

# Kindergarten Learners' Methods of Coping in the New Normal

VIVIEN FAYE MARTICIO SOBREVILLA<sup>1</sup>, MARIO E. CAMPILLA, ED.D.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> *Degree Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education, Institute of Graduate and Advanced Studies, Urdaneta City University*

**Abstract—** *The level of coping skills used by kindergarten students in the new normal was the subject of this study. The respondents were sixty (60) kindergarten students from the Candelaria District, Division of Zambales. Using a questionnaire checklist created by the researcher and approved by subject-matter experts, data were collected. Results showed that kindergarten students' level of coping mechanisms had a grand overall weighted mean of 4.27, which is considered to be "High." In addition, there was no evidence of a significant difference between kindergarten students' levels of coping mechanisms across their profile variables, except for the father's highest level of education. It's interesting to note that, except for the existence of educational resources at home, there is a substantial association between kindergarten students' degree of coping techniques and their profile characteristics. Therefore, given that it received a low rating in this study, it was advised that kindergarten students maintain their level of coping mechanisms along with social aspects and that activities about emotional health be used by the teacher in kindergarten classes to improve the learners' emotional development.*

**Indexed Terms—** *Coping Mechanism, Emotional, Psychosocial, Mental, New Normal, Physical*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Learning is a difficult process. One must overcome numerous obstacles and problems to become knowledgeable (Martinez, 2017). Academic difficulties like the inability to regularly attend courses, an excessive amount of memorization work, and an excessive number of assignments, and projects to complete are some difficulties. Financial difficulties like a small daily allowance budget and a lack of

financial help to buy study materials are others. However, as they are also people, students endure stress, particularly in this new regular environment. People who feel trapped and overpowered by their problems typically experience stress. It is an important aspect of existence. The effects of stress on children's life are unavoidable. As a result, one of the most important things societies can do is to teach kids how to deal with stress in ways that are appropriate for their stage of development and targeted at the kinds of stresses they can encounter. According to studies on adults and adolescents, people who have superior coping mechanisms are better able to deal with life's obstacles (Compas et al., 2001; Moreland & Dumas, 2008). Focusing on coping is a logical element of early learning or intervention programs because the coping repertoire expands with age. To help with program development in this area, further study on early childhood and management is required. The research that does exist is either supported by studies on children's social-emotional competence (Denham et al., 2003) or is based on studies on adolescents and adults that have been extended downward to include children (e.g., Altshuler & Ruble, 1989; Band & Weisz, 1988; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Losoya, 1997; Folkman, 1984). Managing the internal and external demands of a situation is crucial to coping, which is a dynamic process. The school shut down, face-to-face instruction was suspended, and distance learning took place. Additionally, it recommended that during the viral outbreak, remote work be promoted as much as possible. When faced with a difficult situation and unable to envision a positive solution, students can get paralyzed. Students who are taught to approach problems step by step will be more equipped to handle stress, particularly the stress brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic's new normal. Because their parents had to work to support their families, the kindergarten students in the District of Candelaria,

Division of Zambales, needed assistance to complete and turn in their Learning Activity Sheets (LAS) on time. Physical distance also changed the amount of time parents and kids spend with others outside the family, decreasing it while increasing it. Students are apparently not a defense against the stress imposed on them by the new normal in the Philippines. According to Yazon's article from 2020, "Coping Mechanism and Academic Performance among Filipino Students," Filipino students are under stress as a result of the epidemic. According to the report, pupils, particularly those in public schools, face stress as a result of the overwhelming number of modules they are required to complete without parental or guardian support. While some students have completed all the activity sheets, others still need to complete the module activities, which causes anxiety in other students. Based on the foregoing findings, a thorough examination of kindergarten students' coping strategies in the context of the new normal is required, with an emphasis on their physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. This has led to the conceptualization of the study. Lazarus and Folkman explain stress, he continued, using the transactional model, which emphasizes interactions between people and their surroundings.

