

Parenting Styles and Academic Performance: A Study of Senior Elementary Students in Henan, China

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the researcher aimed to explore the relationship between parenting styles and the academic performance of senior elementary school students. A cross-sectional study design was employed, involving a sample of 384 students aged 10 to 13 years from Henan Province, China. The results indicated a significant negative relationship between parenting styles and academic performance ($B = -5.377$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that more controlling or inappropriate parenting styles are associated with lower academic achievement in children. Among the different parenting styles, both authoritative and uninvolved parenting were found to be significant negative predictors of academic performance. Specifically, the authoritative parenting style had a beta coefficient of -0.247 ($p < 0.001$), while the uninvolved style showed a stronger negative association, with a beta coefficient of -0.343 ($p < 0.001$). Furthermore, a significant difference in parenting styles was observed across different grade levels ($F = 9.333$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the importance of considering grade level when assessing the impact of parenting on academic outcomes. These findings support the hypothesis that parenting styles significantly influence academic performance, with uninvolved parenting having the most detrimental effect. In conclusion, the study suggests that parental involvement and appropriate parenting strategies are crucial for fostering better academic outcomes in senior elementary school students, and highlights the negative impact of disengaged parenting.

Keywords: Parenting Styles, Academic performance, Elementary School Students, Quantitative Study

INTRODUCTION

Academic success is regarded as a crucial indicator of a student's prospective social standing and career path (Tsela et al., 2023). Environmental influences and the development of self-identity have a significant impact on academic achievement. Numerous studies have addressed significant family factors in this context. Among the variables significantly influencing student performance, parenting styles and behavioral issues are among the most extensively researched. Parents and educators who mentor students in school environments are particularly concerned with the correlation between parenting styles and academic performance as a significant issue for students and children (Kim, & Kim, 2021).

Parenting style is very important to society's development because it plays a crucial part in the development of children and adolescents, who are vital for the future (Ebeid et al., 2019). Parenting is a general term including all sorts of parental engagement with students and the nature of the relationship that exists between them (Mushtaque et al., 2024). Parenting styles refer to a set of attitudes held by parents towards their children and are a summary of a wide range of parenting behaviours that reflect their attitudes and feelings towards their children. Parenting styles differ according to cultural differences (Hassan et al., 2022). There are also current studies exploring the relationship between parenting styles and their children's future academic performance (Zhao et al., 2022). Studies have found that parenting styles have a significant impact on students' academic performance (Masud et al., 2015). In order to provide a more scientific basis and reference for current Chinese family education, it is essential to explore in depth the relationship between parenting styles and children's

academic performance, as well as the impact of parenting styles in the Chinese cultural context (Ma, Qiao & Xing, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Parenting style is a concept developed by Baumrind (1971), who, based on extensive interviews and observations, proposed three parenting styles: authoritative, permissive, and authoritarian. Then, Baumrind expanded these three parenting styles into four: Authoritative: Highly responsive and controlling, parents are strict yet gentle, give clear rules, and provide emotional support. Authoritarian: low responsiveness and high control; parents expect strict obedience and pay less attention to the child's emotional needs. Permissive: Highly responsive and low control; parents set few limits and give children more freedom. Uninvolved: This type of child is unresponsive and has low control; parents pay less attention to the child's needs and life (Tsela, Rosie, & Ignacio, 2023).

There are many factor variables that affect academic performance, including parenting styles, parenting methods (Love et al., 2020; Korucu et al., 2020), family characteristics, and variations in temperament (Checa and Abundis-Gutiérrez, 2017).

Similarly, Peng (2015) reported similar findings. Factors affecting adolescents' academic performance include parenting styles, teacher-student relationships, etc. Among these influences, parenting style is one of the most important factors (Masud et al., 2015). Specifically, parenting style, as a key component of the child's immediate environment, profoundly affects not only their cognitive and emotional development but also their academic performance. Accordingly, the correlation between parenting styles and academic performance has also been of interest to educators and psychologists (Diaconu-GGherasim & Mairean, 2016).

