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# Proposal of a Tool for a More Efficient School Guidance in Cameroon Cameroon'da Daha Etkili Bir Okul Rehberliği için Araç Önerisi

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## **Abstract**

The primary aim of this study is to propose a tool that can improve and ensure the conflict-free implementation of school guidance in Cameroon. The research specifically focuses on the General Education System of the country. To achieve this goal, a comprehensive methodology was adopted, including a literature review, field data collection, data analysis, and the preparation of a final report. In the Cameroonian General Education System, school guidance is carried out at three stages: within the first cycle, between the first and second cycles, and within the second cycle. Regardless of students individual abilities, "Year Five Science" in the French-speaking sub-system and "Form 5 Science" in the English-speaking sub-system are the most commonly chosen fields when entering the second cycle. However, in both sub-systems, only 25% of the students' academic work completed during the four years prior to orientation is considered, which often leads to parental objections, especially when students are guided toward literary tracks. To address this issue, the Fopoussi Tuebue Chart-2 offers a structured model for conducting school guidance without conflict, serving as an effective mechanism in secondary education institutions to prevent disputes over guidance decisions. Moreover, it was observed that boarding students who do not meet the formal requirements for selection into Year Five/Form 5 Science often demonstrate higher academic performance than external students admitted into these programs. Therefore, it is recommended that schools focus on developing strategies to better support and promote their own students before considering the admission of external candidates into Year Five/Form 5 Science. Adopting such an approach could foster a positive school climate and enhance student well-being across educational institutions nationwide.

**Keywords:** Cameroon, Education, Secondary Education, School guidance, Student academic profile

## Öz

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Kamerun'da okul rehberliği uygulamalarını geliştirmek ve çatışmasız bir şekilde yürütülmesini sağlamak için kullanılabilecek bir araç önermektir. Araştırma, özellikle ülkenin Genel Eğitim Sistemine odaklanmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, literatür taraması, saha verilerinin toplanması, verilerin analizi ve raporlaştırılması süreçlerini kapsayan bütüncül bir yöntem benimsenmiştir. Kamerun Genel Eğitim Sistemi'nde okul rehberliği, birinci döngü içinde, birinci ve ikinci döngü arasında, ve ikinci döngü içerisinde olmak üzere üç aşamada yürütülmektedir. Ancak, öğrenci yeterlikleri dikkate alınmaksızın, Fransızca konuşulan alt sistemde "Year Five Science" ve İngilizce konuşulan alt sistemde "Form 5 Science", ikinci döngüye geçişte en çok tercih edilen alanlar olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Her iki alt sistemde de öğrencilerin yönlendirilmeden önceki dört yıl içinde yaptıkları çalışmaların yalnızca %25'i değerlendirilmekte, bu durum özellikle Edebiyat alanına yönlendirilen öğrencilerin velilerinin itirazlarına yol açmaktadır. Bu soruna çözüm olarak önerilen Fopoussi Tuebue Tablo-2, çatışmasız okul rehberliği için yapılandırılmış bir model sunmakta ve ortaöğretim kurumlarında rehberlik kararlarına yönelik velilerden gelen itirazlara karşı etkili bir mekanizma işlevi görmektedir. Ayrıca, Year Five/Form 5 Science alanına yönlendirilme koşullarını sağlamayan yatılı öğrencilerin, çoğu zaman dışarıdan kabul edilen öğrencilere kıyasla daha yüksek akademik başarıya sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu nedenle, her okulun öncelikle kendi öğrencilerini destekleyici stratejiler gelistirmesi, ardından dısarıdan öğrenci kabulünü değerlendirmesi önerilmektedir. Bu yaklasım sayesinde, ülke genelinde olumlu okul iklimi ve öğrenci iyi oluşu (well-being) sağlanabilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kamerun, Eğitim, Ortaöğretim, Okul Rehberliği, Öğrenci Akademik Profili

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## Introduction

It includes information about the purpose, significance, conceptual. School guidance is defined as a set of actions that enable a student to be placed, at a given point, on a pathway that ensures a promising future (Canzittu & Demeuse, 2017). In Cameroon, school guidance plays a critical role particularly at the transition to the second cycle of secondary education. However, when the results of this highly sensitive process are announced, it is common to observe the reluctance and dissatisfaction of many families, especially those whose children have been oriented towards Year Five/Form 5 Literary tracks (Fopoussi Tuebue, 2021b).

