

## Teachers' Perceptions of Public Employees' Performance Management Information System Effectiveness in Government Secondary Schools in Mzumbe Ward, Tanzania

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### ABSTRACT

*The Public Employees' Performance Management Information System (PEPMIS) was the focus of this study, which evaluated its effectiveness in government secondary schools in Mzumbe Ward, Tanzania. The study was guided by the expectancy theory that provided a framework for understanding employee motivation and behavior. A qualitative single-case study design was used, involving qualitative interviews with 13 teachers purposively sampled from Mongola and Mzumbe Secondary Schools. Data saturation determined the sample size. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data. The findings reveal that while PEPMIS enhances administrative efficiency and supports professional development, its effectiveness is hindered by challenges related to fairness, transparency, training, technical functionality, and network reliability, necessitating improvements for greater usability and satisfaction. Addressing these challenges through targeted interventions can enhance the system's effectiveness, user satisfaction, and overall impact on organizational performance. The study recommends training programs for teachers and school administrators, addressing technical infrastructure issues, and incorporating feedback mechanisms into PEPMIS to make it more responsive to teachers' needs and expectations. This paper contributes to the understanding of PEPMIS from teachers' perspectives. It highlights important insights for policymakers and educators in improving PEPMIS implementation and its impact on the country's education sector.*

**Keywords:** Educational System, PEPMIS, Performance Management System, System Usability, Teacher Engagement

### I. INTRODUCTION

Accountability and efficiency are key components for effective performance management systems in public sector institutions around the world, with a significant impact on the performance of the organization (Felício et al., 2021). They are aimed at reducing administrative hitches, improving transparency, and increasing general efficiency by determining employees' roles (Mbore & Cheruiyot, 2017). Governments and institutions around the world have utilized digital performance management tools to improve the quality of public sector services and the level of employee engagement. For instance, Government Digital Services (GDS) has been created in many countries to enable the digitalization of the whole public sector, in order to perform better public services through the use of internet portals available all over a country (Klochan et al., 2021).

Canada continues to show its commitment to modernize public services with the creation of the Canadian Digital Service in the 2017 budget and Ontario Digital Service, both aimed at leveraging technology to deliver more accessible, efficient, and user-centered public services. At the same time, there has been a big drive for the use of digital performance management systems across Africa. For instance, performance evaluations are used to identify employees with skills and high-performance earnings, and this leads to increased salaries and emoluments that make workers satisfied and stimulate employees (Mahad & Muhindi, 2024). Tanzania, too, deployed the Public Employees' Performance Management Information System (PEPMIS) aimed at reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies and improving public sector efficiency in such a way that fairness in performance evaluation is achieved (e-Government Authority [eGA], 2022).

According to e-Government Authority (eGA, 2022), PEPMIS is part of a broader plan of digitizing government service systems in order to boost effectiveness, responsibility, and a happy workplace for employees in different government sectors. While it is widely recognized that the use of PEPMIS is becoming almost a necessity in digital performance management in Tanzania, more research needs to be carried out on the challenges faced by teachers in using PEPMIS in secondary schools. This research fills the gap given the fact that teachers' perspectives are important in understanding the effectiveness of PEPMIS in the educational sector by looking at the case of PEPMIS' application in secondary schools.

The contribution of this study is beneficial to the growing body of knowledge on digital performance management systems in the public sector, particularly in the field of education, and to recommendations on how to improve the implementation of PEPMIS in secondary schools.

### 1.1 Research Objectives

This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the challenges surrounding the adoption and use of the Public Employees' Performance Management Information System (PEPMIS) in secondary schools and the relatively little work on the perceptions of teachers about the system. The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To examine teachers' perceptions of the fairness and accuracy of PEPMIS.
- ii. To identify challenges faced by teachers in using PEPMIS.
- iii. To determine recommendations for improving the implementation of PEPMIS in secondary schools.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

#### 2.1.1 Expectancy theory

Expectancy theory is used as the theoretical premise for this study, which enables the identification of a holistic framework for examining employee motivation and behavior in organizational settings. Proposed by Vroom (1964), Expectancy Theory emphasizes three core components: These include expectancy that effort will produce desired performance (beliefs, i.e., expectancy), instrumentality, the belief that desired performance will lead to specific outcomes, and valence (value placed on those outcomes). Applied to PEPMIS, the theory maintains that teachers' ratings of the applicability of PEPMIS (effectiveness) are based on whether they believe PEPMIS will provide fairly rated performance compliments or developmental training (expectancy), that performance compliments and developmental training will lead to outcomes justified by PEPMIS (instrumentality), and that the outcomes are of personal value (valence). This study sought to inform how teachers' perception of PEPMIS, under the lens of Expectancy Theory, constructs PEPMIS systems in secondary schools in Tanzania.