As Chinese parents pay more and more attention to family education, the demand for family education guidance has been increasing (Li & Wei, 2019). To provide a more scientific basis and reference for current family education in China, it is very necessary to explore in depth the specific manifestations of the relationship between parenting styles and children's academic performance in the context of Chinese culture, as well as the factors affecting the relationship between the two (Xie et al., 2022).

Through a large number of empirical studies, scholars have developed a consensus on the idea that parenting styles can have a direct or indirect impact on academic performance and are strongly linked to teenagers' academic success. Existing research supports the potential impact of parenting behaviours and parenting styles on students' academic performance development (Masud et al. 2015).

A growing body of empirical research has established a consensus that parenting styles exert both direct and indirect influences on students' academic performance, playing a crucial role in their academic success. Studies have consistently highlighted the potential impact of parenting behaviours and styles on students' academic outcomes (Masud et al., 2015). The effects of parenting styles can either promote or hinder academic achievement, depending on the specific approach employed (Moè et al., 2020). For instance, Zhao et al. (2022) found that providing affirmation, encouragement, and praise can significantly enhance students' academic performance. Similarly, Pinquart (2016) observed that parenting characterised by responsiveness, autonomy support, behavioural regulation, and authoritative practices is positively associated with improved academic outcomes.

Authoritative parenting styles exhibit a substantial and favorable correlation with pupils' academic performance by increasing adolescents' self-regulated learning ability and parental education involvement in pupils' academic life (Asanjarani et al., 2022). While parental educational involvement surpasses non-involvement, the beneficial correlation between parental engagement and children's academic achievement is contingent upon the quality of styles of parenting (Amani et al., 2020).

Although the perspectives and methodologies of various researchers differ, they all agree that positive parenting styles promote academic performance, whereas negative parenting styles are detrimental. Therefore,

this study is still necessary to find out the relationship between parenting styles and students' academic performance. This holds particularly true when conducting the study at a specific time and location.

This study aimed to examine the relationship between parenting styles and academic achievement of upper elementary school students through three main research questions. First, to examine whether there are significant differences in students' academic achievement across parenting styles. Second, to examine whether there are significant differences in parenting styles based on students' gender and grade level. Finally, this study examines the potential correlations between parenting styles and students' academic achievement to provide a comprehensive understanding of these dynamic factors.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. The study population consisted of senior elementary school students aged 10–13 years old, with the independent variable being parenting styles and the dependent variable being the academic performance. The study subjects were all students from two-parent families from Henan Province, China. Participants for this experiment were selected using a randomised sampling procedure. An online questionnaire was utilised for data collection, resulting in 400 replies. Post-data cleaning and screening validated 384 of these responses, resulting in a validity percentage of 96.7%. Of the valid respondents, 219 (55.7%) were male, and 170 (44.3%) were female. In order to achieve the objective of the study, the researcher conducted a statistical analysis through SPSS software. The researcher used the analytical tool to scrutinise the relationship between the variables and provide important insights into the research questions.

The researcher investigated the parenting styles of senior elementary school students using the Parenting Style Inventory (PSI). The researcher appropriately adjusted and adapted the questionnaire of The Family Parenting Style Inventory, revised by Echedom, Nwankwo, & Nwankwo (2018), considering the actual situation and characteristics of primary school students in Henan Province. The scale used a 5-point Likert-type format. The Cronbach's alpha value for the parenting styles scale was 0.722, indicating a satisfactory level of internal consistency and reliability of the scale. Higher scores indicate stronger feelings about parenting styles.

The Academic Performance Related Measurement Instrument is a tool that measures the academic performance of students. It considers a student's performance in the final examination, particularly in the three major subjects of Chinese, mathematics, and English. By averaging these scores, the researcher can obtain a relatively objective score that reflects the student's learning outcomes throughout the semester. The higher the score obtained, the better the subject's academic performance in these subjects.

RESULTS

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
PS	384	2.26	4.11	3.33	0.32
AP	384	69.33	97.00	87.26	4.04

PS: Parenting Style; AP: Academic Performance

According to Table 1, this study collected a total of 384 valid samples. The scores of parenting styles ranged from 2.26 to 4.11 with a mean of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 0.32. These statistical indicators reveal some differences in the status of parenting styles among the senior elementary school students in the sample. However, the majority of the subjects' parenting style scores fell into the senior middle range, suggesting that the students had a strong perception of parenting styles. The standard deviation is 0.32, which is relatively concentrated, indicating that the performance of the students on this variable is somewhat consistent, with small individual differences.

