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## An Investigation of Prospects and Challenges of 6-3-3-4 Educational System Policy in Nigeria: A Management Approach.

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**Abstract:** *The study examined the challenges and the prospects of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy that came into being in the 1980s primarily to meet the citizenry educational needs and equipping the young people with sellable skills for self-reliance. The study drew depth of scholarly works regarding the problems and the possible improvement that could make the 6-3-3-4 policy inherently achieve its objectives. The study's findings indicated that the problem of implementation partly due to corruption, attitude, inadequate facilities, poor salary structure and indiscipline of teachers are basically affecting the effectiveness of the 6-3-3-4 policy from the primary, secondary and at the University levels. The study therefore believes the 6-3-3-4 policy has the potential to make the educational system the cynosure of other nations if there are effective supervision, professional development of teachers, and implementation of the policy among others. Therefore the paper suggested the need to ensure current problem of corruption, poor attitude towards and others needs to be dealt with, including review of the present curriculum from primary through university levels towards the achievement of goals in both short and long term.*

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**Keywords:** Educational System, Educational Policies, Education.

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### Introduction

Paul-Sewa (2012) indicates that the relevance of education to individual across Nations globally cannot be overemphasized. This infers that education is one of the existing unassailable rights of individuals that should be given priority irrespective of nations and race. That is why Paul-Sewa (2012) stressed that Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981), and the Child Rights Act are enacted to ensure the inclusiveness of all human beings. However the existing undeniable rights prominently within the global sphere makes from century to another develop various educational frameworks towards building human capacity. This suggest that education, no doubt is a huge investment in human capital development that critically affects the productivity and continuous growth nationally (Dauda, 2010; Obasanjo, 2012). Besides, Ibadapo-Obe (2007) held that education represents socio-economic development for individual empowerment and poverty reduction. By implication education is fundamental to a Nation human development index. Thus, (Dauda, 2010) stressed that education equips human resources with the needed knowledge, skill and competences which would make them functional and contribute to the development of the nation. The global recognition given to education equally makes Nigerian leaders at different era to design educational policies making it go through series of reforms which lead to the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 educational system in the early 1980s. By implication the 6-3-3-4 educational system essentially happens to be the recent policies that drive the current Nigeria educational system. The rationale was to build technical capacities in students and the society and increases the quality of education that would in return assist the country towards technological advancement and industrialization (Paul-Sewa, 2012).



## The Concept of Educational Policy

The empirical relevance of education is largely determined by educational policies or initiatives mostly driven by the government to achieve its stated objectives (Okoroma, 2000). This informed Osokoya (1987) position that education policies are the distinctive measures to inculcate values to the society and inducts young ones into full membership. In the view of Awokoya (1981), educational policies are structural programs directed towards increasing the quality of life of a people, which suggest the need for the Nigeria 6-3-3-4 system when it was developed. Further, Awokoya (1981) suggested that policy objectives should satisfy individual needs, community pressures and be flexible to meet social needs within a state. Kerr (1976) believes that, for policies to meet the social needs and demands of a society it should be distinguished from other policies, this is why Hoy and Miskel (1978) believed that education policies need to be different not only when it is formulated also by implementation. Further education policies are expected to be consistent in implementation and do not have to be rigid, as there should be room for adjustment if necessary after its formulation. Based on scholars position the researchers however hold that Nigeria education policy needs to be flexible sufficiently to promote social changes when implemented. Meanwhile regardless of how good an educational policy may be its implementation may be characterized with imperfections. That is why this study intends to evaluate the Nigeria education policy by reviewing the antecedents of the educational system to understand the purposefulness in terms of test of time and the imperfections it has created, as discussed below;