In such cases, it is not unusual to see parents presenting their children's Mathematics and Natural Sciences exam scripts, covering Year One to Year Three in the French-speaking subsystem, and Form 1 to Form 3 in the English-speaking sub-system, as evidence in the Principal's office, contesting the guidance decisions. This recurring situation raises a crucial issue regarding the procedures that govern school guidance practices throughout the country. Additionally, some parents challenge the decisions of the Guidance Council by requesting that their children be placed in Year Five/Form 5 Science, even going so far as to promise to hire private tutors during the entire holiday period, in order to prepare their children to follow the desired academic track, regardless of the child's actual abilities or academic readiness. Given these realities, while such disputes are undeniably disturbing, it remains equally true that the current orientation procedures tend to disadvantage students. At the same time, these procedures weaken the position of academic institutions when confronted with parents' objections. Thus, to ensure fairness and balance, it has become imperative to propose a tool that, as part of the school guidance process, would consider all of the efforts and achievements of each student throughout their academic journey within a given cycle. Furthermore, this tool is expected to equip schools with a solid basis to defend their decisions against disputes and unrealistic demands from dissatisfied parents.

Ultimately, such a tool would serve as a key mechanism to promote positivity and well-being in school guidance practices in Cameroon, as emphasized by Fopoussi Tuebue (2024). Therefore, the main objective of this study is to propose a Chart designed to synthesize and reflect each student's academic trajectory during the first cycle of secondary education. This Chart will be grounded in all the structural and procedural elements that shape academic life within the Cameroonian educational system.

#### **Material**

Since the advent of the so-called European school in Cameroon, there has been a juxtaposition of two education Sub-Systems in force, notably an English-speaking Sub-Systems and a French-speaking Sub-Systems (Ndjock, 2016). In both cases, academic activity is punctuated by General Education and Technical Education (Ekomo Engolo, 2001; Tsala Tsala, 2004). Regardless of the type of education considered, the practice of educational guidance in Cameroon is a reality (Fopoussi Tuebue, 2021b; Mbwassack, 2022).

## Method

It provides details regarding the methodology and procedures employed in the research. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines. Regarding data collection, secondary sources were utilized, including books, unpublished personal documents, academic journals, newspapers, and official government records. To achieve the stated objectives, the research was carried out through both fieldwork and desk-based analysis.

During the fieldwork phase, one of the best bilingual general education secondary schools in each region of the country—making a total of ten schools—was selected and approached. At each institution, in-depth discussions were conducted with key stakeholders, including guidance counselors, teachers, students, parents, and administrators. The purpose of these discussions was

to gain insights into the academic abilities of students seeking admission into the second cycle of secondary education in specific specialties. More precisely, this phase aimed to compare the academic profiles and competencies of these prospective students with those of boarding students already at that level and pursuing the same specialty. Additionally, these exchanges sought to gather diverse perspectives on the concept and practice of educational guidance in Cameroon, as experienced up to the time of the study.

The desk-based (indoor) component of the research focused on analyzing the data collected from the field and conducting a thorough review of relevant educational content and policies. This included:

- Examining the subjects included in the curriculum by level and by sub-system throughout the second cycle of General Education in Cameroon,
- Gathering information on the different educational levels within each cycle across the two General Education sub-systems in place in Cameroon,
- Identifying the subjects that serve as determining factors for orienting students toward specific specialties within each sub-system,
- Highlighting the key stages in the General Education secondary curriculum where school guidance interventions are applied, and
- Reviewing official documents and policies related to school guidance in Cameroon.

