

Original Article

The Impact of Parental Encouragement on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students

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Abstract

Students' academic paths are greatly influenced by parental support, especially in secondary school. Parents' involvement in their children's education may have a significant impact on their children's intrinsic drive, learning habits, and final grades. The study examines the ways in which parental encouragement promotes academic achievement, drawing on theories from psychology and education. It also explores the possible consequences for educational policy and family involvement strategies.

Parental support significantly influences students' academic journeys, particularly in secondary school. The involvement of parents in their children's education can greatly affect their intrinsic motivation, study habits, and ultimately, their grades. This study, drawing on psychological and educational theories, explores how parental encouragement fosters academic achievement. It also investigates the potential implications for educational policy and strategies for family involvement.

Keywords: Education, School, Students, Secondary, Parental.

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Submitted: 22 Sep 2024 **Revised:** 30 Sep 2024 **Accepted:** 15 Oct 2024 **Published:** 30 Nov 2024

Introduction

Everyone agrees that education is a path to personal progress, country prosperity, and social change. Students' academic achievement is the most important component of their educational experience, especially in secondary school, a pivotal year that frequently dictates their future study courses and professional paths. Many individual and institutional factors affect academic performance, such as school quality, teaching methods, learning resources, peer influence, and personal motivation. However, one of the most important and lasting factors that is often overlooked is the role of the family, especially parental encouragement. Although intangible, parental support is the cornerstone that many children use to establish their academic identity, drive, and future success. Consistent and positive reinforcement is what parents provide their children. This includes things such as being there for them emotionally, believing in what they can do, being involved in their schooling, and creating a home atmosphere that values learning. This type of support goes beyond just providing financial aid; it also provides psychological and emotional reinforcement that motivates children

to do their best in school, stay motivated when things go tough, and ultimately create a lifelong love of learning.

The function of parental encouragement is complex and significant in secondary education, when children start to develop feelings of autonomy, responsibility, and self-identity. Adolescents deal with the psychological and social changes that occur during puberty, in addition to ever-increasing academic pressures. Encouragement, as opposed to direct control or supervision, is an effective and suitable kind of support that shows care and investment in a student's success while still respecting their growing independence, which is a natural decline in parental involvement. Students who receive consistent positive reinforcement are more likely to become self-motivated, confident in their talent, and overcome academic challenges. Positive reinforcement may take many forms, including but not limited to: vocal affirmations, genuine curiosity about how things are going in school, open dialogue about future goals, and compliments on effort rather than final grades.

Quick Response Code:	Access this article online
	Website: https://rlgjaar.com
	Website: https://www.doi.org DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15798458

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How to cite this article:

Dheeraj, D., & Kumar, S. (2024). The Impact of Parental Encouragement on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students. Royal International Global Journal of Advance and Applied Research, 1(5), 22-28. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15798458>

When schools lack the necessary resources or when educational disparities are widespread, this type of assistance becomes even more important. As a compensating element, parental support can help children overcome systemic restrictions. Nevertheless, academic attitude and performance are significantly affected by positive reinforcement, even in more privileged settings. Having access to resources can help children succeed in school, but this will not be enough unless they also have the emotional support and motivation they need to make good use of those resources. This is when the psychological component of the educational process appears. Consistent parental encouragement is an excellent way to help children feel appreciated, understood, and capable, all of which contribute to their academic success. Positive study habits, increased academic engagement, and improved communication between parents and children were associated with positive reinforcement.

Parental encouragement is the cornerstone of good parenting, regardless of cultural differences in how it is seen or practiced. In individualistic societies, the emphasis may be on individual accomplishments and self-actualization, but in collectivist cultures, it is typically associated with family honor and community prosperity. The fundamental idea is the same throughout cultures: children do better in school when they see their parents' faces on the wall. By bolstering pupils' feelings of purpose and direction, encouragement also acts as a buffer against negative external effects, such as socioeconomic difficulties or social pressure. The quality and consistency of parental encouragement often exceed the frequency or intensity of their participation.