The range of academic performance was 69.33 to 97.00, indicating that there was some variability in the academic performance of the students in the sample, ranging from moderate to excellent.

The mean value of 87.26 indicates a high level of academic performance for the sample as a whole, which may be related to the overall high quality of teaching and learning in primary education.

The standard deviation is 4.04, showing the existence of individual differences in academic performance among the sample, but the fluctuation is small in statistical significance.

Table 2 T-Test-Gender

IV	Mean (SD)		T-Value	P
	Male(N=214)	Female(N=170)		
PS	3.31(0.35)	3.35(0.29)	-1.28	0.20
AP	87.38(3.75)	87.10(4.39)	0.68	0.50

$P < 0.05$ *; $p < 0.01$ **; $p < 0.001$ ***

The analysis using an independent sample t-test yielded the following findings, as shown in Table 2.

In terms of parenting styles, the means of females are slightly higher than those of males, but the differences are small, and the standard deviation of females is lower, indicating that the distribution of scores for females is more centralised and that the distribution of scores for males is relatively more dispersed.

There is no significant difference between male and female on parenting styles by gender ($t = -1.28$, $p = 0.20$); men's scores on parenting styles ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.35$) are not much smaller than women's ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.29$).

In terms of academic performance, the means for males are slightly higher than those for females, but the differences are smaller, and the standard deviations are higher for females, indicating a more spread-out range of scores for females and a more concentrated distribution of scores for males.

The difference in the standard error means indicates that the precision of estimation of the means is slightly higher in the male group than in the female group. Differences in sample size and score distribution may be the cause of this.

There is no significant difference between male and female in terms of academic achievement scores by gender ($t = 0.68$, $p = 0.50$), and male academic achievement ($M = 87.38$, $SD = 3.75$) is not much greater than that of females ($M = 87.10$, $SD = 4.39$).

Table 3 ANOVA-Grade

IV	Mean (SD)				F	P	LSD
	1. grade3 (N=65)	2. grade4 (N=100)	3. grade5 (N=106)	2. grade6 (N=113)			
PS	3.37 (0.27)	3.22 (0.40)	3.44 (0.34)	3.30 (0.17)	9.33	***	1>2 3>2 3>4
AP	86.97 (4.76)	87.45 (3.55)	86.86 (4.72)	87.63 (3.25)	0.85	0.47	

$P < 0.05$ *; $p < 0.01$ **; $p < 0.001$ ***

The researcher used ANOVA to analyze the differences between the two variables for subjects with different grades. Table 3 displays the results. The results of the study found that different grades reached a significant difference in parenting style scores ($F = 9.33, p < 0.001^{***}$). There is no significant difference in academic achievement among different grades ($F = 0.85, p = 0.47$).

Post hoc comparisons were made using LSD, and the results are presented below: the study revealed significant differences in parenting styles among subjects in different grades. Mean scores were significantly higher in grade 1 than in grade 2 ($3.37 > 3.22$), in grade 3 ($3.44 > 3.22$), and in grade 3 ($3.44 > 3.30$) than in grade 4 ($3.44 > 3.30$). This suggests that elementary school students in grades 1 and 3 have higher perceptions of parenting styles compared to elementary school students in grade 2. In addition, elementary school students in grade 3 were more perceptive of parenting styles than elementary school students in grade 4.

Table 4 Correlation of Variables and Dimensions

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Parenting Style	1					
2.Authoritative	.35***	1				
3.Authoritarian	.66***	-.30***	1			
4.Permissive	.34***	.43***	-.31***	1		
5.Uninvolved	.55***	-.49***	.69***	-.12	1	
6.Academic Performance	-.43***	-.06	-.33***	-.09	-.34***	1

$P < 0.05$ *; $p < 0.01$ **; $p < 0.001$ ***

The results of the Pearson product-difference correlation analysis are shown in Table 4. The correlation study results indicated a strong negative link between parenting style and academic performance ($r = -0.43, p < 0.001$), suggesting that overall parenting style may negatively impact students' academic performance at elevated levels. Of the four specific parenting styles, authoritarian ($r = -0.33, p < 0.001$) and uninvolved ($r = -0.34, p < 0.001$) were significantly negatively correlated with academic performance, indicating that these two parenting styles have a greater negative effect on students' academic development. This suggests that these two parenting styles have a greater negative impact on students' academic development.

