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EDITORIAL DESK

The Centre for General Nigerian Studies has continued to be a frontier for knowledge dissemination through her series of publications, among other activities being performed by the directorate.

This volume 5 journal of Contemporary Issues in Nigerian Economy of March 2025 housed a total of 18 well researched articles from scholars across the geographical boundaries of the Africa sub region. The team of experienced editors subjected the articles to peer review, and their plagiarism checks have satisfied the guild of editors.

The journal is recommended to researchers, scholars, lecturers, and students to read, and the planners can leverage on recommendations as panacea to the doldrums confronting the socio-economic and educational spheres of the Sub Sahara Africa nations

I wish all the contributors and readers Barka Eid Fitri and Easter in advance

Prof. M.O.B Mohammed FNAEAP

Lead Editor

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PARENTING STYLES, PEER INFLUENCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AS CORRELATES OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS OF ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated parenting style, peer influence and socio-economic status as correlates of sexual behaviours of adolescents in senior secondary schools in Education District III of Lagos State. The study adopted a cross-sectional correlation survey research design. The population of this research comprised all the public senior secondary school students in Education District III of Lagos State. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select 138 respondents. Self-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collected were analysed. Findings showed a positive non-significant relationship between parenting styles and sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students, ($r = .120, N = 138, p > .05$); a positive significant relationship between peer influence and sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students, ($r = .649, N = 138, p < .05$) and a significant combined contribution of parenting styles, peer influence and socio-economic status (SES) to sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students, $F_{(5, 132)} = 24.711, p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.483$. It is recommended among others that Education programmes that focus on positive parenting practices, peer-led initiatives in schools, and programmes that would consider challenges faced by students from different SES backgrounds should be developed.

Keywords: Parenting Style, Peer Influence, Socio-Economics, Status, Sexual Behaviour

Introduction

Adolescence as a stage in human development appears to be characterized by different kinds of behaviours. During this stage, adolescents exhibit various psychosocial behaviours such as peer identification, questioning the legitimacy of parenting authority and supervision and deviant behaviours towards societal norms. Others include masturbating, engaging in unprotected sexual intercourse and watching pornographic videos. Furthermore, this period marks the development of reproductive organs which may spur them to go into sexual relationships with partners of the opposite sex and subsequently explore sexual activity.

This sexual experimentation among adolescents could involve unprotected sexual intercourse leading to unwanted pregnancies. The female adolescents in such a trap could end up not going back to school; even some of them may lose their lives in the process of aborting the unwanted

pregnancies. In the quest for adolescents to experiment with sexual activities may indulge in risky sexual behaviours.

This risky menace has become increasingly pronounced in society and consequently has deteriorating effects on adolescents' psychosocial well-being. Reasons for such an increase could be improper sex education programmes and social media which promote uncontrolled lustful and irresponsible sexual behaviour. Peer influence on dressing and drug intake (Uya, 2015). The child's upbringing parents and societal factors (Alika et al, 2016) are some reasons responsible for the menace. The parenting style adopted in homes could have effects on the child's psychosocial development. The first point of call by a child is the home having the parents as their teachers, thus the type of parenting style could affect children's upbringing which subsequently affects their adolescence stage which may in turn influence their sexual behaviours.

Parenting styles adopted at home represent behaviours and ways parents adopt to control children's behaviours to metamorphose into an acceptable socialized (Shabbir & Ishaq, 2019). As parents prepare their children for adulthood, they adopt different parenting styles to protect their adolescents from engaging in immoral acts such as risky sexual behaviour and other forms of deviant behaviour. Different homes adopt different parenting styles, which implies that differences in parenting styles could occur within individual societies as well as between different cultures. Four major parenting styles as identified by Baumrind (1991) as cited in Kuppens and Ceulemans (2019) include authoritarian, permissive, authoritative and neglectful or uninvolved.

The authoritative parenting style is the one in which parents listen and respect their children's point of view and offer them opportunities to their children to be independent. Siegler as cited in Hennessey (2015) states that the parent-child relationship that exists between authoritative parents and children is a unique one as children are allowed to be heard, air their views, and express their sadness, fear, worries and anxiety. The children according to Shah (2019) are characterized by having high self-esteem, confidence in themselves, striving to achieve their goals and not giving up easily; facing new situations with confidence and enthusiasm, having good social skills and being socially competent, having great emotional intelligence which allows them to express, understand and control their own emotions, as well as understand those of others and have empathy.