The level of coping skills used by kindergarten students in the new normal was the focus of this study. The kindergarten students' demographic characteristics, such as birth order, parents' highest level of education, monthly family income, and the existence of recreational equipment at home, are the independent variables. The level of kindergarten students' coping strategies in the new normal, in contrast, as well as physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual components, are the dependent variables.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this study were attained by using a correlational analysis and a descriptive research methodology. Additionally, this study employed the descriptive-correlation research methodology. A population, circumstance, or phenomenon is intended to be accurately and completely described through descriptive study. What, where, when, and how can be addressed, but not why. Using a variety of research approaches, descriptive research methods can examine one or more variables. In contrast to experimental research, the researcher does not change or otherwise alter the variables; instead, they are only observed and measured. In order to ascertain and examine the level of coping mechanisms used by kindergarten students in Candelaria District, Division of Zambales, this study used the descriptive technique and correlational analysis. Inferences, judgments, and suggestions were all based on the findings of the statistical study. Sampling entails the examination of a small sample of the universe's constituent parts. For maximal representation and uniformity in this study, the researcher used the census approach. To lessen the likelihood of sampling error, the researcher also took the population into account. The study's subjects were 60 kindergarten students who were fully counted in the Candelaria District, Division of Zambales, during the academic year 2021–2022. Survey methods include asking people questions and conducting interviews. Based on this premise, the data-gathering tool for this study was a checklist questionnaire. It is a set of questions that have been codified and used to elicit data from responders. After carefully scouring pertinent studies and literature, the researcher created the questionnaire checklist. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data once it had been sorted, totaled, structured, and

Figure I: Research Paradigm

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Dependent Variables</b>
Profile of the Kindergarten Learners	Level of Coping Mechanisms of Kindergarten Learners
a. Birth Order	a. Physical Aspect
b. Highest Educational Attainment of Parents	b. Mental Aspect
c. Family Monthly Income	c. Social Aspect
d. Presence of recreational Materials at Home	d. Emotional Aspect
	e. Psychosocial Aspect

tabulated into the Excel Spreadsheet. To address each of the questions posed by this study, the data that needed to be collected was processed using various statistical approaches. Frequency counts and percentages will be utilized to ascertain the profile of the respondent learners, including their birth order, parents' highest educational levels, the family's monthly income, and the existence of recreational resources at home. To make the computation easier, every profile variable was grouped and given corresponding number values. To assess the level of coping mechanisms utilized by kindergarten students in the new normal across physical, mental, emotional, social, and psychosocial dimensions, the average weighted mean was used to collect the data.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to assess if there were significant differences in the degree of coping strategies utilized by kindergarten students in the context of the new normal across their profile characteristics. In order to determine the correlation between the degree of coping mechanisms utilized by kindergarten students and the new normal, the Coded Pearson Product Correlation was used. The p-value (Probability Value) of 95% significance was used to determine the significance level. If  $p < 0.05$ , the null hypothesis is accepted, it states that there are no significant differences or relationships among the variables in the study. If  $p > 0.05$  the null hypothesis is rejected, it states that there are differences and relationships among the variables.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As to birth order, 18 or 30% of respondents are the first and second children in the household, while 12 or 20% are the third children, 4 or 6.7 percent are the fourth and sixth children, and 3 or 5% are the fifth. It can be shocking to learn that 1 or 1.7 percent of families have a seventh child. Firstborns frequently tend to withdraw while their parents are around, which may help to explain why they occasionally behave in an adult-like manner. They have a propensity for being meticulous and seeking excellence in all they undertake. Firstborns are frequently trustworthy because they are the pack leaders. Firstborns are typically given a lot of responsibility at home, such as caring for younger siblings or helping with chores, which prompts them to take charge right away (and can make them pushy).

A child who already feels pressure to be flawless might experience excessive stress as a result of that expectation. The youngest children, on the other hand, are typically painted as being pampered, quick to take extreme positions and smarter than their older siblings. According to psychological theories, parents spoil the youngest kids.

As to the highest educational attainment of the fathers, the fathers of the respondents are mainly high school graduates (21 or 35%), college graduates (12 or 2%), college undergraduates (9 or 15%), and elementary school graduates (7 or 11.7%). There are four fathers of the respondents whose fathers did not complete elementary school (4 or 6.7%). Given that the respondents' fathers completed or received a diploma from the fundamental level of education, which is the DepEd's ultimate goal, their maximum educational achievement is noteworthy. Other parents may have completed four-year degree programs if they are also college graduates. According to a study by Nelson (2009), parents who have gone to college are frequently more aware of the benefits in the long run. Because they hold a degree, they tell their children this. The more education their parents have, the greater support their children will receive from their parents in completing a degree program.