Conversely, there was no significant correlation between academic performance and authoritative ($r = -0.06, p > 0.05$) or permissive ($r = -0.09, p > 0.05$) parenting styles.

Table 5 the result of regression

IV	DV: Academic Performance			
	Beta	SE	β	VIF
Parenting Style	-5.38<.001	0.07	-.43<.001	1.00
AdjR2	0.18			
F	84.88 <.001			
df	1.00			

Table 5 displays the results of the regression analysis investigating the correlation between parenting style and academic performance. The results of the analysis revealed a significant negative predictive effect of parenting

style on academic performance ($B = -5.38, p < 0.001$), when parenting style scores increase, academic performance decreases significantly. This suggests that when parents use stricter, controlling, or inappropriate parenting styles, elementary school students' academic performance decreases significantly.

The adjusted $R^2 = 0.18$ for the model indicated that parenting style explained approximately 18.0% of the variance in academic performance, and the overall model was significant ($F = 84.88, p < 0.001$). The standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = -0.43$) further suggests that parenting style has a moderately strong influence on the model. The multicollinearity test ($VIF = 1.00$) showed that there was no issue with covariance between the independent variables. This meant that the model's results could be trusted and were separate from each other.

Table 6 the result of regression

IV	DV: Academic Performance			
	Beta	SE	β	VIF
Authoritative	-1.66<.001	.40	-.25<.001	1.71
Authoritarian	-.97	.36	-.19	2.22
Permissive	-.59	.40	-.08	1.45
Uninvolved	-2.07<.001	.45	-.34<.001	2.60
AdjR2	0.19			
F	23.52 <.001			
df	4.00			

Table 6 display the results of the regression analyses, which tested the specific effects of the four parenting style dimensions on academic performance.

According to the results of the analyses, authoritative parenting style had a significant and negative predictive effect on academic performance ($\beta = -0.25, p < 0.001$). The regression coefficient for authoritarian parenting style ($\beta = -0.19, p > 0.05$) indicated that its negative prediction of academic performance was not significant, but there was a negative trend. The regression coefficient ($\beta = -0.08, p > 0.05$) for tolerant parenting style indicates that its effect on academic performance is insignificant and weak. The uninvolved parenting style had the most significant negative prediction of academic performance ($\beta = -0.34, p < 0.001$), showing that it had the strongest negative effect on the development of students' academic performance among the four parenting styles.

The overall significance of the regression model for this study was high ($F = 23.52, p < 0.001$), and the adjusted $R^2 = 0.19$ showed that the four parenting styles explained 19.0% of the variation in academic performance. In addition, tests of multiple covariance (VIF) values showed that, although there was some degree of correlation between the different parenting styles, none of them reached the severity of the covariance problem ($VIF < 10$). This indicates that the correlation between the variables has a low impact on the model, and the regression results are reliable.

DISCUSSION

According to the results of descriptive statistical analysis, the overall average academic performance is 87 points. Presumably, the academic performance of the subject students in these 384 samples is excellent, albeit with some individual differences.

The results of the analysis based on the t-test indicate that males and females are similar in terms of perceived parenting styles and academic performance, at least in the sample of this study.

The gender variable does not seem to be a significant influencing factor in parenting styles and academic performance; this is in keeping with the findings of Shi (2022), which found that early childhood family parenting styles were not significant in gender differences and also not significant in grade level differences.

