-to-one sessions, nondirective counselling, therapeutic intervention	Guidance and counselling play a significant role despite limitations in facilities and teacher training	Preventive and corrective
3	Students' Conceptions of Role of Guidance and Counselling in Discipline Management in Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga County (Magdalene et al., 2019)	Students' perspectives on the role of guidance and counselling in school discipline in Kenya	Guidance and counselling dissemination, whole-school approach, elimination of corporal punishment	Guidance and counselling are not fully optimized students often receive punishment rather than guidance, indicating a need for system improvement	Preventif
4	Strengthening Discipline Character of	Discipline character strengthening in	Islamic habituation, inquiry-based learning, parental	Boarding school effectively instills	Preventive and character strengthening

	Students at Muhammadiyah Boarding-School (MBS) Muhiba Yogyakarta (Baehaqi & Murdiono, 2020)	an Islamic boarding school	communication, Islamic reward punishment, teacher role modeling	discipline through Islamic culture and teacher role modeling	
5	Good Character: The Role of Counseling Teacher in Establishing Student Discipline Character in Madrasah (Hasibuan et al., 2023)	Role of guidance teachers in forming students' disciplinary character in madrasah	Positive habituation, educational reward–punishment, motivation, parental collaboration	Teachers effectively instill discipline through habituation, motivation, and parental involvement	Preventive and corrective
6.	Strategies for Improving Student Discipline through Character Development Programs in Schools (Aini et al., 2024)	Guidance and counselling strategies for enhancing discipline in high schools	Individual counselling, tiered system (teacher, homeroom teacher, counselor, parents), character development	Tiered strategy effectively builds student discipline	Preventive and character strengthening
7.	The Role of Guidance and Counselling Teachers in Developing Students' Discipline Character at SMP Negeri 3 Onolalu (Harita et al., 2022)	Role of guidance teachers in shaping middle school students' discipline	Continuous guidance, corrective feedback, positive reinforcement, collaboration with homeroom teachers	School counselors are essential in cultivating student discipline and benefit from institutional support.	Preventive and corrective
8.	Guidance Teachers' Strategies in Enhancing Students' Learning	Counselling strategies in post pandemic context at a middle school in Jambi	Individual counselling (modeling techniques), group counselling, intensive communication,	Strategies significantly improve learning discipline (attention,	Preventive and corrective

		Discipline Post-COVID-19 (Fahrudin et al., 2023)	learning monitoring, motivation	participation, timely assignment submission) main challenges procrastination, low motivation, adaptation post-online learning	
9.	The Role of Guidance and Counselling Teachers in Improving Student Discipline at SMA Muhammadiyah Luwuk (Mangerang, 2023)	School counselor role in strengthening high school student discipline	Role modeling, reward & punishment, individual & group counselling, stakeholder collaboration	School counselor are essential through role modeling, habituation, educational consequences, and collaboration with teachers and parents; challenges include peer influence and limited parental involvement	Preventive and corrective
10.	Efforts of Guidance Teachers in Enhancing Student Discipline through Counselling Services at SMAN 1 Telukjambe (Adnan et al., 2025)	School counselor efforts in improving student discipline	Individual, group, and class-wide counselling, empathy & communication, school-parent collaboration	Counselling services reduce violations (lateness, dress code, truancy) students become more disciplined and active	Preventive, corrective, and character development

Based on a thematic analysis of ten journals, it was found that preventive guidance and counselling services employ a variety of strategic approaches by school counselor to strengthen student discipline.

1. Orientation and Information Services

The first step involved in creating discipline is achieved through information and orientation about school regulations and values of discipline. This service is a preventive one, ensuring that students are aware of the regulations from the start, thus cutting down on violations. A study by Salgong et

al. (2016) reveals the significance of dynamic group processes and formal communication in consolidating students' appreciation for disciplinary values through group interactions. Moreover, Magdalene et al. (2019) observe that socialization about school regulations is crucial so that students not only abstain from punishment but also understand the significance of the value of discipline in their lives. Moreover, Aini et al. (2024) observe that tiered communication between subject teachers, homeroom teachers, guidance counsellors, and parents is a significant way of ensuring that the message of discipline is spread effectively.

2. Individual and Group Counselling

One of the strategies with the greatest influence mentioned in other journals is counselling services. These services are carried out both individually and in group settings. These counselling sessions emphasize internalization of disciplinary values using personal and social approaches. Egenti (2019) concluded that individual and group counselling sessions were effective in minimizing student indiscipline in Nigeria. This was corroborated by Hasibuan et al. (2023), who found that guidance counsellors in madrasas were effective in developing motivation and discipline awareness through consistent counselling services. Fahrudin et al. (2023) concluded that individual counselling through modelling techniques, accompanied by group counselling sessions, were effective in improving student attention, class participation, and timely submission of assignments after the pandemic. Similarly, Adnan et al. (2025) concluded that individual, group, and class counselling sessions resulted in a reduction in instances of misconduct, including arriving late to class or playing truant. Overall, these studies support counselling services as an important means to discipline students both individually and in group capacities.