Researchers have shown that this style of parenting is the most successful for children because of its high degree of involvement and balanced levels of control. Regarding sexual behaviour among adolescents, positive relationships characterized by high levels of warmth and support may act as a conduit through which parents impart their views or morals and help guide youth in decision-making skills, affecting their involvement in risk behaviour (Coley, Votruba-Drzal, & Schindler, 2009). Longmore, Manning and Giordano (2009) that when parents provide warmth/support, appropriately monitor behaviour and practice discipline in non-coercive ways, adolescents are more likely to develop interpersonal security and observe boundaries that shape involvement in sexual activity. These suggest that adolescents from authoritative parents may be less involved in sexual practices.

A permissive parenting style is one in which parents are in love with their children but do not set norms or limits. They are lenient; do not use punishment and allow their children to make their decisions without their guidance and regardless of the consequences. They try to be friends instead

of parents showing little control in the children's lives. Baumrind (1991) as cited in Rahman, Shahrin and Kamaruzaman (2017) added that parents usually fail to set proper discipline for their children, even if they have few behavioural expectations for them. The parents also tend to encourage their children's autonomy and allow them to make their own decisions and regulate their activities. Cherry (2019) posited that children raised by permissive parents tend to make bad decisions; show more aggression and less emotional comprehension; are prone to delinquency and unable to manage their time and their habits. However, a study by Mbua and Adigeb (2015) reported that in sexual behaviour, adolescents with permissive parenting styles do significantly better than their counterparts with authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. From these reports, it remains unclear regarding the direction of the relationship between permissive parenting style and adolescent sexual behaviour. From the foregoing, it can be seen that parents play a pivotal role in acting as social control and attachment models for their adolescents by providing emotional connections, behavioural constraints and modelling of relationship processes. It is sufficient to state that these parenting styles discussed may go a long way in determining how adolescents engage in sexual behaviours. Hence, the type of parenting style adopted by parents is significant in predicting adolescents 'outcomes in sexual activities.

For years, peer influence has reigned as the most important contributor to adolescent behaviour as well as other social processes. In addition the interpersonal peer group processes such as group expectations and the development of one's social identity (Jeffrey, 2007). Steinberg (2008) established that adolescents are more likely than children to take risks, as recognized by the elevated rates of experimentation with drugs, alcohol and unprotected sexual intercourse. In a related study by Steinberg and Monshais (2017), peer influence was observed as a primary contextual factor contributing to adolescent's tendency to make risky decisions. Furthermore, one of the strongest predictors of delinquent behaviour in adolescents is affiliated with delinquent peers (Dishion et al, 2012).

Similarly, in a National Survey of teens, adolescents cited pressure from their friends as the reason for their initial involvement in sex (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2018). It is therefore a long-established principle of social psychology that people feel compelled to conform to the norms and perceived expectations of the group to which they belong (Baumester, 1990) and according to Berndt (1996), there is evidence that this is true, especially in early adolescence.

Peer influence, including peer pressure, significantly impacts human behaviour. Scholars have long studied these factors to understand how they affect our actions, particularly concerning adolescent sexual behaviour within school settings, even though such behaviour often clashes with societal norms. Sexual behaviour encompasses how individuals act regarding sexual intercourse (Nwagbo & Ubachukwu cited in Chigbu et al, 2021). It can lead to multiple partners, prostitution, and atypical practices like homosexuality, as well as premarital sex and inconsistent condom use (Udadi in Chigbu et al, 2021). Udadi also sees sexual behaviour as the sum of an adolescent's actions in managing sexual urges. Others define it as actions and responses linked to sexual pleasure (Omeje et al in Chigbu et al, 2021) or the capacity to experience and express sexual feelings. Gebhard (2014) defines sexual behaviour as any solitary, partnered, or group activity that causes sexual arousal. Gebhard highlights that human sexual behaviours are determined by inherited sexual response patterns which ensure reproduction, and the social restraints placed on the expression of sexuality.