### 2.2 Empirical Review

#### 2.2.1 Teachers' Perceptions of the Fairness and Accuracy of PEPMIS

To promote favorable work outcomes, mental well-being, and higher job performance, teacher perceptions of fairness and accuracy in PEPMIS are critical. Several studies have researched how teachers' views on performance appraisal systems affect teachers' motivation, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction.

For instance, on the topic of the effects of teacher outcomes on the perceived strength of performance management systems, Van Waeyenberg et al. (2022) used social exchange theory and the job demands-resources model to investigate this relationship. The strong performance management system characterized by clear communication, consistency, and consensus was found to value teachers more than the weak performance management system. The positive perception leads to increased affective organizational commitment and decreased exhaustion, which in turn promotes teacher performance.

Likewise, Dal Corso et al. (2019) also examined how teachers' perceived performance appraisal justice influences their well-being. When Italian teachers see performance appraisals as fair, they feel better about the appraisals, which, in turn, boosts performance, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. It shows that fairness in performance evaluations is fundamental for the well-being of teachers and the quality of teaching.

Similarly, Franco-Santos and Doherty (2017) also investigated how performance management influences the well-being of academic staff in UK higher education institutions. The findings showed that the directive approach aiming at strict performance targets adversely influences well-being. On the other hand, when an approach is enabling and communication is happening, there is involvement of the staff in the decision-making, and professional development is encouraged, then people feel better. This study highlighted the fact that staff development and participation supported by performance management systems are more likely to promote motivation, job satisfaction, and general staff health.

#### 2.2.2 Challenges in Using Performance Management Systems

Performance management systems are useful in terms of their benefits. However, several challenges hinder their effective implementation, which is why they are not popular in public institutions and schools. All these are linked to the challenges of fairness, training, and resistance to change.

Mahad and Muhindi (2024) argued that performance appraisal practices in the County Government of Mandera, Kenya presents critical challenges. According to their study, when employees' average levels of productivity are low, they miss deadlines; employees also require more efficiency in service delivery. However, these problems occur in view of the inadequate handling of workloads, lack of rigorous and just performance evaluations and few

financial incentives. The study found that good work load managements, consistent and fair performance evaluation and right rewards can make employees productive and their morale improved.

Mito et al. (2021) examined the implementation of public secondary school's Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) policy in Kenya. Although training worked in policy implementation it focused mainly on principal and deputy principal training and not on teachers' training. This alluded that there are gaps in training to nullify the realization of the TPAD policy. Consequently, school leaders need to attend to more targeted interventions including regular workshop to raise principals' awareness on the impact of performance appraisals in improving teachers' performance.

Furthermore, Dal Corso et al. (2019) highlighted other challenges arising from teachers' perceptions of appraisal justice. If teachers think performance appraisals are unfair or ineffective, their satisfaction with the process will decline, which will ultimately harm their job performance, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. This illustrates the paramount importance of perceived fairness in making performance management systems effective.

Ohemeng (2011) has discussed other challenges in implementing performance management systems in public organizations. According to him, legislation strategies to implement a performance culture rarely engage stakeholders and are frequently met with resistance, mistrust, and reduced legitimacy. Such can severely hamper the success of performance management systems.

According to Ahmad and Bujang (2013), additional challenges highlighted include issues of fairness, accuracy, and subjectivity, which are often due to the rater's lack of skills and knowledge. Quota-based approaches, where rewards are limited, may also result in dissatisfaction and lower employee morale. Additionally, performance appraisal systems, they noted, also tend to be criticized for perceived bias and discrimination and need careful concomitance with organizational and cultural frameworks for efficacy.