Beyond short-term improvements in grades, parental support has far-reaching consequences. Students' sense of self-worth, ability to manage their time wisely, and outlook on learning were all positively impacted in the long run. Students who feel supported are more inclined to try new things, ask for clarification, get assistance when needed, and keep going even when they fail. These actions provide the groundwork for academic resilience, a quality that is critical for doing well in secondary schools, colleges, and beyond. Sustained academic success depends on pupils having a growth mentality that is promoted through encouragement. This attitude holds that intellect can be enhanced through hard work and persistence.

By failing to recognize the significance of parental encouragement, educational systems run the danger of embracing the flawed paradigm of student development. While school districts and lawmakers should prioritize investing in qualified educators, well-designed classrooms, and rigorous curricula, parents must also be actively involved in their children's education. The divide between home and school settings can be reduced by initiatives such as parent-teacher communication platforms, educational programs for parents, and school events that incorporate families. Another way teachers may help

is to encourage parents to continue learning at home in a positive way, without resorting to punishment or pressure, but rather by having conversations that are helpful and actively listen to their children.

Parental support is more important than ever in today's schools because children face many problems, including academic expectations, Internet diversions, mental health issues, and the competitive nature of standardized tests. It provides students with emotional support and a feeling of purpose, qualities that are in short supply in today's more robotic classrooms. While technological advancements have been beneficial, nothing can supplant the personal touch and genuine care that genuine encouragement provides. When students are motivated, they are less likely to view digital tools as distractions and are more likely to use them to their advantage as they continue their educational journey.

Parental encouragement is an often-overlooked yet crucial component of secondary school children's academic success. It functions as a gateway between providing emotional support, motivating counsel, and reinforcing learning. Encouraging growth in both competence and independence is a more balanced approach than authoritarian parenting or monetary assistance. The procedure is ever-changing, adapting to the child's growth, and is based on the premise that every child can achieve its goals. Parents play an essential role in their children's education, not just as caretakers and resource suppliers, but also as constant cheerleaders throughout their children's academic careers. This role must be acknowledged and supported if educational stakeholders seriously improve student results. Educational results can be more comprehensive, long-lasting, and significant if encouragement is an essential part of academic assistance.

1. Concept Of Parental Encouragement

An important component of a parent's role in their child's education, especially in the formative years of high school, is providing positive reinforcement in the form of encouragement, which is a multi-faceted notion. This means that parents should always be there to their children emotionally and offer them positive feedback and affirmations when it comes to school. Positive reinforcement from parents encourages a lifelong love of learning rather than short-term obedience that might result from pressure or compulsion. Fundamentally, supporting a child's growth and development with words of encouragement shows that they believe in their abilities. It may not always take the form of physical aid, like doing a child's homework or showing up for parent-teacher conferences, but it always includes words and body language that tell the child how much you value and respect what they are doing in school. Verbal praise, constructive criticism, expressions of pride, motivation to pursue goals, listening attentively during school discussions, sharing personal experiences connected to learning, and involvement in academic decision making are all forms of parental encouragement. The development of character attributes associated with success in school, such as

self-control, interest, and perseverance, may also reflect this. For example, a parent who consistently shows interest in their child's school activities, provides positive feedback after tests, or offers reassurance when the student is struggling academically is performing powerful acts of encouragement that validate the student's worth and ability.

You can better grasp the idea of parental encouragement when you place it in the context of the entire range of parental participation. School visits, parent-teacher conferences, homework monitoring, and involvement in school administration are all examples of parental involvement, but encouragement is a more person-centered and emotionally focused kind of assistance. Although it typically occurs in the privacy of one's own home, in one's own words, or as part of one's daily routine, its psychological impact on pupils can greatly affect their perceptions of their own talents, duties, and aspirations. Because it corresponds to a child's emotional needs and developmental stage, encouragement is very beneficial. Adolescents face rising demands for approval, peer pressure, self-doubt, and autonomy as they navigate their secondary school years. Students are better able to handle academic and personal difficulties when they receive constant parental support. It helps one maintain a healthy academic self-concept, or the conviction that one can succeed intellectually, which is an important indicator of future academic achievement.