3. Character-Building Programmes

Discipline is also strengthened by character-building activities that are embedded in the school culture. Baehaqi et al. (2020) assert that some boarding schools implement practices that are grounded in the values of Islam, such as worship activities, inquiry-based learning approaches, and effective communication between the school and the parents through the application of the 'one rule' policy. These approaches effectively influence students' disciplinary practices. Aini et al. (2024) add that a tiered system that is not only corrective but also helps to develop students' character by encouraging them to obey the rules or be responsible for their actions is significant. These character-building activities are preventive since they aim to make students disciplined not only by punishing them but by implanting good values into their lives.

4. Teacher Role Modelling

Furthermore, counsellors are also role models for students in improving student discipline. This is evident since Harita et al. (2022) strongly support the perception that counsellors not only instruct students with guidance or corrections, but also practice disciplined actions that students can follow, such as being on time and adhering to regulations. This is also confirmed by Mangerang (2023), who demonstrates that the role of counsellors as role models, together with their firm yet empathetic approach, is a major factor that encourages student discipline at Muhammadiyah Luwuk High School. Moreover, the role of counsellors as role models is a preventive role that

transcends theoretical guidance into practice by Adnan et al. (2025), who assert that the empathetic-communicative efforts of counsellors make students feel accounted for, not judged.

5. Provision of Educational Rewards and Punishments

Other prevention strategies include the use of positive reinforcement via rewards for disciplined students and through educational sanctions for those who misconduct. Hasibuan, Hadjarasul, Rachman setDefaultCloseOperation, & Mangunkusumo (2023) and Baehaqi & Murdiono (2020) state that the role of an Islamic-based reward and punishment is crucial for developing a value of discipline among students. Reprimand, educational sanctions, and praises were found by Harita, Alfiah, & Kurniawan (2022) and Mangerang (2023) to be effective means of encouraging students to obey school regulations. A reprimand or punishment is not viewed as a corrective but a preventive tool that encourages disciplined practices among students.

6. Collaboration with Relevant Parties

Cooperation between form teachers, subject teachers, school principals, and parents is a significant key to the effectiveness of prevention services. Aini et al. (2024) assert that the effectiveness of a tiered approach including homeroom teachers, guidance counsellors, and parents cannot be denied. Mangerang (2023) states that support from stakeholders is crucial, whereas the contribution of parents to counselling services is found by Adnan et al. (2025) to improve student discipline programs.

This analysis further points out some challenges faced by the implementation of services for prevention, such as a lack of facilities and counsellors (Salgong et al., 2016), the practice of corporal punishment at schools (Magdalene et al., 2019), influence by peers and lack of parental support (Mangerang, 2023), and challenges of adapting to the post-pandemic situation (Fahrudin et al., 2023). Despite these challenges, the findings of the ten studies support that guidance or preventive counselling services related to rule orientation, individual and group counselling, character-building activities, the role of the teacher as a positive example or role models, educational rewards/punishments, as well as parental-school collaboration are strategic elements for developing student discipline both nationally and internationally through guidance or preventive counselling services.

Bandura's Self-Regulation Theory

According to Bandura (1991), human behaviour is regulated by a self-regulation system that enables one to guide their behaviour in line with their personal as well as social standards. He asserts that humans are not only passive recipients of their environment but are active performers who are capable of self-regulating their behaviour. Self-regulation is referred to as the process through which individuals monitor, appraise, and respond to their own behaviour occurring in relation to certain social standards or norms (Cambron et al., 2017). This is achieved by three key processes: self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reaction. Using these processes, students are able to monitor their behaviour, judge it with respect to the social behavioural norms of schools, and modify their behaviour through self-reinforcement. Within the

social setting of schools, discipline is achieved not only by monitoring by the teacher but through self-regulation by students.

Self-Monitoring (Awareness of Behaviour)

Self-monitoring is the process by which people monitor themselves. This helps them evaluate themselves on the basis of their behaviour to ascertain if it meets desired standards or not. Self-monitoring helps students monitor their daily behaviour related to factors like attendance, wearing uniforms, and adhering to class room regulations. Self-monitoring helps students develop an understanding that each action influences an outcome, promoting personal accountability.

Self-Judgement (Evaluation against Standards)

Self-assessment is meeting one's behavior with some criteria of personal standards, social expectations, or moral norms. Such self-assessment of students goes beyond obeying or breaking school rules to involving critical reflection of values such as responsibility and respect. Guidance counsellors would play a significant role in playing professional clarity about the standards of behaviors and the moral significance of behaviors related to school regulations, ensuring that discipline is not only about compliance but also about values.

Self-Reaction (Internal Motivation for Discipline)

Self-reaction is linked to emotional behaviors that occur as a result of self-evaluation. Sentiments like satisfaction, pride, disappointment, or guilt are self-reinforcing behaviors that direct students' subsequent actions. When students display disciplined behavior, they feel satisfied and proud of themselves, but if they perform poorly, they feel guilty about themselves. This is the stage where intrinsic motivation is developed, which is more effective compared to external reinforcement through punishment. This stage can be reinforced by the guidance counselor through positive reinforcement.