### **2.2.3 Recommendations for Improving Performance Management Systems**

Several recommendations have been made to meet the challenges in performance management systems and make them more effective and more likely to produce effective results.

Mahad and Muhindi (2024) state that performance management in the County Government of Mandera could be improved if frequent job analyses were conducted to match employees into skills that are suited to their roles and prevent workload on employees that inhibit their productivity. Furthermore, performance evaluations need to be conducted consistently and fairly so that employee contributions are accurately assessed. The study concludes that rewards, including salary increments, should be given priority to motivate employees and improve their performance.

According to Klochan et al. (2021), there is a need to create a unified digital ecosystem in public sector digital transformation efforts. This ecosystem should be based on a software platform that enables collaborative work among its participants. In addition, public administration consulting services should be provided via digital platforms to facilitate management technologies and public administration and civil service reforms. Success will also depend on establishing criteria to assess the efficiency of consulting support for project management in the public sector.

In the context of teacher performance appraisals, Mito et al. (2021) argue that targeted interventions are required to improve the implementation of the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development Policy. They recommended a refocused approach towards school leaders' training, especially principals and deputy principals, through a series of workshops on administrative skills and the correct way of implementing performance appraisal policies. In addition, there is a need to sensitize school principals to the significance of performance appraisals in improving teacher performance and thus linking teacher training to policy implementation.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Population and Sampling**

This study was conducted in Mzumbe Ward, which comprises two government secondary schools: Mzumbe Secondary School and Mongola Secondary School. The target population was teachers from these schools, directly involved in the use of PEPMIS. The study had a total of 13 teachers from Mzumbe Secondary School (n=7) and Mongola Secondary School (n=6). Data saturation guided the sample size; once interviews provided new, relevant information toward objectives, additional interviews were not necessary.

### **3.2 Research Design**

A case study design was used in this research to investigate teachers' experiences in Mzumbe Ward. Creswell (2007) and Yin (2003) both support the use of case studies in exploring complex phenomena in real-life settings.

### **3.3 Data collection**

The data for this study were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 13 teachers from Mongola and Mzumbe Secondary Schools, Mzumbe Ward. Therefore, the sample size used in this study was chosen to achieve data

saturation, a standard for the quantitative research sample size set forth by Streubert and Carpenter (2003), which recommends between 5 and 50 research participants. With the selection of information-rich participants, we were able to thoroughly explore ideas and perspectives of relevance in order to reach saturation. Since the study objectives were to cover the depth and focus, phone calls were conducted, which were flexible and accessible. The semi-structured format allowed for open-ended discussions, and yet it validated and completely addressed all main study themes (Creswell, 2009).

### 3.4 Sampling Procedure

The study purposively sampled teachers of Mongola and Mzumbe Secondary Schools in Mzumbe Ward. Bakkalbasioglu (2020) suggests this method as the method to target those who have certain knowledge or experience in a certain topic of research. The teachers, who were chosen, with relevant experience, contributed valuable insights about PEPMIS.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis included qualitative scrutiny of the data collected through phone interviews. The study's objectives were used to categorize the responses and code them into thematic categories. In order to extract the main theme and patterns from the interviews, thematic analysis was used to find out teachers' points of view regarding the fairness and accuracy of the PEPMIS, the difficulties the teachers faced, and suggestions for improvements.

### 3.6 Validity and Reliability

A review was done to ensure that the interview guide was based on the objectives of the study and to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. A pilot test of the questions was conducted with a small group of teachers to refine the questions until they accurately asked the information needed. Responses across participants were compared to achieve cross-verification and confirm the consistency of themes.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

The principles of being ethical were adhered to in the study. Prior to undertaking the interviews, all participants were informed, consented, and assured that their answers to questions would remain confidential and used only for academic purposes. Participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time. It took place between times convenient for the participants in terms of respect for their time and privacy.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Teachers' perceptions of the fairness and accuracy of PEPMIS.