The idea also emphasizes the need to evaluate a child's uniqueness and independence through positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement fosters a child's sense of agency and ambition, in contrast to authoritarian or directive methods when parents establish rigid standards or use punishment as a means of control. It establishes a climate of trust and open dialogue between families by valuing each child's individual abilities, learning style, and growth rate. This relationship is crucial for students to feel comfortable asking for help, making errors, expressing uncertainty, and taking academic opportunities without fear of reprimand or humiliation. Children are more likely to embrace learning as a personal journey and find pleasure when parents support rather than impose it. In addition, it is important to set reasonable goals when encouraging someone, which should not include achieving flawless results or receiving an A+ but rather highlight the importance of working hard and striving for greatness to the best of one's ability.

Modelling actions that emphasize the importance of education are also part of the idea of parental encouragement. Kids pick up many cues from seeing their parents and tend to act in a similar manner. In a roundabout way, parents show their kids that education is valuable and worth investing in when they read frequently, think critically, talk about current events, and work on themselves. A student's attitude towards education and learning may be significantly impacted by this type of encouragement, which is called modelling. The way parents react to

their children's academic achievement or failure also shows how they support their children. Teaching children that learning is about the journey and not the destination is the job of parents, who value effort and persistence more than test scores. Conversely, parental participation can backfire if they respond with negative reinforcement, such as comparisons, harsh criticism, or a lack of compassion, which can damage a child's self-esteem and drive.

How parents support their children varies greatly depending on cultural and socioeconomic contexts. While explicit verbal reinforcement is more typical in certain cultures, others may rely on nonverbal cues such as body language to convey support. Similarly, the knowledge, resources, and time available to parents from various socioeconomic backgrounds might affect how and how often they promote their children's education. However, the core of encouragement, showing faith in the child's abilities, is constant. Moral support, emotional availability, and a firm dedication to their academic well-being may empower even the most economically or educationally disadvantaged parents to inspire their children to achieve academic potential. To compensate for extrinsic constraints, such as underfunded schools or a lack of extracurricular activities, parental support may be the most constant and dependable source of academic motivation for children in impoverished situations.

Most importantly, children who are not naturally gifted academically are not the only ones to benefit from parental support. For children who are not doing well in school or who do not care about learning, it is just as important. Particularly helpful would be words of encouragement that center on these children's efforts, their growth, and the possibility of other routes to achievement. In such circumstances, offering words of encouragement might help break the vicious cycle of low self-esteem and academic failure. A child's self-esteem and academic trajectory can be gently restored with consistent encouragement and positive reinforcement from their parents. Moreover, this demonstrates that encouragement can avoid problems such as low self-esteem, disruptive behaviors, and dropping out of school. Recognized as crucial in today's competitive and sometimes stressful academic settings, resilience—the capacity to bounce back from setbacks—is intricately related to encouragement in educational psychology.

One important aspect of parent-child interaction that has a direct impact on academic success is parental encouragement. It includes verbal affirmations, emotional support, talking about goals, providing a good example in terms of education, and making the house a good place to study. Encouragement, in contrast to other types of participation, does not require special access to resources or formal organizations; it is both fundamentally human and available to everyone. It promotes a love of learning that lasts a lifetime, honors each student's uniqueness, and encourages intrinsic drive and self-assurance. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge it as more than just a kind

deed; it is a cornerstone of student growth. If parents want their children to succeed in school, one of the most important and long-lasting things they can do is encourage them. This will help shape their attitudes, boost confidence, and direct their academic concentration.

2. Theoretical Framework

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a popular paradigm for comprehending human motivation, personality development, and psychological well-being. The main tenet of SDT is that people have innate desires for relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Individuals' sense of well-being, engagement, and self-motivation is boosted when these demands are met. When applied to the field of education, SDT provides a robust framework for investigating how parental support affects children's academic achievement, particularly at the crucial juncture of adolescent emotional, social, and cognitive development.

Students need autonomy when they want to feel that they can make their own decisions and act independently. Autonomy is promoted when parents let their children take charge of their own education, make choices about what they study, and aim for academic outcomes meaningful to them. Instead of micromanaging their children or putting undue pressure on them to succeed, parents who promote autonomy in their children's learning help their children understand why certain academic standards are important, validate their emotions, and promote creative problem solving. Higher rates of academic perseverance, creativity, and satisfaction are related to this type of encouragement because they promote feelings of self-direction and intrinsic drive.