As to the highest educational attainment of the mothers, the majority of the respondent's kindergarten students' mothers are high school graduates (27 or 45 percent), followed by college graduates (17 or 28.3 percent), high school undergraduates (7 or 11.7 percent), college undergraduates (5 or 8.3 percent), elementary undergraduates (3 or 5 percent), and graduates (1 or 1.7 percent). As a result, it can be seen that the majority of the mothers of the respondents have completed high school or college, which is comparable to the highest level of education attained by the respondents' fathers. This could imply that the mothers of the respondents are functionally literate given that they have completed such a level of education. However, parents who did not finish college tend to know less about the social and financial benefits of higher education. As a result, some parents may prefer that their children work rather than attend college. College-bound students whose parents didn't go to college may have to choose between continuing

their education and living up to obligations or expectations from their families.

As to the family income, 27 or 45 percent of the learner families have a monthly family income of 10,000 or less, 24 or 40 percent have an income between 10,000 and 20,000 pesos, 8 or 13.3 percent have an income between 20,000 and 30,000 pesos, and only one (1) family—or 1.7 percent—has an income between 30,000 and 40,000 pesos. As a result, it can be deduced that the majority of the respondents' families were below the poverty line, which was calculated to be P12,082 based on the average monthly income in 2021 and represents the amount that the average Filipino family needs to meet both their essential food and non-food needs. The achievement gap between students from low- and high-income homes has been documented in the literature. Children of low-income parents are more prone to behavioral issues, academic challenges, and higher rates of school abandonment (Berliner, 2013).

As to the presence of recreational materials at home, according to the table, most pupils have two sets at home. 54, or 90 percent, have radios, 39, or 65 percent, 22, or 33.3%, have board games, and 11, or 18.3%, have comic books; this may indicate that these items are sources of relaxation to aid with stress management. These allow one the chance to take care of oneself and promote equilibrium and self-esteem, which immediately lowers anxiety and depression. TV was considered to be a suitable technique of unwinding if one needed to escape from everyday concerns. Nabi (2016) found in his research that watching more TV can lower cortisol levels. Cortisol is the "stress hormone". Because it can exacerbate depression, high cholesterol, and weight gain, it is risky.

Table I: Level of coping mechanism of kindergarten learners in the new normal along physical

Physical	WM	TR
Finds time to exercise		
<i>Maghanap ng oras para mag-ehersisyo</i>	4.15	High
Eats lot of foods		
<i>Kumain ng maraming pagkain.</i>	4.40	High
Takes a jog, walk, or run	4.53	High

<i>Mag-jog, maglakad o tumakbo</i>		
Takes vitamins and food supplements		
<i>Uminom ng bitamina at food supplements.</i>	3.78	High
Engages in healthy lifestyle		
<i>Makisali sa malusog na pamumuhay.</i>	4.25	High
OWM	4.22	High

The table shows that kindergarten students' level of coping with the new normal in terms of physical aspects received an overall weighted mean of 4.22, indicating a transmuted rating of "High" of the five (5) indicators. Item no. 3 "take a jog, walk, and run" obtained the highest rating of 4.53, which is Very High, while item no. 4 "take vitamins and food supplements" got the lowest rating of 3.78, which is Moderately High. This finding implies that kindergarten kids engage in physical activities to relieve stress in the new normal, such as running, jogging, or walking. These activities were thought to provide a short-term calming and stress-reduction effect. Additionally, it can improve one's mood since running increases blood flow to the brain, which has an impact on the area of the brain that responds to stress and elevates mood. Exercise has been associated with gains in mental health, including mood and self-esteem, according to Raglin (2012). Additionally, the earlier listed activities release endorphins, which act as natural painkillers and improve sleep quality. The high number of vitamins that kindergarten students' parents could hardly afford to buy, given that their family's monthly income is below the poverty line level, can be blamed for their students' limited consumption of vitamins and food supplements. Physical coping mechanisms including jogging, walking, and running are techniques one might employ to physically express one's sentiments, according to Jiao W.Y et al. (2020). Learners will substitute negative actions such as punching, shoving, and kicking for these coping mechanisms. He went on to say that students might physically express their anger in a variety of ways.