## Antecedent and the Review of the Nigeria 6-3-3-4 System of Education

The Nigeria educational system is replete with unique antecedent in terms of reforms from pre-independence to post-independence era. Several attempts were made, apparently to improve educational development, which draws from the traditional system of education, circular and Islamic system of education such as Luggard Policy of Education (1914-19), Clifford's Policy (1926), Elliot's Commission Report (1945), Ashby Commission Report (1960), and the National Policy of Education (1987) in Segun (2015). Notably all these education reforms contained noble ideas that lead to the transformation of educational system in Nigeria. Similarly the educational reforms embarked upon in Nigeria from pre-independence was the concerted effort of some notable Nigerians who agitated for self-rule, that led the British colonial Masters to change the education system in operation in 1954 from the 8-6-2-3 (eight years of primary education, six years of secondary education, two years of higher school certificate(HSC) and three years of tertiary education) to the 6-5-2-3 system (six years of primary education, five years of secondary, two years of a higher school certificate education and 3 years of tertiary education (Awanbor, 2010). Even with that the 6-5-2-3 system of education, generally considered elitist and predominantly colonial in outlook and the policy was believed to serve the interests of the colonial masters. The system deemphasized science and technology, self-development and entrepreneurship, rather on teaching of humanities. It was a result of these seeming inadequacies that necessitated the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education.



The viewpoint of the 6-3-3-4 system of education was driven by the intent to produce a free-and-democratic, a just-and- egalitarian society, a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens. Also the 6-3-3-4 system of education essentially are designed to inject functionality into the Nigerian school system, by producing graduates who would be able to make use of their 3Hs- Hands, Head and the Heart. Before it was officially introduced in 1982, this marked a radical departure from the British system of education which Nigeria inherited at independence in 1960. Basically it adopted the American system and philosophy, by creating the 6-3-3-4 system structured into three years of Pre-Primary Education, six years of Primary Education, three years of Junior Secondary School (General and Prevocational), three years of Senior Secondary School (Vocation and General ) and four years of Higher Education Vocational) (Nwagwu, 1997). In this context, the 6-3-3-4 system of education was still considered not adequate, so the Nigerian former President, Goodluck Jonathan in October 2010 while speaking at a national stakeholders' meeting on the education sector, said that the 6-3-3-4 system of education had failed and that its proponents should apologize to Nigerians. However, taking a second look at the system, this informed the Minister of Education, Professor Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufai proposed to the National Assembly, the need to revert to the 6-3-3-4 system of education, but with a modification that would include Early Childhood Education (ECE). The system she christened 1-6-3-3-4. The proposed system signifies that the first one year of education would be for child from 1-5 years, the 6-year component would be for primary education, three for Junior Secondary School, three for Senior Secondary School and 4 years for tertiary education. An attempt to re-embrace the 6-3-3-4 system of education shows that the system was not a bad idea; rather it was a failure due to the problem of bad implementation. Thus adoption of 1- 6-3-3-4 system of education gives every Nigerian the opportunity to contribute to the nation's development at the level commensurable to his mental ability.

The seeming unanimous acceptance of the introduction critical gravitates towards ensuring that every Nigerian is educated according to the dictates of his cognitive and affective ability. Despite this introduction, the building block of the recent education structure is the 6-3-3-4 system; the question then is what are the prospects, effectiveness and the problems of the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria? The Nigeria 6-3-3-4 of education was introduced to ensure that each student spend six years in the primary school, three years in the junior secondary school, three years in the senior secondary school, and four years in the tertiary institutions. In these stages, the Primary education is the elementary type of education for children between ages of 6 to 11 years. This represents the foundation of education upon which all other levels such as junior and high level of education are built. However, the secondary education in any nation overall education system has different objectives which include:

- (a) Preparation for useful living within the society and
- (b) Preparation for higher education. Tertiary education, which is the post-secondary education given in the higher institution aims at:



- (i) The acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society at large.
- (ii) The development of the intellectual capabilities or capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments.
- (iii) The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop, and
- (iv) The acquisition of the objective view of local and external environments.