The impression of a student's capacity to successfully complete tasks and overcome problems is at the heart of the demand for competence. When parents believe in their child's skills, praise their efforts, and focus on the process rather than the result, they meet this need. When a parent compliments their child's hard effort in an assignment, regardless of the final grade, the child feels good about themselves and is more likely to keep trying. Improved academic performance, more courage to tackle challenging activities, and less fear of failure have been associated with higher levels of academic self-efficacy, which may be fostered by this type of feedback.

The urge to be part of a community and have one's worth recognized and appreciated makes up the third need, relatedness. Parents meet this requirement when they demonstrate interest in their child's school life by listening, demonstrating empathy, and being physically present. Having a close relationship with one's parents or guardians helps instill the belief that learning is a group effort rather than an individual effort. When students have strong ties with the people they learn from, they are more invested in their academic success, have higher regard for their teachers, and like being part of the school community.

Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) is a cornerstone of the psychological theory that describes how people pick up new habits, perspectives, and information by seeing and imitating others around them. Social learning theory (SLT) differs from behaviorism in its emphasis on the power of important others, including parents, instructors, and classmates, to shape behavior. When applied to the realm of education, SLT sheds light on the ways in which parental support affects the study habits and grades of secondary school students.

Bandura argues that one way to learn is through observational learning, which entails seeing and mimicking the actions of others. Parents play a key role as role models for their children who observe and frequently imitate their behavior, outlook, and reactions to schooling. Reading often, making academic objectives, managing time well, and politely mentioning the significance of education are examples of beneficial behaviors that children are likely to absorb and mimic in their own academic pursuits when they see their parents doing the same. When students are teenagers, they are especially receptive to role expectations and social signals, making this modelling impact more potent.

A fundamental idea of SLT is reinforcement, which can be direct or indirect. Positive reinforcements increase the probability that a student will continue to engage in academic activities when they see their parents' support efforts, lauding persistence and appreciating academic accomplishment. As an example, when a parent takes pleasure in their child's progress, no matter how small, in maths, the youngster learns that their efforts are valued, which encourages them to continue their behavior. Furthermore, a student's academic motivation might be impacted by vicarious reinforcement, which occurs when one observes other people who are rewarded for specific behaviors. A student may be more likely to mimic their siblings' actions if they see that their siblings are receiving positive reinforcement for their own academic performance.

Self-efficacy, or the conviction that one is capable of achieving one's goals, is also highly valued in the SLT. Parents' words of wisdom and unwavering emotional support go a long way in molding their children's sense of self-efficacy. Children develop a sense of self-worth and competence when their parents believe in them and push them to succeed academically. Higher levels of academic self-efficacy are associated with greater resilience in the face of adversity, greater excitement in the learning process, and improved academic outcomes.

In addition, the SLT emphasizes the idea of reciprocal determinism, which is the interplay between individual characteristics, actions, and their surroundings. It follows that a student's academic conduct is impacted by both parental influence and the student's own interpretation of and reaction to that effect. Therefore, rather than coming off as a control

or judgment, the most successful form of parental encouragement is genuine, supporting, and empowering. A crucial aspect of this participatory learning process is the atmosphere that parents cultivate, which should be emotionally supportive, intellectually engaging, and positively reinforcing.

Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner established the Ecological Systems Theory as a framework for studying the interplay between different environmental systems and their effects on human development, with a focus on childhood and adolescence. Recognizing that a child does not develop and learn alone but rather within a complex network of social and environmental factors, encompassing both immediate family and larger societal forces, is central to this theory. Micro, meso, exo, macro, and chronosystems are the five interconnected levels that constitute these systems. When it comes to early teenage development, the microsystem, which encompasses the child's immediate surroundings including family, school, and peer groups, is the most important. As an element of the microsystem, parental encouragement is essential to molding a child's academic conduct, drive, and achievement. Academic engagement and self-confidence are positively impacted when parents offer emotional support, believe in their children's abilities, and take an active interest in their education. A supportive family environment is essential for a child's academic performance, and this type of encouragement helps foster such qualities in children. Examples of microsystem interactions include those between the home and the classroom, which are reflected in the mesosystem.

