

# Impact of Technological Advancements on Alumni Relations Management in Higher Education

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**Abstract:** The evolving landscape of higher education increasingly recognizes alumni as vital stakeholders contributing to institutional development, student mentoring, and community building. This study explores the growing significance of technology driven alumni engagement practices across higher education institutions (HEIs) in Punjab, India. With the proliferation of digital communication platforms, universities are leveraging tools such as LinkedIn, WhatsApp, alumni portals, and virtual events to strengthen lifelong connections with graduates. The primary objectives of this research are to investigate existing alumni engagement strategies, assess their effectiveness in fostering long term relationships, identify influencing factors, and analyze the role of technology in enhancing sustained alumni institution student interaction. The study employs a mixed method approach, incorporating survey responses from 60 alumni and 2 institutional officials representing multiple HEIs in Punjab. Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and visual analytics to identify participation patterns, satisfaction levels, and digital engagement frequency. Qualitative insights were obtained from institutional representatives to contextualize strategic and operational challenges. Findings reveal that over 80% of alumni prefer technology mediated engagement, with LinkedIn and WhatsApp emerging as the most dominant platforms. Mentorship programs, webinars, and networking events demonstrate the highest perceived effectiveness, while barriers include limited institutional support and outdated alumni databases. The results highlight the transformative potential of digital tools in bridging generational gaps, promoting professional collaboration, and reinforcing alumni identity. The study concludes with recommendations for implementing integrated digital ecosystems, continuous data management, and personalized engagement initiatives. By aligning technological innovation with relational strategies, higher education institutions can cultivate enduring alumni loyalty and foster a collaborative network that benefits both alumni and current students.

**Keywords:** Alumni engagement, digital platforms, higher education, Punjab, technology adoption, relationship management, LinkedIn, alumni networks

## 1 Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, alumni engagement has emerged as a critical dimension of institutional success and sustainability. Alumni are not only former students but also lifelong ambassadors who embody the legacy, reputation, and values of their alma mater. Effective alumni engagement contributes to institutional development through mentorship, networking, philanthropic contributions, and active participation in academic and professional initiatives. Traditionally, alumni relationships were maintained through periodic reunions, newsletters, and in person events. However, the evolution of technology and the proliferation of digital communication platforms have transformed how higher education institutions (HEIs) connect with their graduates. In the context of Punjab a region recognized for its educational vibrancy and rapidly expanding higher education sector understanding how digital tools are shaping alumni engagement has become particularly significant (Permana et al., 2022).

The rise of digital technologies has redefined the boundaries of institutional outreach. With the advent of social media platforms, alumni management software, and virtual engagement channels, higher education institutions now have unprecedented opportunities to maintain and strengthen their relationships with alumni communities. Platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and institutional alumni portals enable continuous interaction, professional networking, and collaborative projects beyond geographical limitations. Technology driven engagement allows institutions to cultivate a sense of belonging and emotional connection among alumni, while simultaneously opening avenues for mentorship, knowledge sharing, and community building. In an era where higher education faces global competition and increasing accountability, fostering such connections can play a pivotal role in enhancing institutional reputation, graduate employability, and stakeholder trust (Miller, 2023).

Punjab's higher education ecosystem presents a compelling case for examining technology driven alumni engagement. The state hosts a diverse mix of public and private universities, autonomous colleges, and professional institutions that serve students across various disciplines. Over the past decade, the region has witnessed an expansion in digital infrastructure and the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) within academic operations. Many institutions in Punjab have developed alumni cells or offices tasked with maintaining relationships with graduates. Yet, the depth and effectiveness of these initiatives vary widely. While some institutions have embraced comprehensive digital strategies such as dedicated alumni apps, virtual mentorship programs, and digital fundraising campaigns others still rely on traditional communication modes, limiting their ability to build sustained connections with global alumni networks. This uneven adoption highlights the need for a systematic investigation into how technology can be strategically leveraged to enhance alumni relations within the regional context (Maulana et al., 2023).