Numerous factors, including cultural background, sample characteristics, and social environment, may influence this finding. First, cultural context plays an important role in shaping parenting styles. In some regions where gender roles are more traditional, parents may adopt different parenting styles for their children based on gender, leading to significant gender differences in the study. However, in the sample of this study, which is located in areas that may have a greater focus on gender equality, the parenting styles of both boys and girls converge, reducing the impact of gender differences. The modern educational environment, where gender differences in education have narrowed and many educational policies and family practices are working to eliminate gender bias (Li & Sun, 2022), supports this notion of equality in gender roles by reducing the impact of gender differences in academic performance.

In addition, parents' expectations of their children in modern societies are often more focused on individual competence and development than traditional gender-based expectations. This change in perception may lead parents to show more consistency in parenting styles for boys and girls. At the same time, family structure and socioeconomic background may further obscure the role of gender differences. For example, families with a higher socio-economic status are often able to equalize educational resources for their children, which somewhat diminishes the impact of gender factors.

According to the ANOVA results, there were significant differences in the perceptions of parenting styles among upper elementary school students in different grades, with students in 1 (grade 3) and 3 (grade 5) significantly different from those in 2 (grade 4) in terms of their perceptions of parenting styles. Third and fifth graders scored significantly higher than fourth graders ($1 > 2$, $3 > 2$). These findings suggest that parenting styles may change with students' age or grade level. The study by Xie et al. (2022) also pointed out that individual parental influences on children may change as children grow older, as evidenced by younger children benefiting more from parental help than older children.

Despite the differences in perceived parenting styles across grades, there were no significant differences in academic performance across grades, with academic scores remaining between 86 and 88 for all grades—a relatively small difference. This result suggests that non-grade level factors like family structure and parental involvement in education may have a greater influence on the stability of academic performance than grade level factors (Al-Rousan et al., 2023).

The fourth grade of elementary school is usually a critical transition period in students' psychological and behavioural development, where they may face greater social adjustment challenges along with an increased academic load. This stage is considered a transition period in the upper elementary grades, and students have not yet fully adapted to the new academic demands, which may result in lower academic scores. The fifth graders, on the other hand, are typically more mature in their psychological development and behavioural adaptations; they possess greater coping skills and self-confidence, which may account for their higher scores. The sixth graders, on the other hand, face the pressure of impending graduation and may begin to focus on preparing for the transition to secondary school, a psychological fluctuation that may result in slightly lower scores.

According to the results of the correlation analysis, there is no correlation between authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and academic achievement, nor is there a correlation between permissive and neglectful parenting styles. For the rest of the variables, there were unequally significant correlations between the two. Further analysis revealed that the correlations between the dimensions of parenting styles also varied, with authoritarian being strongly positively correlated with uninvolved and authoritative being positively correlated with permissive. This suggests that there may be some overlap or correlation between different parenting styles on certain behavioural characteristics. Authoritarian and uninvolved styles show a strong

positive correlation, reflecting their similarity as low-responsiveness styles (Fadlillah & Fauziah, 2022), such as a lack of active support for students or tendencies toward extremity in certain behaviors. Authoritative and permissive styles show a positive correlation as well, as both are high-responsiveness parenting styles (Fadlillah & Fauziah, 2022), which may indicate a shared tendency to grant students a certain degree of autonomy or demonstrate a relatively open educational attitude.

According to the results of the regression analysis, authoritative parenting styles showed a significant negative predictive effect on the academic performance of students in the senior elementary grades. This finding contradicts established research that commonly recognizes authoritative parenting styles as having a positive impact on academic achievement. Pinquart (2016) noted that authoritative parenting styles typically promote academic success due to their highly supportive and guiding nature. However, the results of this study reveal that authoritative parenting may have the opposite effect on academic performance in specific cultural contexts and stages of education.

This phenomenon may reflect the psychological stress and emotional burden that high expectations and frequent interventions in parenting styles create for students, thereby weakening motivation to learn. Peng's (2020) study suggests that children may perceive parents' high expectations, which do not align with their actual abilities, as excessive academic demands, thereby affecting their interest in learning. Additionally, a higher degree of control typically accompanies the authoritative parenting style in the Chinese cultural context (Zhang et al., 2017). In some cases, this control, if not combined with warmth and emotional support, may result in students feeling a lack of autonomy, further reducing the positive effects of academic performance. Cultural values that place a high value on academic achievement may further exacerbate this. However, when they incorporate explicit guidance and emotional support, authoritative parenting styles may partially mitigate their negative effects and even positively impact academic performance (Masud et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the developmental stage of upper primary school students may be associated with this negative correlation. At this stage, adolescents encounter diverse parenting styles, and their upbringing can shape their development (Zhang et al., 2017). During the important transition from dependence to independence, if parents do not adopt specific aspects of an authoritative parenting style, it may hinder the development of their children's independence. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of authoritative parenting can vary depending on the students' age, cultural background, and individual needs.