Positive educational achievements are reinforced when parents engage in good communication with their teachers, attend school activities, and work together on academic concerns. Parental support encompasses more than just saying nice things about their children at home; it also means being involved in their children's extracurricular activities. Even when students are not actively involved, the exosystem still has an indirect influence on their growth. For example, a parent's ability to provide their child with enough time, attention, or emotional support could be impacted by their stress levels, regulations at work, or the resources they have access to. Students' academic performance may suffer if their family experiences economic or vocational stress, as this can lead to a decrease in encouraging behaviors.

Cultural views, societal conventions, and educational policies that shape parental encouragement are parts of the macrosystem. Parents are more likely to view providing academic help as a fundamental obligation in cultures that place high value on education. However, in other situations, parental engagement may be limited because of structural inequities or cultural norms, even when parents are prepared to provide support. Finally, the chronosystem is all about time, which includes changes in one's life, society, and history. The

constancy or form of parental encouragement can be affected over time by changes, such as family moves, divorce, or the fast incorporation of technology in schooling. Secondary school students are especially vulnerable to these kinds of changes; providing consistent support from parents may go a long way towards ensuring their mental and academic well-being as they navigate these years. Parental encouragement, according to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, is not a static act, but rather an impact molded by interactions across several environmental levels. Educators and lawmakers can better assist families in achieving academic achievement for their secondary school children if they grasp this connection.

3. Dimensions Of Parental Encouragement

Parents show their beliefs in and support for their children's academic growth through a variety of behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and relational manifestations. This multi faceted construct is known as parental encouragement. A more nuanced understanding of the ways in which parents positively impact their children's educational engagement, motivation, and success can be achieved by examining different aspects of parental encouragement. This is especially true during secondary school years, when students face increasing academic challenges, emotional volatility, and the formation of their identities. Emotional support, academic assistance, motivational reinforcement, expectation-setting, good communication, praise and acknowledgement, and participation in academic decision-making are all essential components of parental encouragement. All these factors work together, not alone, to create an atmosphere that is good for students' academic success.

Affective displays of care, worry, and empathy offered by parents to their children within the framework of learning constitute emotional support, the first and most fundamental feature. This involves being there for the child when they are feeling anxious about school, understanding when they are having trouble with schoolwork, and always assuring them that they are valuable regardless of how well they do. Academic resilience and risk-taking are aided by a sense of psychological safety, which can be achieved through emotional support. Students are more inclined to take risks, ask for help when they need it, and maintain a positive outlook on learning when they have a strong sense of emotional security and acceptance from their parents. Having this quality is especially important for teenagers, who often struggle with low self-esteem and worry about upsetting their parents. In this way, encouragement reassures them that their worth is based on more than just their grades; it is also decided by how hard they work and how long they stay on the task.

Academic assistance is another important factor; it entails becoming more involved in children's schoolwork. Assisting with homework when requested, giving necessary academic resources such as books or Internet access, establishing a regular study schedule at home, and promoting productive

study habits are all part of this. Academic assistance provides students with the habits and tools they need to achieve, while emotional support lays the psychological groundwork for learning. Students can still receive academic help by showing how to tackle learning problems on their own rather than having their work done for them. Communicating with teachers and keeping tabs on children's academic achievement is also a part of this.

Related to this is motivational reinforcement, which includes both spoken and nonverbal cues that encourage youngsters to strive for academic success. A few well-chosen words or phrases may go a long way, such "I believe in you," "You can do it," or "Keep trying." Small triumphs or pre-test words of encouragement can also be potent forms of motivational reinforcement. A growth mindset in which pupils view effort as the key to development can be fostered through this kind of reinforcement. Students develop intrinsic motivation when they see value in their efforts, even if the payoff is slow.

When it comes to molding academic habits and goals, the aspect of expectation setting is crucial. One way parents show faith in their child's skills is by having high academic expectations that are both reasonable and challenging. These expectations serve as benchmarks for pupils to aim towards, encouraging them to do their best. However, the manner in which expectations are presented is vital. Parental expectations should not be imposed by coercion or fear of punishment but rather through open dialogue with the establishment of shared goals that account for the child's interests, abilities, and areas of weakness. The ideal set of expectations would encourage the student to go for stars while still being reasonable and accommodating when faced with setbacks.