Table II. Level of coping mechanism of kindergarten learners in the new normal along mental

Mental	WM	TR
Takes time to relax <i>Maglaan ng oras para makapagpahinga.</i>	4.50	VH
Takes time to meditate <i>Maglaan ng oras para magnilay.</i>	4.43	H
Reads books on how to adjust in the new normal <i>Magbasa ng libro kung paano mag-adjust sa new normal.</i>	3.23	H
Manages time in answering modules <i>Pamahalaan ang oras sa pagsagot sa mga modules.</i>	4.73	VH
Gets enough sleep <i>May sapat na tulog.</i>	4.43	H
OWM	4.27	H

Indicator number four, "manage time in answering modules," received the highest weighted mean of 4.73, denoting a transmuted rating of "Very High." This could be interpreted to mean that kindergarten students value their time in answering their modules, and this could be attributed to the proper guidance. As shown in the table, the level of coping mechanisms of kindergarten students along the emotional aspect received an overall weighted mean of 4.27, described as "High." In planning their children's schedules, the parents believe that time management is crucial. As a result, they may spend more time at home concentrating on their kids' education, especially when it comes to completing their modules. By allowing them more time to rest and deal with other concerns that may cause mental or physical distress, time management in this situation reduces their children's risk of burnout. As a result, they have plenty of time to focus on their work and experience less tension and anxiety. Renzthou (2020) asserts that time management is crucial for students since it aids them in overcoming the lethargy that frequently causes procrastination. The right amount of time gives youngsters the opportunity to complete the assignment with the assistance of their parents. One of the most frequent causes of procrastination among students is lack of knowledge of how to approach the assignment. However, "read books on how to adjust the time in the

new normal" had a weighted mean of 3.23, which was categorized as Moderately High; this could be interpreted as meaning that kindergarten students have a limited number of reading materials at home, such as comic books, books, and children's books of stories based on their profile. Given that the majority of their parents' average monthly household income is below the poverty line, this can be attributed to financial limitations. Their parents' top concern in this scenario is taking care of them.

Table III. Level of coping mechanism of kindergarten learners in the new normal along emotional

Emotional	WM	TR
Finds something favorable in the present situation <i>Maghanap ng isang bagay na pabor sa kasalukuyang sitwasyon.</i>	4.27	H
Ignores problems brought by the new normal <i>Di pagpansin sa mga problemang dala ng new normal.</i>	4.12	H
Cries out problems caused by the new normal <i>Ipinapahayag ang mga problema dulot ng new normal.</i>	3.97	H
Thinks positively about the new situation <i>Positibong mag-isip tungkol sa sitwasyon.</i>	4.03	H
Tries to relate the present situation from the past <i>Sinusubukang iugnay ang kasalukuyang sitwasyon mula sa nakaraan.</i>	4.23	H
OWM	4.12	H

It is astonishing to see that all five (5) indicators received "High" ratings from respondents' students. This could imply that kindergarten students take care of their emotional health amid the new normal. They recognize the value of positive thinking because it can improve both physical and mental health. They keep a positive outlook, cope with stress better, have stronger immune systems, and are less likely to die before their time. Additionally, they contend that optimistic thinking fosters contentment and all-around life

pleasure. The importance of emotional health as a component of general health was stressed by Hung (2011). People who are emotionally balanced have control over their thoughts, emotions, and behavior. They are therefore equipped to deal with life's challenges. They put issues in perspective and recover quickly from failures.