The terms sexual behaviour, sexual activities, and sexual practice are often used interchangeably. Sexual behaviour includes actions intended to arouse another person, like foreplay. For this study, sexual behaviour refers to any sexual act in-school adolescents perform for sexual gratification. Studies show that sexual activity is common among in-school adolescents. For example, a study in Imo State (Utobo, 2002) found that 76% of male students had experienced heterosexual intercourse. Another survey in Enugu State (Onuiwu & Echefuns, 2004) revealed that 17% of girls aged 13-18 were sexually active, with 35% having multiple partners. Such behaviours can leave adolescents open to exploitation and risky situations, potentially leading to unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

Research indicates that an early sexual debut, defined as engaging in sexual activity before the age of 15, significantly heightens the risk of unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and future risky sexual behaviors (Houlihan et al., Waller & DuBois, in Peçi, 2017). During their teenage years, many adolescents face decisions regarding whether to engage in sexual activity and, if they choose to do so, whether to use condoms or other contraceptives. Various factors influence these decisions. Parents, educators, and other adults involved with youth have realized that they cannot directly control teenagers' sexual behaviors. Although parents may wish to monitor their children constantly to prevent sexual activity or unprotected sex, this is not feasible. Instead, they can attempt to influence the factors that shape young people's sexual decision-making, such as their values regarding sexual behavior, their perceptions of family and peer norms about sex, their attitudes toward condoms and contraception, as well as their educational and career aspirations, and their connections to parents, schools, and faith communities. These elements can significantly impact whether teens choose to have sex and whether they use protection to prevent pregnancy and STDs.

An early sexual debut refers to an adolescent's first consensual sexual experience occurring before age 15 (Peçi, 2017; Guttmacher Institute, 2012). Current data shows that around 13% of adolescents are sexually active by age 15 (Guttmacher Institute, 2012). Before age 13, only 6.1% of youth report having had sexual intercourse (CDC, 2012). By age 19, about 85% of adolescents are sexually active (CDC, 2012). These statistics suggest that a crucial period for intervening in adolescents' sexual behaviors is between ages 13 and 15.

Peer norms significantly influence individual sexual and contraceptive behaviors among teens. Research indicates that when teenagers perceive their peers as having permissive attitudes toward premarital sex or engaging in sexual activity themselves, they are more likely to participate in sexual activity, do so more frequently, and have multiple partners (Kirby in Peçi, 2017). Additionally, when youth believe their peers support condom use, they are more likely to use condoms and other contraceptives. These findings imply that adolescents who are part of groups that uphold clear values or norms against sexual activity or unprotected sex are less likely to engage in those behaviors. Conversely, those connected to groups with permissive attitudes toward sex are more likely to become sexually active. The perception of peers' sexual behaviors is a strong predictor of an early adolescent's intention to engage in sexual activity sooner (Peçi, 2017).

A crucial phase of sexual exploration and development takes place during adolescence. At this stage, individuals start to evaluate which sexual behaviors are enjoyable, moral, and suitable for their age group (Levay in Chigbu et al, 2021). However, society often strongly discourages

adolescents from engaging in sexual activities, regardless of their perceived enjoyment, morality, or appropriateness.

Additionally, parents play a vital role in instilling positive sexual values in adolescents. Supporting this idea, Oluyemi, Yinusa, Abdullateef, Kehinde, and Adejoke (2017) found a significant connection between adolescents' sexual behaviors and the level of parental communication and monitoring. Their research suggests that when adolescents feel they are subjected to excessive psychological control by their parents, they are more likely to experience an earlier sexual debut.

Adolescents are known to be sex-crazed and hormone-driven individuals whose sexuality has been viewed negatively as inappropriate and troublesome rather than normal and healthy. Despite the efforts made by the government, school administrators and counsellors in secondary schools in the Lagos States to instill moral values and appropriate moral behaviour into the lives of the students, adolescents in this area still seem to develop negative personalities which seem to have hampered and overwhelmed these efforts. They indulge in indiscriminate sexual behaviour such as indecent dressing, premarital sex, rape, homosexuality, lesbianism, masturbation, and voyeurism among others which may have resulted in unwanted pregnancies, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS. Worst of all is the fact that most female adolescents seem to have dropped out of school and abandoned their Education career as a result of unwanted pregnancy through pre-marital sex.

The parenting styles, peer influence and socio-economic status adopted by families in child upbringing which are characterized by lack of attention, love, acceptance, care and attachment to the child may affect the sexual behaviour of most adolescents in secondary schools. Given this, the researchers deemed it necessary to ask if there is any relationship between parenting styles and in-school adolescents' sexual behaviour. It is against the backdrop the present study investigated parenting style, peer influence, religion, marital status and socio-economic status as correlates to the sexual behaviour of adolescents in senior secondary school students in Education District III of Lagos State. Specifically, the study assessed the relationship between parenting styles and sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State. It also examined the combined contribution of parenting styles, peer influence, marital status, and socio-economic status (SES) to the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

1. What is the relationship between parenting styles and sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State?
2. What is the relationship between peer influence and the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State?
3. What is the relationship between parents' socio-economic status (SES) and the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1

1. There is no significant combined contribution of parenting styles, religion, peer influence, marital status, or socio-economic status (SES) to the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State.
2. There is no significant relative contribution of parenting styles, religion, peer influence, marital status, or socio-economic status (SES) to the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State.