Overall, the findings show that teachers tend to view PEPMIS as a tool that helps make administrative tasks easier and clearly organizes information. For example, Respondent 1 stated, "*PEPMIS have simplified things a lot... 'Information is organized excellently, and the headteacher makes sure everything is done right.'* Similarly, Respondent 5 noted that "*Using the system makes it easier to process promotions and keep track of teacher details.*" This aligns with Van Waeyenberg et al. (2022), who indicate that when performance management systems are deemed strong, with good communication, consistency, and high levels of consensus, teachers will feel valued, which is associated with more organizational commitment and higher performance.

However, the findings also raise concerns over fairness and transparency. Respondent 7 said, 'Sometimes, the information in the system does not match what we know on the ground.' Respondent 13 also said, "*Sometimes, errors are not fixed immediately, which has an impact on how we are assessed.*" Dal Corso et al. (2019) are clearly concerned with such things, too, as perceptions of appraisal fairness affect job satisfaction and well-being. Addressing these deficiencies in PEPMIS may improve teachers' satisfaction and motivation and, thus, better outcomes.

There were also common challenges related to the need for more input mechanisms for teachers. 'Respondent 11 said: "*If the system could allow us to provide input or feedback, that would be even better.*" Respondent 3 agreed, saying, "*we use the system, but it feels like everything is decided for us without asking us first.*" This resonates with Franco-Santos and Doherty (2017), who argue that enabling performance management systems in which staff engage in participation and have professional development increases well-being and motivation. Consequently, incorporating mechanisms for input by teachers in PEPMIS could enhance satisfaction and productivity.

Respondent 9 also added: "*The system is useful, and it is sometimes a bit too stressful, especially if there are deadlines that do not adjust for technical problems*" In line with Franco-Santos and Doherty (2017), it is common to find that directive performance management strategies based upon strict targets will be counterproductive to well-being. Such issues could be better mitigated, and better teacher outcomes would be promoted if there were a more balanced system.

In short, PEPMIS has demonstrated its strengths in simplifying administrative tasks and promoting organization, but peoples' reactions to the challenge of fairness, transparency, and teacher input must still be addressed.

#### 4.2 Challenges Faced by Teachers in Using PEPMIS

Positive and negative usage of the PEPMIS among teachers were found, and many experienced significant challenges that minimized the effectiveness of the system. Network-related issues experienced by the majority were recurring challenges reported by the respondents. Respondent 1, for example, stated, *"I do not finish filling my tasks on time because there is too much delay in processing them due to network problem."* Similarly, Respondent 3 said, *"Network issues often deprive me of submitting the annual examinations, and I need help explaining why this is always happening. Other teachers' data sometimes shows up with my name because of bad connectivity."* Many of those same technical challenges were experienced by Respondents 4, 6, 9, and 5. For example, Respondent 4 said: *"I had some problems with my data processing because documents got delayed or were missing at all due to connectivity issues."* This is in line with Mahad and Muhindi (2024), who showed that technical inefficiencies, frequency, and fairness of evaluation can hinder performance management systems. These reported difficulties with PEPMIS are consistent with broader common challenges in public sector systems in which delays and technical failures can cost individuals and groups as well as the organization.

Respondents also pointed out the need for more training to successfully use the system. Respondent 2 said: *"The training did not cover enough details." When I use the system, many issues remain unresolved."* Respondent 4 also said: *"There was no comprehensive training, some of the advanced features of the system were not covered, and I just relied on my colleagues for help."* Such lack of in-depth training is also true with Respondent 6, who said, *"They did have some training, but they did not really have enough training for me to get around the system. That was based on the support we had from other colleagues who attended more detailed sessions."* Furthermore, respondent 7 noted additional training needs by saying *"more structured training sessions would have made a huge difference in me being able to use the system."* This result is also in line with Mito et al. (2021) acknowledging that the lack of training in performance appraisal systems (especially for teachers) sabotages the successful implementation of such systems. While many teachers in PEPMIS rely on peer support rather than a structured learning approach, formal and targeted training needs to be improved and has only intensified teachers' difficulties.