Moreover, technology has transformed the expectations of alumni themselves. Today's graduates seek more personalized, flexible, and interactive engagement opportunities. They expect institutions to provide digital avenues for professional growth, knowledge exchange, and social contribution. Simultaneously, current students benefit greatly from alumni interactions facilitated through online platforms, gaining access to real world insights, career guidance, and industry exposure. Thus, technology serves as a bridge between generations connecting past, present, and future members of the academic community. However, despite these advantages, institutions face challenges such as digital fatigue, data management issues, limited institutional resources, and the need for continuous innovation in engagement strategies. Understanding how these factors influence alumni participation and institutional outcomes is essential for designing sustainable engagement frameworks (Malhotra et al., 2023).

Research in the field of alumni relations has underscored the growing importance of digital transformation in higher education. Globally, institutions are adopting data analytics, artificial intelligence, and customer relationship management (CRM) systems to track alumni engagement patterns and tailor communication strategies. In India, initiatives like digital alumni directories, virtual networking events, and online fundraising drives have gained traction. Yet, there remains a gap in regional studies focusing specifically on Punjab's higher education institutions, which operate within unique socio economic and cultural contexts. Punjab's strong diaspora and global alumni presence offer immense potential for international collaboration, institutional development, and community outreach if effectively harnessed through technology (Lavi et al., 2021).

This study, therefore, seeks to explore how technology driven strategies are employed by higher education institutions in Punjab to engage their alumni, assess their effectiveness, and identify best practices for sustainable relationship building. By examining existing

digital tools and practices such as alumni portals, virtual events, social media networks, and mobile applications the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how institutions can create meaningful, long term relationships with their graduates. Furthermore, the study will analyze how these technological initiatives influence alumni loyalty, participation in institutional activities, and their interactions with current students.

In addition, this research will consider the challenges institutions face in implementing and maintaining digital engagement systems, including issues related to resource allocation, data privacy, content relevance, and technological literacy. The study will also explore the role of institutional leadership and alumni offices in fostering a culture of continuous digital engagement. By synthesizing these insights, the research intends to offer actionable recommendations and best practices that can guide policy makers, administrators, and educators in enhancing alumni engagement strategies through technology.

## 2 Literature Review

Over the past two decades, alumni engagement has evolved from being a ceremonial institutional practice to a strategic dimension of higher education management. Early research in the field conceptualized alumni relations as a support activity focused mainly on fundraising and event organization. Later studies, however, began to recognize the wider significance of alumni in contributing to institutional reputation, employability enhancement, and community building. Scholars have increasingly emphasized that alumni are not merely former students but lifelong stakeholders whose participation strengthens the academic ecosystem. This shift in perspective led to a growing body of literature investigating how engagement strategies can foster enduring relationships between graduates, their alma mater, and current students (Varghese & Polidoro, 2025).

Several studies have examined the nature and dimensions of alumni engagement. Traditional models categorize engagement into emotional, social, professional, and financial aspects. Research demonstrates that emotional attachment the sense of belonging and pride in one's institution often precedes other forms of participation. Social engagement, expressed through reunions, events, and volunteer activities, helps maintain connection, whereas professional engagement contributes to knowledge exchange, mentorship, and career advancement (Gupta et al., 2025). Financial contributions, though historically considered the core of alumni relations, are now viewed as one outcome of broader relational commitment. Empirical findings across higher education systems indicate that when institutions maintain consistent communication, acknowledge alumni achievements, and involve them in academic or career initiatives, engagement becomes sustainable and multidimensional (Jack et al., 2025).

As digital transformation has reshaped organizational behavior, scholars have explored its impact on alumni relations. Research on technology mediated engagement demonstrates that digital platforms have revolutionized how institutions communicate with graduates, enabling them to transcend geographical and temporal barriers. The integration of social media, online portals, and dedicated alumni management systems has allowed universities to maintain active contact with dispersed alumni communities (Salendab & Tago, 2026). Studies have shown that platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter serve as informal yet powerful spaces for interaction, professional networking, and institutional storytelling. These virtual communities encourage alumni to share updates, participate in discussions, and stay informed about institutional developments, thereby strengthening their connection to the alma mater. Researchers also note that digital networks democratize engagement by enabling participation from alumni who may not otherwise attend physical events due to distance or time constraints (Moloney, 2025).