Therefore at tertiary stage it is professionally oriented stage which expectedly is aimed at providing graduates to minimize unemployment and produce skilled manpower, in science, management, and social sciences. In brief, it is to make individual capable economically and socially responsible. It is also stated in the National Policy on Education that a priority of place is going to be given to religion and moral instructions for the moral and spiritual wellbeing of individuals; but no child will be forced to accept any religious instruction which is contrary to the wishes of his parents (Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education 2004). By implication Nigeria 6-3-3-4 System is well articulated and laid system of education. This makes the Nigeria 6-3-3-4 system of education one of the best systems that have the potential of increasing the quality of students, which will in return move an entire nation into technological advancement and industrialization. America and Japan adopted the system of education and it has impacted greatly on the quality of education and technological advancement in these two countries. Therefore Segun (2005) observes that 6-3-3-4 system of education relatively facilitate the school buildings, classrooms, chairs, desks, laboratories and other facilities necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. He further stated that a slight adjustment in the system, makes education relatively less expensive, and not the 1-6-3-3-4 presently proposed by the Nigerian government, which in the view of the researchers make education more challenging and attracts additional expenditure. There is a reason to believe that the 6-3-3-4 system brought substantial improvement in the achievements in the education operated in Nigeria. However there are challenges that have bedeviled the system even in the face of changes in the Nigeria leadership from 1982 till date.

### **The Challenges/ Problems of the Nigeria 6-3-3-4 System.**

Segun (2005) holds that there have been lots of debates on the quality of education in Nigeria with the general consensus that the quality of education is falling, not only in Nigeria but in most African countries. By implication the quality of education and its system in Africa Nations is low when compared with those of other continents of the world. Segun (2005) stressed that some of the recent declines includes the supplies of key inputs at the pre-tertiary levels, such as infrastructures, equipment, books and other learning materials has had deleterious consequences on education in Nigeria. Segun (2005) argued that both the 6-3-3-4 system has failed, because the system of education has not moved the Nigerian state to the league of industrialized countries nor build technological inclined students in Nigeria. Rather, the standard of education has continued to experience fall in performance of students. Also poor implementation could be linked to recent decay of the educational system in Nigerian, which has continuously thrown the provision of education



to private individuals, religious organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Imperatively, the lost in the quality of 6-3-3-4, has made some resourceful Nigerians prefer to send their children to Europe, America and even small African countries such as Ghana that has only two universities as against more universities in Nigeria with functioning and adequate learning facilities. As a result other persist factors inhibiting the efficiency of the 6-3-3-4, system in Nigeria among others, are;

### **Corruption**

It is obvious that if anything has contributed greatly to the stagnation of educational development of Nigeria, it is this virus called 'corruption'. It is found in all aspects of human endeavour in Nigeria. Its presence in Nigeria has earned our nation a place of negative prominence in the world. That is why Aghenta (1984) says that fund meant for educational development and for running of schools does not get to the schools and the little that gets there is normally wasted by those whose responsibility it is to manage the schools. The UNESCO standard for education for all nations of the world is 26% of the national budget. During the eras of dictatorship (military government) in Nigeria, education received as much as 13%. But both past and present democratic government in Nigeria has fallen short of this of the 26% benchmark. For example, in 2015, 2016, and 2017 just about 7% is allocated to education, in fact the present President Muhammadu Buhari allocated only 7.04% to education. The issue of corruption in education became more prominent in 2005 when President Olusegun Obasanjo made a broadcast to the nation alleging that some members of the National Assembly demanded and collected N55 million from Professor Fabian Osuji (the former Minister of Education). The Senate President and five other senators were involved in the deal. According to President Obasanjo the purpose of the bribe was to enable the National Assembly to approve an enhanced budget for the Ministry of Education (Obasanjo, 2005). This evidence indicates that acceding to bribery is currently affecting the education sector of Nigeria.

### **Inadequate skilled human resources and materials**

Abdul (2002), states that one of the greatest problems facing the implementation of the 6-3-3-4, system in Nigeria on education is the lack of qualified personnel in areas listed below.

- (a) Teachers in the science, technical and vocational subjects.
- (b) School inspectors and education supervisor for quality control.
- (c) School managers, administrators for the efficient and effective running of the schools programme.
- (d) Supportive staff such as laboratory assistants, library assistants, workshop attendants etc. and
- (e) Guidance counselors to guide for proper placement having the adequate knowledge of Individual's aptitude and interest.