### **Results**

## Overview of the General Education System in Cameroon

Organization of Cycles

In the General Education System of Cameroon, education is structured into two main cycles: the first cycle and the second cycle.

- In the French-speaking sub-system, the first cycle runs from Year One to Year Four, while in the English-speaking sub-system, it extends from Form 1 to Form 5.
- The second cycle includes Year Five, Year Six, and Year Seven in the French-speaking sub-system and Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth in the English-speaking sub-system.

The first cycle itself is divided into two sub-cycles:

- An Observation Sub-Cycle (Year One and Year Two in the French-speaking sub-system; Form 1 and Form 2 in the English-speaking sub-system), and
- An Orientation Sub-Cycle (Year Three and Year Four in the French-speaking sub-system; Form 4 and Form 5 in the English-speaking sub-system).

The second cycle is dedicated to specialization, encompassing Year Five to Year Seven in the French-speaking sub-system and Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth in the English-speaking sub-system. Notably, in the Anglophone system, Form 5 is already specialized, divided into Form 5 Sciences and Form 5 Arts.

Throughout these stages, the guidance process is omnipresent.

- In the French-speaking sub-system, entry into the orientation sub-cycle is guided by an initial school guidance process, directing students into Year Three (with options for German, Chinese, or Spanish).
- Entry into the specialization sub-cycle is determined by another level of guidance, primarily based on specific subjects. For literary tracks, Foreign Language I (French,

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English) and Foreign Language II (Chinese, Spanish, German) are critical, while for scientific tracks, Mathematics, Physics-Chemistry-Technology (PCT), Life and Earth Sciences (SVTEEHB), and Computer Science are decisive.

However, only Year Four academic performance is considered in this decision—results from Year One to Year Three are disregarded. Upon completing Year Five Science, students face another orientation: either to Year Six Mathematics and Physics or Year Six Natural Sciences and Mathematics.

In the English-speaking sub-system, a single guidance step exists, based on History, Literature, and Geography for literary tracks, and Physics, Chemistry, and Biology for scientific tracks. This occurs at entry into Form 5, again relying solely on Form 4 performance, ignoring earlier years.

Given that Years One to Three (or Form 1 to Form 3) represent approximately 75% of the first cycle journey, neglecting this significant portion raises serious concerns about the fairness and validity of the school guidance system, as it disregards much of the student's development and effort.

Ambiguity in Admission to Year Five Science: Boarding vs. External Students

The admission process into Year Five Science often reveals serious ambiguities, especially when comparing boarding students to external applicants. Following national Year Four examination results, many prestigious schools conduct entrance exams for Year Five.

For instance, during the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 academic years, ten top-ranked schools (one per region) were monitored, assessing a sample of 1,000 candidates (100 per region). Among these, 285 applied for Year Five Literary and 715 for Year Five Science, reflecting the negative perception many families hold towards literary tracks, often seen as a refuge for weaker students.

Despite the competitive exams, some external candidates were admitted out of leniency. A comparative analysis revealed that 94.3% of boarding students, though oriented towards Year Five Literary, had stronger academic profiles than 90% of external candidates admitted into Year Five Science. This underlines serious flaws in current guidance and admission practices.

Proposal of a Chart to Summarize Student Progress in the First Cycle

To restore fairness and protect student rights, there is an urgent need to systematically summarize each student's academic progress throughout the first cycle. The Fopoussi Tuebue Chart-2 (Tables 1 and 2) provides a solution.

• Description of Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2

The Fopoussi Tuebue Chart-2 is designed for both French-speaking and English-speaking sub-systems, with only minor adaptations. It is structured into two main parts:

- 1. The first part documents:
  - o All academic levels completed during the first cycle,
  - The corresponding academic years,
  - Quarterly marks for each subject,
  - o Annual averages per subject,
  - o Preliminary orientation indications at the end of each academic year.
- 2. The second part summarizes:
  - Subjects critical to orientation,

- o Overall orientation trend after four years,
- Guidance Council decisions,
- o Parental opinions, and
- The final orientation decision.
- Functioning of Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2

The subjects used for orientation in the French-speaking sub-system are:

- French, English, Mathematics, Physics-Chemistry-Technology (PCT), Life and Earth Sciences (SVTEEHB), and German/Chinese/Spanish (Foreign Language II). In the English-speaking sub-system:
- History, Geography, Literature, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology.