Parallel research on alumni management systems and customer relationship management (CRM) tools underscores the growing importance of data analytics in engagement. Institutions that employ CRM technology are better equipped to track participation, segment alumni based on interests, and personalize communication strategies (Sullivan et al., 2025). Several studies highlight that data driven personalization enhances engagement by making alumni feel recognized and valued. The transition from generic newsletters to targeted digital communication marks a shift from transactional outreach to relationship centered engagement. Further, virtual events, webinars, and online conferences have gained prominence, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, as higher education institutions sought new ways to sustain community interaction. Scholars have argued that these online experiences can be as meaningful as in person engagements when designed to promote interaction and mutual learning (Kunekar et al., 2025).

The connection between alumni engagement and current student development has emerged as another important strand of literature. Many studies emphasize that alumni-student relationships contribute significantly to career development, mentorship, and institutional identity formation. Digital technologies have facilitated the establishment of mentorship programs, online communities, and collaborative projects that connect current students with experienced alumni across the globe (Reongsang et al., 2025). Research findings consistently show that institutions that cultivate these digital mentorship ecosystems witness higher student employability, stronger alumni loyalty, and a more cohesive institutional culture. Moreover, exposure to alumni success stories through digital media enhances students' motivation and reinforces the perception of the institution as a lifelong support system (Alwi et al., 2025).

Despite the enthusiasm surrounding digitalization, scholars caution that technological tools alone do not guarantee engagement. Several studies have identified key factors influencing the success of technology driven alumni programs. Institutional leadership, strategic planning, and clarity of purpose are consistently mentioned as foundational requirements. Without a defined engagement strategy, digital initiatives often become fragmented and short lived. Research further highlights the significance of user experience and accessibility (Burgess & Maughan, 2025). Complicated login processes, outdated platforms, or irrelevant content tend to discourage participation. On the contrary, simplicity, personalization, and interactivity attract sustained involvement. Another recurring theme in the literature is the importance of perceived value. Alumni engage more actively when they perceive tangible benefits such as professional networking, mentorship, access to institutional resources, or recognition of achievements. Thus, effective digital engagement requires a balance between institutional objectives and alumni expectations (Tanis, 2020).

Social influence has also been identified as a determinant of participation. Studies note that when peers or respected faculty members promote engagement initiatives online, participation levels increase through network effects. In contrast, barriers such as low digital literacy, data privacy concerns, and lack of consistent follow up hinder the success of these initiatives. Researchers point out that digital engagement demands continuous content generation, database maintenance, and skilled personnel resources that not all institutions can afford. Consequently, digital inequality across institutions remains a challenge, particularly in developing regions (Strapp et al., 2023).

The Indian higher education landscape presents unique characteristics in this regard. Research indicates that while prestigious national institutions have successfully implemented comprehensive alumni portals and digital communities, many regional and private institutions are still in nascent stages of adoption. The literature identifies several obstacles to technology enabled engagement in India: inadequate data management systems, fragmented alumni records, and a lack of institutional culture emphasizing lifelong connection. However, studies also highlight emerging positive trends, such as virtual alumni meets,

online mentoring programs, and the growing role of social media in community building. The rapid spread of internet connectivity and smartphone usage has further opened new avenues for outreach. Indian universities increasingly recognize that alumni engagement not only contributes to institutional prestige but also supports student employability and research collaboration (Snijders et al., 2019).

Within this broader national context, very limited research exists on the specific practices adopted by higher education institutions in Punjab. Preliminary reports suggest that while some universities in Punjab have developed alumni associations and social media networks, systematic digital engagement strategies remain inconsistent (Schlesinger et al., 2023). Factors such as resource limitations, leadership orientation, and the global dispersion of Punjabi graduates influence the scope and effectiveness of digital outreach. There is also evidence that cultural norms affect alumni participation; engagement is often event driven rather than continuous. The literature therefore highlights a regional research gap concerning how institutions in Punjab can harness technology more effectively to sustain long term relationships with both alumni and students (Schaeffer et al., 2023).