Table IV. Level of coping mechanism of kindergarten learners in the new normal along social

Social	WM	TR
Spends time with family <i>Naglalaan ng oras para sa pamilya</i>	4.83	VH
Finds time with friends <i>Naglalaan ng oras para sa mga kaibigan.</i>	4.73	VH
Does outdoor activities with family <i>Gumagawa ng mga aktibidad sa labas kasama ang pamilya.</i>	4.58	VH
Does outdoor activities with friends <i>Gumagawa ng mga aktibidad sa labas kasama ang mga kaibigan.</i>	4.43	H
Communicates with other people through online platforms <i>Makipagkumonikasyon sa ibang tao sa pamamagitan ng mga online platforms.</i>	3.98	H
OWM	4.51	VH

As shown in the table, item no. 1 "spend time with family" received the highest weighted mean of 4.83 while item no. 5 "communicated with other people through the online platform" received the lowest mean of 3.93 despite maintaining its original "High" rating. The overall weighted mean on the level of coping mechanisms along social aspects obtained 4.51, described as "Very High." The overall weight of 4.51, which is classified as "Very High," would suggest that kindergarten students view socialization as a crucial skill to master in order to build strong relationships and make the right decisions. Additionally, one's emotional health depends on it. It is simpler for children to develop good self-esteem when they engage in activities like spending time with family, making time for friends, participating in outdoor activities with family and friends, and talking with

others online. In addition, they can assume the perspective of people from different origins and cultures and sympathize with them in order to understand social and ethical behavior norms and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Table V. Level of coping mechanism of kindergarten learners in the new normal along psychosocial

Psychosocial	WM	TR
Seeks support from friends to cope with problems brought by the new normal <i>Humingi ng suporta mula sa mga kaibigan upang makayanan ang mga problemang dala ng new normal.</i>	3.82	H
Finds support from family members to cope with problems brought by the new normal <i>Humingi ng suporta mula sa bawat miyembro ng pamilya upang makayanan ang mga problemang dala ng new normal.</i>	4.38	H
Shares experiences with friends about the new normal <i>Magbahagi ng mga karanasan kasama ang mga kaibigan tungkol sa new normal.</i>	4.27	H
Shares experiences with family members about the new normal <i>Magbahagi ng mga karanasan kasama ang bawat miyembro ng pamilya tungkol sa new normal.</i>	4.33	H
Asks advice from people whom I trust on how to adjust with the new normal <i>Humingi ng payo sa mga taong pinagkakatiwalaan kung paano mag-adjust sa new normal.</i>	4.23	H
OWM	4.21	H

The overall weighted mean of kindergarten students' coping strategies along psychosocial dimensions was 4.21, as shown in the table, giving a transmuted ranking of "High." It implies that all five (5) indicators received a transmuted rating of "High," with weighted

means ranging from 3.82 to 4.38; this could be interpreted as indicating that the activities they engage in, such as asking for help from friends when they are having difficulties adjusting to the new normal, sharing their experiences with friends and family, and getting advice from people they can trust, help them understand how their body and mind interact. They can use this to make better decisions and stay out of uncomfortable situations. Additionally, it can assist people with taxing duties and issues brought on by the epidemic, efficiently reaching their goals. Martinez (2017) emphasized that exposure to inclusion through psychosocial aspects of life helps learners comprehend that people speak differently from a young age. Additionally, exposing young children to a variety of communication methods strengthens and develops language that aids them in adversity.

Table VI. Summary table of the level of coping mechanism of kindergarten learners in the new normal

Summary table of the level of coping mechanism of kindergarten learners in the new normal		
Indicators	WM	TR
1. Physical	4.22	H
2. Mental	4.27	H
3. Emotional	4.12	H
4. Social	4.51	VH
5. Psychosocial	4.21	H
	GOWM	4.27
		H

The total weighted mean of kindergarten students' level coping mechanisms in the new normal is 4.27, which is categorized as "High" in the table. This could be read to suggest that kindergarten students have higher levels of adjustment and lower levels of burnout symptoms. Additionally, it has been discovered that coping flexibility is linked to a reduction in the severity of anxiety symptoms. The significance of coping skills for mental health also aids young students in getting their emotions under control. This can be achieved through controlling one's emotions or by making an effort to find a solution. Adolescent coping strategies may affect their emotional and mental health later in life (Lokhandwala et al., 2021). Furthermore, the coping strategies used by young students help them develop resilience because they teach them how to effectively deal with unpleasant emotions, panic attacks, and other trying circumstances. According to Ferguson et al.'s study from the year 2021, adolescents employed healthy coping strategies to minimize their anxiety, including

hobbies, safe peer relationships, and physical activity (such as jogging and walking).