There is no doubt that there are shortage of men and materials even at the federal level to implement the 6-3-3-4 system of education. These facts were revealed by Kusamotu (2007), who noted that failed implementation of 6-3-3-4 system of education, in areas of technical and vocational aspects is largely based on men and materials in science and technical



disciplines. The implication of the above challenges have today affected the caliber of graduates the university system is producing as 'half baked' or 'unbaked'. Nigeria is producing these categories of graduates not remotely due to poor university system but rather due to faulty backgrounds that could enshrine quality of education on students admitted by Nigerian tertiary institutions.

### **Unacceptable Salary and Finance Structure**

The issue of finance has grossly affected the prospects of the 6-3-3-4 system of education; despite that it was conceived during oil boom, and unfortunately, the implementation period falls in the period of dearth. Now that the country is in a terrible financial state, the consequence of lack of funds allocated is negative as everything virtually comes to a standstill in the absence of money. That is why the salary structure in the public service does not favor teachers. Paul-Sewa (2012) states that in year 2004 in Ogun State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (the state that produced giants like Obafemi Awolowo, Wole Soyinka, Tai Solarin, Professor Sodipo Olubi and the likes) the salary of a graduate teacher is less than 10,000 naira per month in most primary and secondary schools, about 66 dollars. The effect is even more in other State in Nigeria due to the running cost of inflation on food, accommodation, education, transportation, books, electricity and water consumption, among others. This therefore gives room to teachers to spend most of their contact hours searching for petty contracts, looking for patronage for underwear's, and other clothing materials within the school all in the name of making ends meet.

### **Poor attitude towards change**

The education is a conscious effort to enshrine positive attitude and bringing innovation in to the life of the nation with resultant development. But due to the natural tendency of individual attitude to resist change. That is why Paul-Sewa (2012) posits that it is unfortunate that the government and people at leadership position attitude towards solving-the country's problem of development leaves much to be desired. He further states that, the present 6-3-3- 4 programme has not taken the country's level higher from the pre-primary education. As most nursery and primary schools, are run like private businesses which should yield bountiful profits. As a result, most of the owners do everything to maximize profit at the expense of rendering quality education service and by employing not qualified teachers. The most unfortunate thing is that these highly vulnerable kids believe and trust what their dullard teachers tell them than the correction the discerning observer wants to make. This gives the privilege to the spread of Nursery and Primary School (government approved) scattered all over the Nation without quality.

### **Inadequate Instructional Facilities**

Instructional facilities refer to the basic structures and facilities necessary for effective teaching and learning in the school. Facilities are plants, equipment, buildings, furniture which enable teachers to deliver effective teaching thereby leading to attainment of behavioural objectives. According to Ehiametalor (2011), facilities are those factors which



enable production workers to achieve the goals of an organization. Olorok (2006) observed that the use of instructional facilities enhances learning experiences and leads to interaction within the learning environment. Marianhi (2009) commented that a simply, dignified, artistic exterior is suggestive of the purpose for which school building exists, make the scholars proud of their school and will have an impressive influence on their performance at school. Lamenting on the type of building found in our secondary school, Nwachuku (2005) remarked that the public sector of education has witnessed stagnation and decay. Stating further that most schools are a caricature of what schools should be in a modern state. United States District of Education (2002) reports that school buildings that can adequately provide a good learning environment are essential for students' success. In a study of high schools in Nepal, India Subedi (2003) found a significant relationship between students' achievement and the availability and use of physical and material resources. Other studies (Okebukola, 2005; Okunola, 2005; Agusiobo, 2004) indicate that the availability of resources is an important variable in student learning.