Recent scholarship has begun exploring advanced technological applications such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and virtual reality in alumni relations. Predictive analytics is being used to assess engagement potential and design personalized campaigns, while virtual and hybrid reunions are reshaping post pandemic engagement strategies (Pradana, 2022). Some studies propose gamification such as digital badges, recognition points, and leaderboards as a way to enhance motivation and participation in alumni communities. Despite these innovations, researchers stress the importance of maintaining a human connection. Digital platforms are viewed as facilitators rather than substitutes for authentic relationship building. Effective engagement requires a blend of emotional resonance, shared values, and mutual benefit, mediated through technology.

### 3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from sixty alumni and two institutional officials from selected higher education institutions in Punjab has been analyzed to understand how technology driven strategies influence alumni engagement and relationship building. The data was obtained using structured online questionnaires and brief interviews with institutional officials, including an alumni coordinator and a placement officer. The analysis incorporates both quantitative and qualitative insights to draw a comprehensive picture of digital alumni engagement practices in the region. The demographic analysis of the alumni participants reflects diversity in terms of gender, age, graduation year, and employment status. Out of the sixty respondents, thirty five were male and twenty five were female, representing a fair gender balance. Most participants belonged to the 26–30 age group, followed by those aged 21–25, indicating that recent graduates form the most active segment in alumni digital networks.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Alumni Respondents (N=60)

Parameter	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	35	58.3
	Female	25	41.7
Age Group	21–25 years	18	30.0
	26–30 years	28	46.7

	31–35 years	14	23.3
Graduation Year	Before 2015	7	11.7
	2016–2020	28	46.6
	After 2020	25	41.7
Employment Status	Employed	46	76.7
	Self-employed	7	11.6
	Pursuing Higher Studies	7	11.6

Gender Distribution of Alumni Respondents

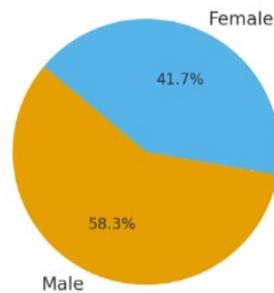


Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Alumni Respondents

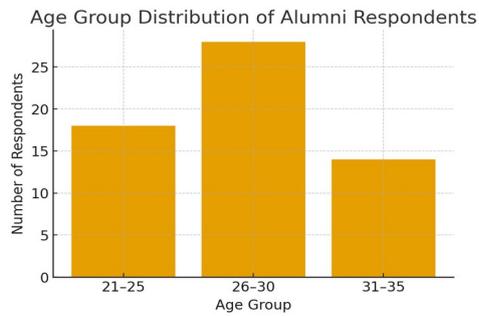


Figure 2: Age Group Distribution of Alumni Respondents

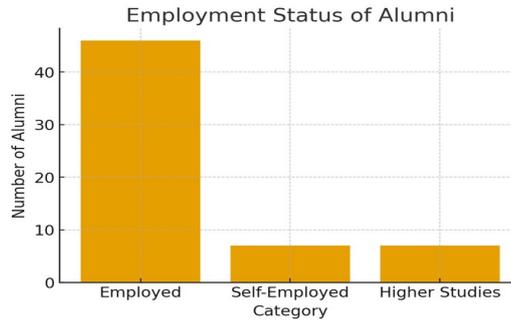


Figure 3: Employment Status of Alumni

The employment pattern highlights that 76.7% of respondents are employed professionals, suggesting that the alumni base remains professionally active and digitally connected. The officials confirmed that these professionals are the most likely to engage in digital mentorship and institutional collaborations.

When asked about the digital platforms used for alumni engagement, the results show that LinkedIn (90%), WhatsApp (75%), and Facebook (70%) dominate the landscape, while Email (65%) and Institutional Alumni Portals (60%) are also widely used. This demonstrates the significance of informal and easily accessible channels in maintaining alumni connections.

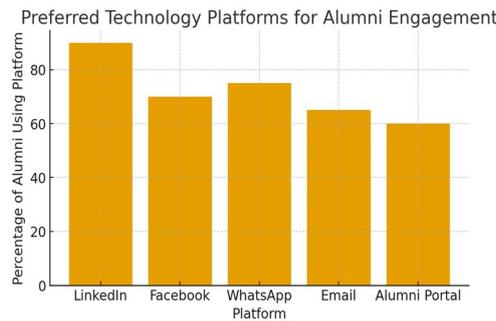


Figure 4: Preferred Technology Platforms for Alumni Engagement

Most alumni stated that they receive updates about institutional activities primarily through WhatsApp groups and LinkedIn pages. Institutional officials validated this finding, adding that these platforms are cost effective and provide wide reach.