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey research design was used and focused on assessing the parenting style, peer influence and socio-economic status as correlates of sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students. The population of the study comprised all the public senior secondary schools in Education District III, Lagos State. The sample size was 138 respondents. A multistage sampling procedure was used in selecting the respondents. The school enrolment records also revealed that there are 132 public schools in Education District III of Lagos State. The quantitative method used was a semi-structured questionnaire. The information gathered from the FGD guided the development of this. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 101 questions which were grouped to cover the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents; the second measured the level of parenting style, peer influence and socio-economic status of parents. Several measures were taken to ensure that the instrument was valid. The draft was subjected to independent peer review and experts in the field of test and measurement critically examined the instrument and made necessary corrections which were effected for face and content validity. The drafted instrument was pre-tested among 32 students selected from Lagos State University (LASU) International School which is not located in the study area. To confirm the reliability of the questionnaire, analysis of the pre-test data was done using Cronbach's Alpha correlation coefficient using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.7. The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics appropriate for each research question and hypothesis. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Answering Research Questions

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between parenting styles and sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State?

Table 1: Relationship between Parenting Styles and Sexual Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Education District III Lagos State

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r	p-value
Sexual Behaviour	138	35.32	16.999	.120	.162
Parenting Style	138	2.43	1.159		

Table 1 shows that there was no significant relationship between parenting styles and sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State, ($r = .120$, $N = 138$, $p > .05$), although, the relationship was positive. The relationship is weak since 1.4% of the variance is explained.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between peer influence and the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State?

Table 2: Relationship between Peer Influence and Sexual Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Education District III Lagos State

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r	p-value
Sexual Behaviour	138	35.32	16.999	.649**	.000
Peer Influence	138	2.26	1.135		

Table 2 shows that there was a positive significant relationship between peer influence and sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State, ($r = .649$, $N = 138$, $p < .05$). The relationship is moderate since 42.1% of the variance is explained. This implies that as the effects of peer influence increase, there is a corresponding increase in sexual behaviours among students.

Research Question 3

What is the relationship between parents' socio-economic status (SES) and the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State?

Table 3: Relationship between Parents' Socio-Economic Status (SES) and Sexual Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Education District III Lagos State

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r	p-value
Sexual Behaviour	138	35.32	16.999	.247**	.003
SES	138	1.64	.800		

Table 3 shows that there was a negative significant relationship between parents' socio-economic status (SES) and the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State, ($r = -.247$, $N = 138$, $p = .003$). The relationship is weak since 6.1% of the variance is explained.

Testing of Hypotheses**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant combined contribution of parenting styles, peer influence, or socio-economic status (SES) to the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State. The data gathered were subjected to Multiple Regression Analysis. The result of the Multiple Regression Analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Multiple Regressions on the Combined Contribution of Parenting Styles, Peer Influence, Socio-Economic Status (SES) to sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State

Tests	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	19140.039	5	3828.008	24.711	.000 ^b
Residual	20447.932	132	154.909		
Total	39587.971	137			

$$R = .695 \quad R^2 = .483 \quad \text{Adjusted } R \text{ Square} = .464.$$

Dependent Variable: Sexual Behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parenting Styles, Peer Influence, Socio-Economic Status

Table 4 shows that there is a significant combined contribution of parenting styles, peer influence, and socio-economic status (SES) to the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State; $F(5, 132) = 24.711$, $p = 0.000$ and $R^2 = 0.483$. Parenting styles, religion, peer influence, marital status and socio-economic status (SES) accounted for 48.3% of the total variance in the model (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.483$).

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relative contribution of parenting styles, peer influence, or socio-economic status (SES) to the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III Lagos State. The data gathered were subjected to Multiple Regression Analysis. The result of the Multiple Regression Analysis is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Multiple Regressions on the Relative Contribution of Parenting Styles, Peer Influence, Socio-Economic Status (SES) to Sexual Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Education District III Lagos State

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Peer Influence	9.206	.949	.615	9.699	.000
SES	-3.895	1.377	-.183	-2.829	.005
Parenting Styles	2.032	.939	.139	2.164	.032

a. Dependent Variable: Sexual Behaviour

Table 5 reveals that peer influence, socio-economic status (SES) and parenting styles were significant contributing variables to the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students ($p < .05$). Peer influence was the best-contributing variable ($\beta = 0.615$; $t = 9.699$; $p = 0.000$); sequentially followed by parents' socio-economic status (SES) ($\beta = -.183$; $t = -2.829$; $p = 0.005$) and parenting styles ($\beta = 0.139$; $t = 2.164$; $p = 0.032$).