Uninvolved parenting was the most significant negative predictor of academic performance, showing the strongest negative impact on students' academic development among the four parenting styles. Uninvolved parenting is characterised by a lack of emotional support and educational involvement (Fadlillah & Fauziah, 2022), which may cause students to lack adequate guidance and motivation in their academics and to feel isolated and helpless (Fadlillah & Fauziah, 2022), thus seriously affecting their academic performance. The presence of neglectful parenting may have a dual negative impact on academic performance and the psychological well-being of primary school-aged students, who are at a critical time when they need a high level of support and attention. This finding emphasizes the importance of parental support for students' academic performances and provides specific directions for home education interventions (Peng, 2020).

Although parenting styles have cross-ethnic consistency (Zhang & Zhao, 2024), their effects on academic achievement have cross-cultural inconsistency (Xie et al., 2022). Some Chinese scholars have also concluded that different parenting styles can either moderately or significantly influence academic achievement (Peng, 2015). Therefore, the present study's finding of no correlation is within certain expectations. The insignificance of these findings aligns with the current study's findings, which indicate that the negative impact of authoritarian parenting styles on academic performance is not statistically significant, although there is a noticeable trend. The effect of permissive parenting styles on academic performance was insignificant and weak.

Various underlying factors may contribute to the inconsistency in research on the effects of parenting styles on academic performance. On the one hand, fathers and mothers often have unique parenting styles that may affect children through different pathways (Inam et al., 2016; Xie et al., 2022). For example, fathers may be more focused on rules and discipline, whereas mothers tend to be more emotionally supportive, and such

gender differences may lead to different patterns of academic performance across different cultural contexts and home environments. On the other hand, although parenting styles play an important role in academic performance, there are other potential factors (e.g., students' personal attributes, school environment, family background, etc.) that collectively influence academic performance (Al-Rousan et al., 2023).

In addition, different parenting styles have both facilitating and inhibiting effects on academic performance, and these relationships vary depending on factors such as student age and subject characteristics. Xie et al. (2022) suggest that positive parenting styles tend to significantly contribute to students' academic performance, while negative parenting styles may have a negative impact on academic performance. However, depending on the student's age stage or the characteristics of the subject they are studying, this pattern of influence may change.

In summary, the current study indicates that upper elementary school students have a keen awareness of their families' parenting styles. This suggests that parenting styles, particularly those that are controlling or punitive, can significantly influence students' academic performance. Overly strict or controlling parenting styles tend to increase students' psychological stress and learning anxiety and weaken their concentration and performance levels in academic tasks. In addition, children aged 10–13 are at a critical stage of self-awareness and independence and need more emotional support and autonomy, while controlling or punitive parenting styles may limit their intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. When parental behaviours convey a lack of trust in students' abilities, students may find it more difficult to build confidence in learning and may show lower self-efficacy and higher frustration when facing academic challenges, which may adversely affect their academic performance.

Based on the results of the current study, future research should explore in depth the interactions between parenting styles and external environmental factors in order to reveal the full range of mechanisms underlying the development of academic performance. This includes examining the synergistic effects of parenting styles among family members and the potential influence of sociocultural context on parenting practices. To promote students' psychological well-being and academic success, parents should balance warmth and rules in their parenting styles, promote authoritative parenting styles, give moderate emotional support and autonomy, and avoid excessive control and punishment. Teachers, on the other hand, should work closely with parents to provide differentiated teaching and psychological support that considers students' individual characteristics.

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Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The researchers used the research ethics provided by the Research Ethics Committee of Universiti Teknologi MARA (RECUiTM). All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants according to the Declaration of Helsinki.

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