Regarding the frequency of digital interaction, twenty five alumni reported engaging weekly, twenty monthly, ten occasionally, and five rarely. This indicates that the majority maintain regular virtual contact with their alma mater.

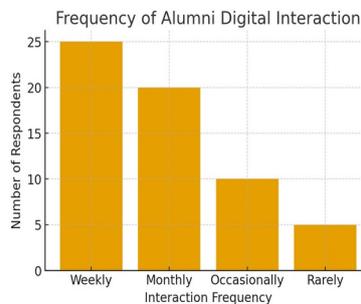


Figure 5: Frequency of Alumni Digital Interaction

To understand which strategies best foster alumni engagement, respondents rated various institutional initiatives. Webinars (85%) and Mentorship Programs (80%) emerged as the most effective methods, followed by Networking Events (75%), Placement Support (70%), and Fundraising Drives (55%).

Table 2: Effectiveness of Alumni Engagement Strategies

Strategy	Rated Effective by Alumni (%)
Webinars	85
Mentorship Programs	80
Networking Events	75
Placement Support	70
Fundraising Drives	55

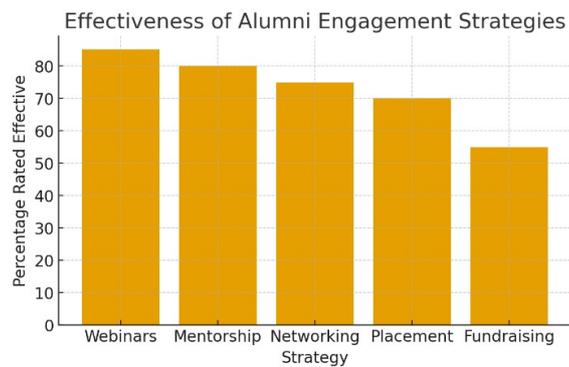


Figure 6: Effectiveness of Alumni Engagement Strategies

The institutional officials affirmed that online events, webinars, and LinkedIn based mentorship programs have greatly improved engagement. They also observed that initiatives that provide tangible professional benefits to alumni yield stronger participation and loyalty.

However, alumni also highlighted several barriers to effective technology driven engagement. Twenty respondents mentioned lack of awareness, fifteen cited limited institutional follow ups, ten pointed to outdated databases, ten mentioned low alumni participation, and five referred to technical issues with portals.

Table 3: Barriers to Technology Based Alumni Engagement

Barrier	Frequency (No. of Alumni)
Lack of Awareness	20
Limited Institutional Support	15
Outdated Databases	10
Low Alumni Participation	10
Technical Issues	5

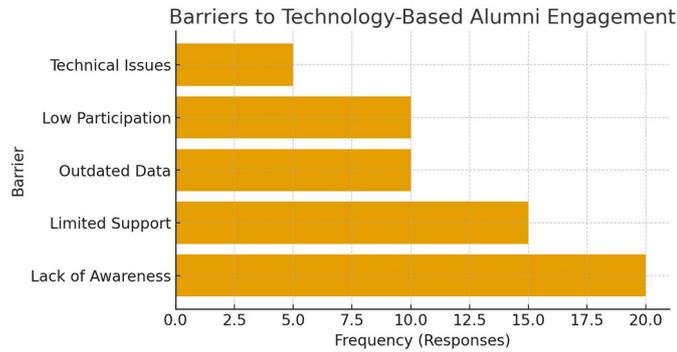


Figure 7: Barriers to Technology Based Alumni Engagement

This indicates that while the digital infrastructure exists, it is underutilized due to weak awareness campaigns and inadequate data maintenance. Institutional officials agreed that regular communication and database updates are vital for sustainable alumni networks. The overall satisfaction level with institutional digital engagement initiatives was found to be high. Twenty alumni reported being “highly satisfied,” twenty five “satisfied,” ten “neutral,” and only five “dissatisfied.” The dissatisfied respondents cited irregular communication and lack of personalized engagement as their primary concerns.