Parental encouragement also includes positive speech. Parents' approach to conversations with their children on school, learning, teachers, and academic difficulties falls under this category. By fostering an environment free from criticism and judgement, positive communication empowers students to speak about their challenges, ask questions, and seek guidance. Engaging in two-way discussions instead of one-sided lectures, listening carefully, and supporting students' emotions are all part of it. The development of favorable academic attitudes and strong interpersonal skills is positively correlated with children's exposure to positive communication at home.

Another important factor in rewarding good academic performance is public claim. By praising growth, perseverance, and effort, rather than merely exceptional results, we show that learning is worthwhile in and of itself. Genuine and tailored compliments, such "I observed the amount of effort you put into that project" or "You made significant progress in maths this term," are more impactful than generalizations. Students are motivated to take pleasure in their learning journey and internalize the relationship between effort and outcome. Conversely, it may backfire if the praise is too subtle or excessive,

making the recipient reliant on reinforcement from other sources. Accordingly, well-timed compliments that foster tenacity, interest, and self-control are hallmarks of good parental encouragement.

Finally, parental engagement in academic decision-making refers to the extent to which parents take part in making choices about their child's education, including course selection, school evaluation, and goal setting. Such participation demonstrates that parents value their children's intelligence and care for their future. That said, this aspect of encouragement should be more of a team effort than an authoritarian one; it should enable children to own their choices while still receiving advice and support from their parents. By participating, students are more likely to feel supported in their decisions and engage in critical thinking about their academic futures.

Together, these aspects of parental encouragement—emotional support, academic support, motivational reinforcement, setting expectations, good communication, acknowledgement, and involvement—form a strong foundation for resilient, self-reliant, and well-rounded students. Students' academic orientation is heavily impacted by the existence and balance of these aspects, which, in turn, affects their performance in school and their attitude towards education in the long run. High expectations without emotional support or academic help without communication are examples of imbalanced or inadequate encouragement that can lead to stress and loss of desire. As a result, when lawmakers, teachers, and parents are aware of these factors, they may advocate positive reinforcement strategies that meet the unique requirements of adolescents in secondary schools. Therefore, rather than viewing parental encouragement as a static idea, it should be viewed as an evolving and multi-faceted process customized to each child's unique circumstances, personality, and goals. A student's family may become an invaluable resource for their academic progress and future success by intentionally incorporating these characteristics into their daily parenting.

Conclusion

The influence of parental encouragement in determining students' academic performance in secondary school was significant. Students receive self-assurance and the will to achieve when their parents are involved in their education, encourage them to learn, and show their support. Children who receive positive reinforcement from their parents are more likely to concentrate, exercise self-control, and face the challenge of scholastic difficulties because they feel loved, capable, and encouraged. Believing in the child's potential, delivering kind words at tough times, and celebrating every tiny accomplishment are all parts of being a supportive parent. It is not only about assisting with schoolwork or attending school meetings. A simple "how was your day at school?" followed by praise for their accomplishments or words of encouragement following a setback may go a long way. Every parent has something unique in

offering to their children, regardless of their socioeconomic status. It is crucial for pupils to have unwavering support from their parents while navigating the challenges of secondary school. School districts, communities, and governments should collaborate to raise awareness among parents regarding the impact they may have on their children's academic success.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Magadh University Bodhgaya, Dr. Dhananjay Dheeraj (HOD), Department of Education, Gaya College, Gaya for providing the necessary facilities and support to carry out this research. We also thank Dr. Dhananjay Dheeraj (HOD), Department of Education, Gaya College, Gaya for their valuable guidance and insightful suggestions during the course of this study.

We are grateful to self for financial assistance under the project Research Paper Title The Impact of Parental Encouragement on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students. Special thanks are extended to Sanjay Kumar Research Scholar, Department of Education Magadh University Bodhgaya for their assistance with data collection, analysis, and administrative support.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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