### **Inadequate discipline among teachers and lecturers**

The effect of what happens at the Nursery and primary schools in the area of curriculum implementation equally repeat itself at the secondary level. This is because most untrained trained products or teachers definitely are in both private and public secondary schools where a replica of the experience of the students from unqualified teachers awaits students. The difference is that unlike, the suspicious quality of teaching staff, the teachers at the secondary school level can be presumed qualified but their enthusiasm for the job is based on remuneration, rather than quality delivery. Most unfortunate is the tertiary schools; the case is that a typical students experience is through lecturers that double as booksellers: it is always a case of "have you bought my book? Then make sure you register your matriculation number with me. This is without any academic guidance to the student. This infers the attitude across levels affect the effectiveness of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. Therefore it is incumbent on those whose responsibility is it to dispense national resources, and enforce compliance to ensure quality human resources are used to avoid consequential damage based on the above factors in Nigeria . However, beyond the problems there are prospects and likely factors that could make the 6-3-3-4 system of education viable to achieve its objectives as discussed below;

### **Prospects of the Nigeria 6-3-3-4 System of Education**

There is need to infuse more serious to the achievement of 6-3-3-4 educational system objectives and increase the quality of students produced, increased overall allocation to education sector is compulsory. This informed Paul-Sewa (2012) position that recent situation where the Nigerian government allocates less than 7% of its Gross National Product (GNP) to education is unacceptable. This infers the Nigerian government should look at the sectors in the economy where budgetary allocations could be cut down in order to increase budgetary allocation to education. The prospects of the 6-3-3-4 educational system objectively is subject to enforcement by the government ensure that schools respect



and increase the percentage payment of through Education Trust Fund (ETF). The Education Tax Fund (ETF) was established as an intervention agency under the Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993 and amended by Education Tax (amendment) Act No. 40 of 1998; with project management to improve the quality of Education in Nigeria. To enable the ETF achieve these objectives, the Act imposes a 2 percent (2%) Education Tax on the assessable profits of all registered companies in Nigeria. More so, the beauty of the 6-3-3-4 educational system is equally subject to international development partners' assistance to Nigeria. It has been documented that in order to make adequate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Nigeria requires additional external support yearly from the developed Economies of the world (Country Partnership Strategy, 2005). Even if the resources in Nigeria are used effectively there will still be challenges of meeting the MDGs. Also the 6-3-3-4 educational system could be wheel of growth if well implemented through shifting resources more to the education sector. In the first two decades of Nigeria's independence the primary and secondary schools were allocated more funds than those for tertiary schools. This is evidenced by Hinchliffe (2002), who states that in 1962 the distribution of funds among the levels of education in Nigeria was 50% for primary education, 31% for secondary and 19% for tertiary education. In contrast, recent estimates show a very different priority and decline to 7% respectively. He further asserts that the share for primary and secondary schools has fallen appreciably, while that for tertiary education has increased. Therefore the researchers believe that the prospect of the Nigeria education can only be achieve through purposive leadership that needs to starts from allocation, campaign on change of attitude, monitoring team and scholarships for all indigent students across state and local governments. Therefore, with the potential of 6-3-3-4 system in mind, Reeves (2004) indicates that a system could become a magnifying glass for the educational system based on the *extent* and *how* teachers and leaders believed the system practices can influence results through:

- a. systemic supervision;
- b. comprehensive curriculum;
- c. Professional development of teachers' curriculum, and assessment.

### ***Systematic Supervision***

Reeves (2004) believe that supervisors of a school system are most accountable for the success of the education system practices. In an effort to determine what makes supervisors successful, Marzano (2003) found that effective principals took the pulse of the building, identified a strategic intervention, and continually examined the effect of that intervention on achievement. The supervisors are expected to inspire the staff with strong guidance, optimism, honesty and consideration.

Influenced by Marzano, Reeves (2004) wrote that leaders must coach and supervise their colleagues systematically, through discussions and action items related to student achievement and best practices. Reeves' work also parallels with the work of Collopy and Bowman (2003), at Winthrop University and Fort Mill (SC) Elementary School, and found that it is the principal who rallies the teachers' enthusiasm and keeps them focused on innovations, while distributing resources and staying alert to teacher concerns. Overall,





these research findings affirm the important role that systemic supervision can play in supporting teachers in their quest for improved outcomes.