Moreover, several respondents flagged issues with the functionality and user experience of the system. In response, respondent 11 stated, *"I find it difficult to submit my scheme of work due to limitations within the system set up. This is not ideal; I have had to replace this with photos of my physical documents instead."* Respondent 5 was concerned about delays with annual leave requests and questioned the delays in the HR approval process, which caused inconsistencies between the data that were submitted for payroll and other critical processes. The limitations on system functionality align with Dal Corso et al. (2019), who found that if systems do not provide what they need, teachers' perceptions of fairness and effectiveness in performance appraisals suffer. Moreover, Ahmad and Bujang (2013) highlight that performance management systems need to be customized to meet the needs of users in terms of ease of document submission and prompt approval then, which undermines user satisfaction and trust. This argument is supported by the fact that teachers failed to overcome the challenges due to the PEPMIS system and made errors and inefficiencies while attempting to accomplish critical administrative tasks.

While these are significant challenges, there were times when teachers recognized the positive effects of PEPMIS, specifically on their professional development. Respondent 1 said *"my proficiency with PEPMIS led to recognition and promotion. The system helped in advancing my career"*. This is an important observation because it shows the capacity of PEPMIS to help in professional development. Respondent 9 also noted, *"Though it was difficult at first, constant use and perseverance did help me to improve my skill. I am much more comfortable now with going through that system."* This is consistent with Mahad and Muhindi (2024), who stated that the same performance management aids in improving employee performance and career opportunities. As technical and training challenges limit the full potential of PEPMIS, the system's contribution to career advancement is a positive outcome for those who take the time to learn to use the system effectively.

The findings from this study confirm that while PEPMIS might be more efficient administratively and support professional development, it is not free; many barriers will occur when using PEPMIS. The barriers to this technique include concerns about system functionality, training, and networking-related issues. These challenges align with Ohemeng (2011), who opined that achieving performance management using strict regulations can result in resistance or mistrust among the stakeholders. Criticism of teachers' use of PEPMIS reflects other challenges in public sector performance management systems regarding lack of technical efficiency, absence of training, and inadequate design. The findings in this study are also parallel with what Dal Corso et al. (2019) and Ahmad and Bujang (2013) who have reported that the effectiveness of a performance management system depend on fair, accurate, and user-friendly functionality. This is the case when these aspects (employee satisfaction, employee performance, and employee trust in the system) are compromised. In this study, the feedback from teachers informs that the usability and effectiveness

of PEPMIS can be significantly improved by resolving the technical and functional constraints that the teachers voiced.

#### 4.3 Teacher's recommendations for improving the implementation of PEPMIS in secondary schools.

Several respondents claimed that there is a need to understand the PEPMIS system better and improve training to make the PEPMIS system more functional and useful. Respondent 1 suggested that leaders, such as heads of institutions, should be better trained to understand how the system works and how it can be used to support others: *"They should train leaders better about how the system works and how to help others along the way."* This is consistent with the literature by Mito et al. (2021) regarding the importance of training of school leaders through workshops on administrative skills and the success of performance appraisal policies. Additionally, Respondent 3 mentioned that more extensive training should be provided to eliminate confusion and ensure that users know how to use the system properly: *"There needs to be more training so someone is not confused as to how to use the system."* This highlights the important need to provide consistent, targeted training initiatives for system usage improvements (Mahad & Muhindi, 2024).

Several responses reported on a repeatedly recurring problem of network instability, complicating PEPMIS. In his interview, respondent 5 remarked that *"network disruptions may lead users to lose motivation and are consequently unable to complete the tasks."* Respondent 7 specifically mentioned that the system heavily depends on a stable internet connection. These findings match very closely with the findings of the study by Klochan et al. (2021) showing the need for a unified digital ecosystem for smooth interaction among all stakeholders. The network infrastructure is the key to predictable operation of digital systems.

Respondent 9 suggested that instead of manual intervention, PEPMIS should have immediate feedback after data entry. They expressed: *"The system is intended to provide immediate feedback as soon as data is entered instead of a manual intervention."* Mahad and Muhindi (2024) pointed out that an efficient system of performance management and application of suitable management technologies are prerequisites to its perfect outcomes. With real-time feedback within a performance management system, it is a way to ensure that employees are quickly rewarded for their efforts thereby motivating and increasing productivity.