Discussion of Findings

Results showed that there was no significant relationship between parenting styles and sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III of Lagos State although, the relationship was positive. The non-significant relationship between parenting styles and sexual behaviour in the study might be influenced by cultural nuances and norms specific to the family. Cultural attitudes towards sexuality and parenting styles can vary significantly, impacting the

observed relationships. On the contrary, existing literature concerning parenting styles showed that different parenting styles exhibit different psychosocial behaviours, for instance when authoritarian and permissive parenting were compared, an increased risk of deviant behaviour was observed, (Aziwake et al., 2018; & Sigre-Leirós et al., 2016). Similarly, Chen and Wang (2017) reported that adolescents with authoritarian parents mostly engaged in risky sexual behaviours as a result of limited parental guidance. This discrepancy highlights the importance of considering cultural and contextual factors in interpreting the influence of parenting styles on sexual behaviour.

The positive and significant relationship between peer influence and the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III, Lagos State, is consistent with findings from diverse contexts. The current study also showed that there was a significant relationship between peer influence and sexual risk behaviour. High peer influence tended to lead to high-risk sexual behaviour. Widman, et al (2016) reported that boys were significantly more susceptible to peer influence than girls. The finding is in agreement with that of Brown and Anderson (2019) who reported a robust positive relationship between peer influence and sexual behaviour among adolescents in a comprehensive longitudinal study spanning diverse Education districts. Their research highlighted the significance of peers as agents of socialization in shaping attitudes and behaviours related to sexuality. Peer influence has long been recognized as a potent factor in shaping the behaviour of adolescents, including their engagement in sexual activities. Gupta et al. (2021) conducted a cross-cultural analysis of peer influence and sexual behaviour among secondary school students in urban and rural settings. While the strength of the relationship varied across contexts, their overall findings supported a positive association. This suggests that the influence of peers on sexual behaviour transcends geographical boundaries and highlights the need for targeted interventions. Peer influence often operates through normative behaviours and attitudes within social groups. Adolescents may conform to the perceived norms established by their peers, including those related to sexual behaviour.

The negative and significant relationship between parents' socio-economic status and the sexual behaviour of senior secondary school students in Education District III, Lagos State, is consistent with findings from diverse settings. Socio-economic factors play a crucial role in shaping the environment within which adolescents make decisions about their sexual behaviour. The influence of socioeconomic status (SES) on various aspects of adolescent development has been the subject of extensive research. The finding in this study is in agreement with that of Tende (2020) who reported that the odds of people engaging in risky sexual behaviour were lower for the richest and those with higher education. The findings of these studies suggest that limited access to resources and opportunities associated with lower SES may contribute to increased vulnerability to risky sexual behaviours, aligned with the negative relationship observed in this current study.

The significant combined contribution of parenting styles, peer influence, and socio-economic status to adolescent sexual behaviour in Education District III, Lagos State, underscores the complexity of this phenomenon. This finding is in agreement with Johnson et al., (2019) reported a significant combined contribution of parenting styles, religion, and peer influence on adolescent sexual behaviour. Recognizing the interconnectedness of these factors and their respective influences is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems that promote healthy sexual behaviours among adolescents. This underscores the importance of examining the interplay between family structure and socio-economic factors in shaping adolescent behaviours. Parenting styles and SES are interconnected factors that collectively shape adolescent sexual

behaviour. Each factor contributes unique insights into the socio-cultural, familial, and environmental contexts within which adolescents navigate their sexual development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Adolescent sexual behaviour is influenced by a myriad of factors, including parenting styles, peer influence, and socioeconomic status (SES). Understanding the combined contribution of these variables is crucial for developing holistic interventions to promote healthy sexual behaviours among adolescents. It is recommended that teachers, counsellors, school heads and administrators devote ample time to inculcating appropriate social skills into the students by deliberately teaching these social skills during moral instructions, orientation weeks and special school programmes. Counsellors should utilise the periods assigned for counselling in the schools' timetable for the dissemination of appropriate information that will aid students' interpersonal relationships. This could also be carried out through co-curricular activities. Useful clubs and societies (such as literary and debating society, press club, JETS club, etc.) should be restored under the supervision of responsible teachers to engage the students in meaningful ventures during their leisure since an idle mind is said to be the devil's workshop.

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