Table VII. Summary of ANOVA results on the differences in the level of coping mechanism of kindergarten learners and their profile variables

Profile Variable	Sources of Variations	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Significance
Birth Order	Between Groups	1.9156	.319	1.343	.255
	Within Groups	12.593	.238		
	Total	14.508			
Highest Educational Attainment of Father	Between Groups	3.4255	.685	3.338	.011
	Within Groups	11.082	.205		
	Total	14.508			
Highest Educational Attainment of Mother	Between Groups	2.1396	.357	1.528	.177
	Within Groups	12.369	.233		
	Total	14.508			
Family Monthly Income	Between Groups	1.2963	.432	1.831	.152
	Within Groups	13.212	.236		
	Total	14.508			

	Total	14.50	5			
		8	9			
Presence of Recreational Materials at Home	Between Group	.655	1	.655	2.7	1
	Within Group				40	0
	Total	13.85	5			3
		3	8	.239		
	Total	14.50	5			
		8	9			

The mean difference in the amount of coping mechanisms used by kindergarten students across their profile factors is shown in the ANOVA summary table. Except for the father's highest educational achievement, the data generally show no variations in kindergarten students' levels of mechanisms in the new normal across their profile characteristics. Therefore, at the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis—which states that there are no significant differences in the level of mechanisms of kindergarten students across their profile variables with birth order, highest educational attainment of the mother, family monthly income, and presence of recreational materials at home—is accepted. These ANOVA results suggest that the kindergarten students' levels of coping mechanisms in terms of physical, mental, emotional, social, and psychosocial components do not differ or are equivalent. On the other hand, the results show variations in kindergarten students' use of coping techniques across the profile variable of the father's highest level of schooling. The null hypothesis, which claims that kindergarten students' levels of coping mechanisms don't differ significantly depending on their fathers' highest levels of education, is thus disproved. This suggests that kindergarten students' levels of coping mechanisms, as well as their physical, mental, emotional, social, and psychosocial abilities, differ depending on their fathers' highest levels of education.

Table VIII. Relationships between the Level of Management in the Implementation of Modular Learning in the New Normal and their Profile Variables

Profile Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Birth Order	-.265*	.040
Highest Educational Attainment of Father	.426**	.001
Highest Educational Attainment of Mother	.322*	.012
Family Monthly Income	.295*	.022
Presence of Recreational Materials at Home	.212	.103

The table demonstrates that there is a significant correlation between the Pearson-r values of paired independent and dependent variables such as birth order, the highest educational level attained by both parents, and monthly family income at levels of significance of 0.040, 0.001, 0.012, and 0.022, respectively. The null hypothesis, which claims that there is no significant association between kindergarten students' level of coping mechanisms and the aforementioned factors, is thus rejected at a .05 level of significance. As a result, the aforementioned profile elements influence how well kindergarten students cope with physical, mental, emotional, physical, and psychosocial challenges. On the other hand, a 0.103 level of significance indicates that there is no significant association between the respondents' degree of coping methods in the new normal and the presence of recreational resources in their homes. The null hypothesis, which claims that there are no significant associations between the aforementioned factors and the respondent's degree of coping mechanisms at the 0.05 level of significance, is accepted in this context. In other words, despite the aforementioned circumstances, the respondents are able to adjust to the new normal.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The kindergartners who responded had a very diverse range of characteristics. In some cases, their modifications are extreme situations. Moreover, the respondent kindergarten students in this study exhibit a remarkable array of coping skills in the face of the new normal. Another, the respondents' kindergarten students' degree of coping skills in the new normal is not significantly comparable. Also, the highest educational level attained by the father and mother, the order of the children in the family, and the family's monthly income all influence the respondents' kindergarten students' capacity for coping with the new normal. Since the majority of the respondent kindergarten students are the first or second kids in their home, parents should provide them with enough direction to help them build their self-esteem, which will help them think positively, which is good for their physical and mental health. Continue educating parents on how to support their kids as they adjust to the new normal. Although the responder kindergarten students' high level of coping skills in the new normal was amazing, it can still be enhanced by giving them access to various techniques and strategies that will raise their happiness quotient.

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