Respondent 11 proposed that the PEPMIS system should allow users to view and update their profiles, such as CVs, which would help users track their qualifications and professional experience: *"The system has to allow a way of viewing and updating of CV and also enable users to track their qualifications easily."* Klochan et al. (2021) emphasizes the importance of creating one common platform where stakeholders will be able to collaborate and manage their information. A personalized digital system will increase the degree of user involvement and user satisfaction through personal career advancement tools.

Respondent 13 emphasized the need for a more user-friendly interface, highlighting the need for a system that is easier to navigate: *"A better interface, and friendlier."* They suggest. This is in line with works recommending using well-structured platforms to try to make the system match the skills of the employees (Mahad & Muhindi (2024). The reduced technical barriers will result to effective use of digital platforms to achieve user satisfaction and engagement.

Respondent 7 drew attention to the need for Wi-Fi provision and other on-line resources in order to facilitate access to the PEPMIS system. They specifically mentioned that addressing network issues in rural areas is crucial for improving the usability of the system: *"For it to work effectively though, it is important to have Wi-Fi and fix countrywide network problems in rural areas."* This unified digital ecosystem, of course, should also take into consideration the lack of infrastructure: such as reliable Internet or online platforms, so that Internet and online platforms are equally available to all users (Klochan et al., 2021). To ensure that e-governance systems and providers of e-governance services are successful, one must equally have equal access to these digital resources.

The responses provided areas that need to be improved with the PEPMIS system, featured primarily on training, network connectivity, system friendliness and timely feedback. These issues can be solved, and the resolution would also enhance system functionality and therefore satisfaction for the user.

## V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

This study focused on the perceptions and experiences of secondary school teachers with PEPMIS. The study has highlighted its potential and challenges. As PEPMIS was appreciated to have eliminated these administrative hassles and aided organisational effectiveness, there remained major criticisms regarding this PEPMIS's fairness, transparency and system usability. Teachers raised issues such as discrepancies with real world data in the system and a lack of input mechanisms and a running on a tight schedule. All of which gave rise to a lack of satisfaction and worries around how fair or effective the system as a whole was.

Network-related issues, inadequate training, technological challenges have hindered proper use of the system. These issues also had impacts on teachers' ability to navigate the system and complete tasks on time, leading to further

disengagement with PEPMIS. Recommendations for improvement were based on teachers' feedback. This included better network infrastructure and improved system design so that it is easier for users to navigate, along with mechanisms for real time feedback and enhanced training for school leaders and teachers.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The findings of this study recommend that both teachers and school leaders to be given comprehensive and continuous training on the effective use of PEPMIS. The training should have practical aspects which deal with how PEPMIS operates, usually troubleshooting issues and understanding interpretation of data. Secondly, the study should provide users with continuous professional development opportunities to keep them confident and skilled.

PEPMIS usability and interface can be improved to make system adhere to this goal. During the redesign process, teachers should be asked for feedback to deal with the complexity and limitations of technical features. This would facilitate ability to use the system by teachers simplifying user interface and making it compatible to available resources in schools.

Investment in upgrading the schools' network infrastructure is required to provide a stable and fast internet connection so to enable timely access to PEPMIS that is hindered by connectivity. This should establish a robust technical support system that helps teachers solve any technical problem they face.

There is need for evident communication about the purpose of PEPMIS and how the process works. The way the data is used in decisions making and the criteria for performance evaluation must be clear. The trust and the uptake of the system by teachers will be increased if transparent guidelines about how data is gathered, processed, and implemented are provided.

A more responsive system can be achieved through features that support real-time feedback from teachers within PEPMIS. Integrate mechanisms for reporting issues or suggesting ways to improve. This feedback needs to be acknowledged, and acted upon, resulting in increased user satisfaction and continual system improvements.

Adoption of a collaborative approach with teachers is needed to implement PEPMIS. This will establish platforms for open dialogue where teachers can together discuss their experiences, concerns and ideas. It will create trust among teachers and administrators, which in turn will help in addressing system challenges.

Finally, performance evaluations should be done fairly and transparent. The process and the criteria of evaluation need to be reconsidered on a regular basis in order to make it consistent and clear. Teachers' confidence towards PEPMIS will improve if how teachers' performance is assessed and their input is valued in the system is understood.

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