### ***Comprehensive Curriculum***

In addition to systematic supervision, Reeves (2004) believes that a school system must be willing to assess and report on the relationship of the curriculum efforts to authentic implementation in the classroom. Such curriculum must be written with the goal of producing a literate citizenry (Ornstein, Behar-Horenstein, & Pajak, 2003). Subsequently, to be effective, curriculum needs to be aligned with instruction as well as with the state assessments that are utilized to monitor students' growth and school effectiveness. Such a curriculum contains standards and benchmarks that are appropriate for each grade level and agreed upon by leaders in the respective fields. Influenced by Marzano, Reeves (2004) went on to claim that a comprehensive, aligned curriculum produced successful schools only if the school system was willing to determine and document the relationship of the curriculum alignment to actual implementation in the classroom. This measurement via the school improvement plan must assess a few things consistently rather than many things once a year. On the whole, these research findings confirm the important role that comprehensive curriculum can play in sustaining teachers in their quest for improved outcomes.

### ***Professional Development***

In addition to systematic supervision and a comprehension curriculum, Reeves (2004) stresses that teaching is a science as well as an art in that certain teaching practices have a high degree of success. The idea of *No Child should be Left Behind* mandate made professional development even more important than previously, requiring educators to be fully certified and highly qualified for their positions. To examine the impact of professional development, Marzano (2003) researched teachers using a 66-item survey instrument about their use of instructional strategies, a classroom management plan, and support of curriculum design. He found that expert teachers had more strategies at their disposal than ineffective teachers. These teachers had a list of rules, procedures and interventions with consequences. They knew curriculum standards and benchmarks and made sure that their students had engaging exposures to them; in addition, they used aligned assessments to determine mastery. In addition, according to Kelleher (2003), professional development was most successful when embedded in the teachers' work. Where an effective implementation of aligned instruction and curriculum where principals allowed teachers to study together regularly, build a strong commitment to meeting the needs of each student and encourage one another as the changes in instruction occur (Strickland, Dorothy, Ganske, Kathy, Monroe, & Joanne, 2002). Borko, Davinroy, Bliem, and Cumbo (2000), in their study of two veteran teachers of intensive math, discovered that teachers who designed and used assessments that were aligned with instructional goals, grew in conceptual knowledge, had higher expectations for their students and allowed for active student participation all these put together gives an educational policy a strong prospects that could make the 6-3-3-4 system practices achieve its objectives.



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing, it is observed that numerous challenges and prospect is embedded in the Nigerian 6-3-3-4 educational system policy towards progressive development. This has therefore necessitated all stakeholders in education sector should live up to expectation by contributing towards achievement of Nigerian 6-3-3-4 system objectives. The problem is not in the system but in the operators like the, teachers, the parents, the students, the school founders, the government, the society. It sounds interesting that, where everyone is sincere in the discharge of their responsibilities at the different levels, it is certain the Nigerian 6-3-3-4 system education policy should get somewhere. Therefore the researchers suggest that the 6-3-3-4 system have the potential to achieve standard educational in Nigeria, with a more radical approach from all the stakeholders in the education sector. Also the entire curriculum of the 6-3-3-4 system should be reviewed to meet global standard and to build human capacity that meets social demands. There is an urgent need for a workable educational policy for Nigeria, infuse with indigenous system of education should be adopted. Ideas that are alien to the cultures of Nigeria should be avoided because they are bound to fail.

- Education should be removed from the sphere of politics with more private stakeholders. It should be made purely a constitutional matter, where key players are allowed to make inputs for quality education.
- The implementation process should be effectively supervised to ensure that education as a non-negotiable right of every citizen has access to
- Mismanagement of educational resources at any level should be made a serious offence attracting a minimum of five years' imprisonment. This should be included in the next constitution of Nigeria. It is believed that in the presence of corruption no new system of education can succeed.
- Nigerian governments and leaders should develop the necessary political will for education to grow. Based on this today, the pace of change is so rapid, particularly in the educational sector the secret of a nation educational practices and system is being able to have leadership practices that can manage both change and continuity to achieve strategic goals. Clearly, one of the principal tasks of the Nigeria leaders across all levels is to ensure that they fosters an appropriate or positive attitude towards the 6-3-3-4 system practices, communication monitoring, curriculum, training, and professionalism. Obviously, doing this will assist in having a balance of emphasis on implementation and negative influences on the 6-3-3-4 system objectives.

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