Observational Learning (Teachers as Role Models)

In relation to self-regulation, Bandura also mentions the role of observational learning by observing models. This requires attention to the observed behaviour of the models, retention of the behaviour through storing it in memory, reproduction of the behaviour through imitation, and motivation to repeat the behaviour. Observational learning is a crucial step in developing self-regulation in individuals by observing significant models. In schools, the models or role models for students would be their teachers and counsellors. Their consistency in behaviour related to timing, discipline, and following school regulations would offer real-life examples that would be imitated by the students.

Reinforcement in Bandura's Perspective

Bandura describes the reinforcement process as one of the important components of the self-regulation system that impacts behaviour maintenance or change. Contrary to other behavioural schools of thought that make external reinforcement the crucial behaviour determinant, Bandura asserts that reinforcement could also be self-reinforcement, which is linked to self-regulation.

1. **External reinforcement** is the stimuli that come from the external environment through rewards, praises, or punishment. This is antecedents that increase or diminish the chances of a behaviour occurring. Bandura clarifies that external reinforcement is not solely responsible for determining behaviour but works in tandem with cognitive and social processes of the individual.
2. **Self-reinforcement** is viewed as one of the major elements of self-regulation. It takes place when people tend to evaluate their own behavior and emotionally react to it. If their actions meet their own standards or social expectations, feelings of satisfaction, pride, or self-worth are experienced. However, if their actions do not meet these standards, they are likely to feel disappointed, guilty, or dissatisfied. Self-reinforcement here is viewed as a more stable long-term governor of behavior since the latter is regulated by self-evaluation, apart from external regulation.

Bandura points out that the relationship between external reinforcement and self-reinforcement is a complementary dual subsystem. While external reinforcement serves as a stimulus for behaviour, self-reinforcement sustains that behaviour by incorporating it into the self-regulation subsystem. Thus, discipline is built not only into temporary obedience with the regulations, but into behaviour that becomes integral with one's character.

Strategies for Strengthening Student Discipline

Strengthening student discipline is a central aspect of character education in schools, where guidance counsellors play a key role in developing students' self-control in relation to school rules and moral values (Cunha et al., 2023). Drawing on Bandura's social cognitive theory, several strategies can be implemented to foster sustainable self-regulation among students:

1. **Modelling strategy.**

These role models developed by guidance counsellors and subject teachers include modelling disciplined behavior such as being on time, being accountable, and following school policies. Using the principles of observational learning, these role models become stimuli for imitation by the students. Therefore, students learn discipline through both instruction and imitation.

2. **Positive reinforcement and directed feedback.**

Bandura says that self-regulation is enhanced by external reinforcement like praise, rewards, or recognition, as well as internal reinforcement like self-administered reinforcement with self-satisfaction or self-pride. Guidance counsellors could use symbolic rewards, words of encouragement, or reflection answers that would enable the students to internalise disciplined behaviors. This would work in line with the self-reaction process whereby intrinsic motivation is triggered to make consistent behavioral decisions.

3. **Goal-setting and behavioural contracts.**

Talking about self-regulation, personal goals provide an internal standard of comparison that helps self-judgment. Counselors can help students formulate specific goals such as being on time or meeting deadlines for assignments. These goals should then be formalized through the implementation of behavioral contracts that would help students strive to live up to the established standards, allowing self-evaluation to become more significant.

4. Monitoring and self-reflection.

This approach encourages students to monitor their behavior (self-monitoring) and make an attempt to ensure that their actions meet the standards of the school or their personal ideals. This can be achieved by the counselor using techniques such as daily journals or group discussions that help students monitor themselves.

This is backed by empirical evidence that suggests the importance of the mentioned strategies. Studies carried out in Bungoma South, for example in Kenya, indicate that school disciplinary offences declined significantly through the application of preventive reinforcement strategies that incorporate positive reinforcement, monitoring, and emotional support (Chepkonga, 2017). Similarly, the American School Counselor Association (2022) suggests that other programme strategies such as classroom guidance, consultation, advocacy, or collaboration efforts are crucial for students to achieve disciplined mindsets and behaviors (Reese, 2021). This suggests that for effective discipline development, efforts should not only be aimed at students adapting to external discipline for a certain period but should aim at developing self-regulation through role modelling, reinforcement, goal setting, or self-reflection practices. This helps ensure that students' self-regulation of the discipline trait is internalized as opposed to reacting to external guidance.

CONCLUSION

The emphasis of this study on strengthening student discipline is related to the strategic role of guidance counsellors as facilitators of self-regulation. Based on the literature review, strategies include services of orientation, counseling both in individual and group categories, character-building programs, modeling by teachers, reward and punishment mechanisms in education, and cooperation with parents and other stakeholders in school. As seen from Bandura's theoretical viewpoint, those strategies facilitate students' self-regulation through processes of self-monitoring, self-judgment, self-reaction, and reinforcement via modelling and feedback. Accordingly, student discipline no longer refers merely to behavioral conformation but develops into an internalized behavior that becomes part of one's character. It goes to recommend systematic, collaborative, and value-based preventive counseling services for sustainable discipline and holistic character education.

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