In the French-speaking system, PCT and Foreign Language II are introduced in Year Three, thus contributing to evaluations over two years only.

The first part of the chart presents a detailed tracking of academic progress, while the second part aggregates these results into final orientation metrics.

- For most subjects, annual marks are averaged over four years (Year One to Year Four, or Form 1 to Form 4).
- For PCT and Foreign Language II, averages are based on two years.
- If a student repeats a level, marks from each attempt are included, with first attempt marks in black and second attempt in red. The final annual mark will consider the latest attempt.

This comprehensive record allows for a well-founded final orientation decision, aligned with both student performance and Guidance Council assessments. If the Council's evaluation aligns with the chart's results, the decision is confirmed. In case of discrepancy, parental input is collected and documented, enabling a final decision that reflects academic reality and family perspectives.

**Table 1:** Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2 for monitoring with a view to a fairer orientation of students upon entering the second secondary cycle of General Education in the French-Speaking Sub-System in the Educational context in force in Cameroon

Level	School	Area of the	Guidance based subjects		Marks	Marks				
	year	investigation			Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Annual average	guidance	
			Main subjects	Sections					option per step	
		Common Languages	French	Reading Comprehension						
		Of communication		Composition writing						
Year 1				Dictatoin Oral expression						
				General mark						
			English	•						
		Sciences	Mathematics							
			Natural Sciences Computer Science							
		Common Languages	French	Reading Comprehension						
Year 2		Of communication		Composition writing						
				Dictation						
				Oral expression						
			English	Final mark						
		Sciences	English Mathemat	ire						
		Sciences	Natural Sc							
			Computer Science							
Year 3		Common	French	Reading						
		Languages		comprehesion						
		Of communication and foreign		Composition writing						
		and foreign languages		Dictation						
				Oral expression						

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		1	Final mark						
			mui muin						
			man/Spanish*						
Sciences		•							
		Computer Science							
	Common								
	Languages		comprehesion						
	Of communication								
	0								
	languages								
			Final mark						
	Sciences								
0.1	 			TO TOTAL 1			TEGOND A	AT CTICE EX	
							SECONDAR	RY CYCLE)	Final
Main subjects		subjects and induced orientation		Psycho	r inai orientation				
				Candidate performance		Observation		orientation option	
		Quadri annual/bi annual marks	Orientation induced	aptitud	les	Literary aptitudes revealed	Parent opinion	Decision of the pedagogic staff	
Frecnh									
English									
MATHEMATICS									
NATURAL SCIENCES									
COMPUTER SCIENCE									
PHYSICS-CHEMISTRY- TECHNOLOGY									
	Frechh English Chinese/ MATHEM NATURA COMPUT PHYSICS	Common Languages Of communication and foreign languages  Sciences  QUADRI ANNUAL/BI AI Main subjects  Freenh English Chineese/German/Spanish MATHEMATICS NATURAL SCIENCES COMPUTER SCIENCE PHYSICS-CHEMISTRY-	English   Chineese/Gern	Chineese/German/Spanish*	English   Chineese/German/Spanish*   Sciences   Mathematics   Natural Science   Natural Science   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Common Languages   Prench   Reading   Comprehesion   Composition   writing   Dictation   Dictation   Oral expression   Final mark   English   Chineese/German/Spanish*   Chineese/German/Spanish*   Sciences   Annual four-year grades per main subjects and induced orientation   Paycho   Candidated   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Candidated   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Candidated   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Candidated   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Candidated   Candidated   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Candidated   Candidated   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Candidated   Physics-Chemistry-Technology   Physics-Chemistry-Technolo	English	English	English   Chineese/German/Spanish*	English