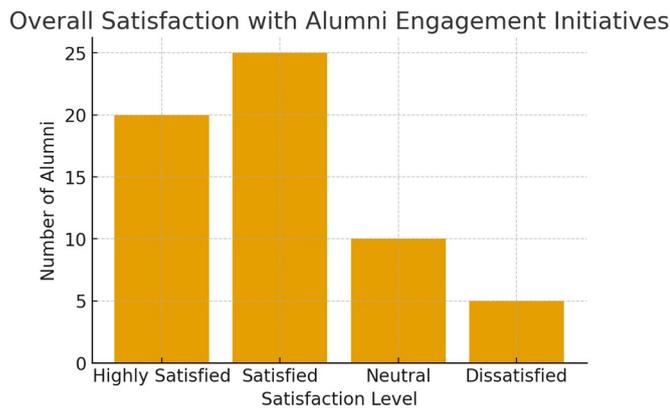


Figure 8: Overall Satisfaction with Alumni Engagement Initiatives

In terms of future participation, fifty alumni expressed their willingness to contribute to future alumni programs, eight were undecided, and only two declined. This suggests a strong foundation for strengthening alumni participation if institutions enhance their outreach efforts.

Alumni Willingness to Participate in Future Programs

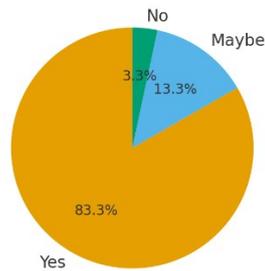


Figure 9: Alumni Willingness to Participate in Future Programs

The study also explored how alumni perceive their impact on current students. Over 80% of respondents believed that alumni mentorship programs and industry oriented sessions significantly enhance student exposure and employability. Alumni emphasized the need for more structured digital mentorship programs where they could guide students on professional skills, internships, and research collaborations.

The analysis further shows a strong link between employment level and engagement rate employed and self-employed alumni reported higher levels of interaction compared to those pursuing higher studies. Younger alumni also displayed a greater tendency to engage via social media, while older alumni preferred email and formal institutional channels.

The institutional officials stated that they are working toward integrating multiple digital tools, including alumni portals, mobile applications, and LinkedIn communities, to cater to diverse user preferences. This digital diversification aligns with the broader trend of hybrid alumni engagement observed globally.

Overall, the analysis confirms that digital transformation has revolutionized alumni engagement in Punjab's higher education institutions. The majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with the digital initiatives undertaken by their institutions, especially those involving networking and mentorship. However, consistent follow up, database management, and personalization of outreach remain areas for improvement.

Institutions that effectively leverage technology, maintain active communication channels, and align alumni engagement with career development initiatives are likely to build stronger, more enduring relationships with their graduates. Such strategies not only benefit alumni but also enhance institutional reputation and student outcomes.

The analysis concludes that digital tools when combined with a clear engagement policy and institutional commitment act as powerful bridges connecting alumni, students, and academic institutions in a mutually beneficial ecosystem.

## 4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study affirms that technology has become an essential catalyst for transforming alumni engagement across higher education institutions in Punjab, providing flexible, accessible, and interactive channels that strengthen communication and foster ongoing collaboration. Digital platforms ranging from social media networks to webinars and virtual mentorship initiatives have enabled institutions to transcend geographical barriers and build sustained relationships that extend far beyond traditional, event based interactions. However, the findings also emphasize that merely adopting digital tools is not enough; meaningful engagement requires consistent communication, structured coordination, reliable data management, and a proactive institutional culture that values

alumni as long term partners. Institutions that integrate alumni engagement into their strategic planning, maintain updated databases, and offer value driven opportunities such as skill sharing and career mentoring experience higher participation and stronger bonds with their graduates. As alumni increasingly seek platforms that allow them to contribute professionally while staying connected emotionally, engagement is shifting toward continuous, relationship centred ecosystems rather than occasional outreach. Ultimately, institutions that strategically combine technology, administrative support, and a culture of inclusivity will be best positioned to cultivate loyalty, enhance student development, strengthen institutional branding, and ensure long term sustainability in the evolving educational landscape.

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