<sup>\*</sup>Cross out the unnecessary

**Table 2:** Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2 for monitoring with a view to a fairer orientation of students upon entering the second secondary cycle of General Education in the English-Speaking Sub-System in the Educational context in force in Cameroon

Level	School	Area of	Guidance based subjects		Mark per	Mark per term				
	year	investigation			Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Annual	orientation	
			Main subjects	Sections					option per step	
		Language and Human Science	English	English Littérature						
Form 1				English Language Final mark						
TOTHI			History	1 mai mai x						
			Geography							
		Sciences	Physics							
			Chemistry							
			Biology							
		Language and Human	English	English Litterature						
Form 2		Science		English Language						
				Final mark						
			History							
			Geography							
		Sciences	Physics							
			Chemistry							
Б 1		T 1	Biology	T 10 1						
Form 3		Language and Human	English	English Litterature						
		Science		English Language						
				Final mark						
			History							

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			Geography							
			Physics							
			Chemistry							
			Biology							
		Language and Human Science	I	English Litterature English						
				Language Final mark						
Form 4			History Geography							
		Sciences	Physics							
			Chemistry Biology							
			UAL REVIEW PI	ER SUBJECT (A'				NDARY CY	CLE)	
Specialties	Main subjects		Annual four-year grades per main discipline and induced orientation			Final				
					Candidate performances			Observation	orientation option	
			Quadri annual marks	Orientation induced	Scientific revealed	aptitudes	Literary aptitudes revealed	Parent opinion	Final decision of the pedagogical staff	
Language	English									
and Human	History									
Science	Geography									
Sciences	Physics									
	Chemistry Biology									
	Didiogy						l			

## **Openings Offered by the Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2**

The Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2 represents a promising and hopeful innovation. Indeed, it offers multiple advantages for both educational institutions and students. For institutions, this tool would enable them to be better equipped to address and counter unfounded complaints from parents, providing clear, data-driven evidence to justify orientation decisions. For students, the Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2 ensures that the guidance process reflects and incorporates the full range of academic efforts and achievements accomplished throughout the entire first cycle of secondary education. By doing so, it promotes fairness, transparency, and recognition of sustained academic engagement.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

It is the main section in which authors describe, analyze, and interpret their findings. The school guidance process serves as a crucial mechanism for the meaningful accompaniment of students (Stevanovic, 2008). Its application takes into account the specificities of the two subsystems of education in force in Cameroon (Noumba, 2008). In the French-speaking education sub-system, entry into the orientation sub-cycle is governed by an initial guidance process. Unfortunately, this process is based on foreign languages, despite the fact that many Cameroonians today struggle to speak even a single word in their mother tongue, as Fopoussi Tuebue (2023b) critically points out. Entry into the specialization sub-cycle is determined by another stage of guidance, whereby students are placed into either literary or scientific specialties. The major issue lies in the fact that only the student's performance during the fourth year—representing merely 25% of their work throughout the first cycle—is considered in making such critical decisions. This approach is frustrating and unfair to both students and their parents. Consider, for example, a student who performs excellently during the first three years but, due to a traumatic family event in the fourth year, experiences a sudden decline. As highlighted by Fopoussi Tuebue et al. (2023c, 2023d) and Fopoussi Tuebue (2024), such a student would not only face misdirected guidance based on unrepresentative data but would also suffer increased psychological distress.

Thus, it becomes evident that the current guidance system, which has shaped the futures of many young Cameroonians, deliberately ignores the essential 75% of the student's journey, which reflects their sustained academic effort and growth. This is a clear example of a procedural error, as described by Numa-Bocage (2011).

Moreover, in Cameroon, literary tracks are often viewed as options for less capable students, a prejudice sustained for decades, as noted by Pena-Ruiz (2001), rooted in ignorance (Milgrom, 2010), or explained through the theory of followership (De Visscher, 2016).

Ambiguities in Admission to Year Five Science

Admission into Year Five Science is a persistent source of controversy and discomfort. Often, external candidates admitted to prestigious schools for Year Five Science perform at lower levels than internal boarding students, who, despite superior academic profiles, are denied entry. This highlights significant disparities in academic standards between institutions, as Musselin (2017) illustrates in similar contexts, and constitutes errors of judgment (Coste & Danet, 2012).

Thus, each institution should prioritize and promote its own students first, as advocated by Cormier-Salem & Roussel (2009). To address this gap, schools could organize special entrance exams for Year Five Science, open both to internal students who do not fully meet conditions and to external candidates, under the discretionary authority of the school head, aligning with Plessix's (2022) concept of institutional sovereignty.

• The Necessity of Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2

To restore students' rights, it is essential to summarize the entire academic journey of each student throughout the first cycle. The Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2 (Tables 1 and 2) is a vital tool in this regard.

Chart Operation and Structure

The Chart-2 accounts for cases where students repeat a level, recording each year's results:

- First attempt marks in black,
- Second attempt marks in red, following Gary-Bobo & Robin (2012), who emphasize that a student may not repeat the same level more than once in a cycle.

For final evaluation, the marks from the second attempt are considered if the level was repeated. This allows a comprehensive and longitudinal view of a student's academic progress, forming a robust foundation for orientation decisions.

However, as Martin-Krumm (2008) reminds, results can sometimes be distorted by cheating or circumstantial failures, making the outcomes of the Orientation Council crucial. These assessments rate both scientific and literary abilities on a scale of 10.

- If aligned with the student's academic record, the orientation decision is straightforward.
- If discrepancies arise, parental input is recorded, and the final decision is adjusted to reflect a more accurate academic reality.

## **Benefits of the Chart for Institutions and Students**

For institutions, this tool offers a defense against unfounded parental complaints, as many parents neglect following their children's academic performance, later presenting numerous irrelevant arguments—a behavior Ott (2010) refers to as parental resignation. Parents often become highly engaged only when their child is oriented toward Year Five Literary, attempting to argue that, with just three months of effort, they can reverse four years of poor performance—an unrealistic claim, as highlighted by Fopoussi Tuebue (2021b).

Fopoussi Tuebue (2021a, 2021b, 2022a, 2022b, 2023a, 2023b) also notes that many parents in Cameroon perceive orientation to Year Five Literary as a family failure. Statistically, parents who attempt to resolve four years of academic struggle in three months are operating within a 3/48 time frame—only 6.25%—indicating a 93.75% likelihood of failure, confirming Ott's (2010) observations on parental resignation.

For students, the Chart-2 ensures that all academic efforts throughout the first cycle are taken into account. As noted by Armagnague-Roucher & Bruneaud (2016), this approach aligns with the principle of justice. Furthermore, by tracking quarterly and yearly performance, it facilitates early detection of academic decline, allowing timely interventions—a process Cayouette-Remblière & Moulin (2019) describe as predictive monitoring.

• Systemic Challenges and the Role of Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2

In the French-speaking sub-system, school guidance occurs at entry into Year Three, Year Five, and after Year Five Science. In the English-speaking sub-system, guidance is applied upon entry into Form 5. In both systems, Year Five/Form 5 Science is the most sought-after specialty, regardless of student ability. Yet, only Year Four/Form 4 results (25% of the total academic journey) are considered for orientation.

Consequently, tensions regularly erupt between schools and parents of students guided toward Year Five Literary or Form 5 Arts, while schools lack strong tools to justify their decisions. The Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2 provides a transparent, structured framework to ensure fairness in guidance and to defend against parental disputes.

#### Proposal of a Tool for a More Efficient School Guidance in Cameroon

It is often observed that boarding students not meeting the criteria for Year Five Science are still academically stronger than external students accepted for that same specialty. Therefore, schools should focus on promoting their own students before admitting external candidates.

The Fopoussi Tuebue's Chart-2 is applicable in any context where school guidance may carry risks of injustice toward students. It enables relevant and comprehensive student monitoring and provides a robust mechanism for schools to defend their orientation decisions against recurring parental complaints. As such, it represents a practical and fair solution to longstanding issues within Cameroon's school guidance system.

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