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CASE STUDY

Universities of the Future: HEIs that are Oriented to Accreditation, Quality Assurance, Research, and Ranking

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ABSTRACT

The article "Universities of the Future: HEIs that are Oriented to Accreditation, Quality Assurance, Research, and Ranking" examines the important variables that will influence HEIs in the future. The study highlights the significance of certification, quality control, research, and ranking as vital success factors in the increasingly cutthroat world of higher education. The paper also looks at emerging trends and best practices in each of these areas, such as the use of technology and data analytics to support accreditation and quality assurance efforts, the growing importance of rankings as a crucial indicator of institutional success, and the growing emphasis on research impact and collaboration. In the end, the paper makes the case that HEIs will be in a strong position to flourish in the years to come by providing high-quality education, research, and innovation that stimulate economic and social advancement in their communities and beyond.

Keywords: Future of Higher Education, Ranking, Accreditation, Research, Quality Assurance

In the twenty-first century, higher education institutions (HEIs) are faced with unprecedented potential and problems. The pressure to offer excellence and maintain competitiveness on HEIs has increased as a result of the speed at which technology is changing, the expansion of globalization, and the rise in demand for high-quality education, research, and innovation. The need for new strategies to ensure that HEIs can fulfill their mission of educating and preparing the following generation of leaders, researchers, and innovators is also becoming increasingly acknowledged. Traditional models of higher education may not be adequate to meet the needs of a world that is changing quickly.

In light of this, this study examines the critical variables that will affect higher education institutions in the future, placing particular attention on the contribution of accreditation, quality control, research, and ranking to institutional success. In order to assure students, employers, and other stakeholders that

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HEIs are offering high-quality education and adhering to set criteria, accreditation and quality assurance are essential elements of the higher education environment. The development and dissemination of new knowledge, the advancement of scientific understanding, and the stimulation of innovation and economic growth are all major drivers of institutional success, and this is especially true for higher education institutions (HEIs)[1].

A growing number of HEIs use rankings as a yardstick for performance and a tool to guide strategic decision-making, which has led to rankings becoming an increasingly significant indicator of institutional success. Prospective students, companies, and other stakeholders might benefit greatly from rankings since they offer insightful information about the relative strengths and weaknesses of various institutions[12].

Although HEIs face many difficulties, there are also numerous chances for innovation and expansion. New trends and best practices in accreditation, quality control, research, and rating provide HEIs with new opportunities to perform better, have a greater impact, and maintain competitiveness in the global higher education market. In addition, there are important issues that need to be resolved, such as the shifting demographics of students, rising expenses, and growing competition from new vendors and technologies[8].

Overall, this paper makes the case that HEIs will be well-positioned to succeed in the years to come if they can successfully handle these opportunities and difficulties, providing top-notch instruction, research, and innovation that promotes social and economic advancement in their local communities and beyond. HEIs can lay the groundwork for success in the twenty-first century by concentrating on accreditation, quality assurance, research, and ranking, which will enable them to meet the changing needs of students, employers, and other stakeholders and establish themselves as leaders in the world of higher education.

Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education

In order to assure students, employers, and other stakeholders that HEIs are offering high-quality education and adhering to set criteria, accreditation and quality assurance are essential elements of the higher education environment. While quality assurance is a broader concept that includes ongoing monitoring, assessment, and improvement of institutional performance, accreditation is a process of external evaluation that compares an institution's programs, policies, and practices to established standards[3].

In order to guarantee that HEIs are providing high-quality education that satisfies the needs of students, businesses, and other stakeholders, accreditation and quality assurance are crucial. Accreditation and quality assurance contribute to the development of trust and confidence in the higher education system and serve as a vehicle for ongoing improvement by offering an unbiased evaluation of institutional performance[11].

Additionally crucial tools for ensuring that HEIs can adjust to shifting societal demands and expectations are accreditation and quality assurance. Accreditation and quality assurance can ensure that higher education institutions (HEIs) are capable of responding to these developments in a proactive and efficient manner as the demands placed on HEIs change. For instance, accreditation requirements may change to reflect new developments in technology, the emergence of new disciplines, or shifting criteria for student learning outcomes.

Accreditation and quality control can also provide difficulties for HEIs. Accreditation procedures can be time- and resource-consuming, and they may call for large expenditures on facilities, teachers, and

staff. Additionally, institutions that operate in multiple jurisdictions may face difficulties due to the wide variations in accreditation standards and procedures between various regions and nations.

Despite these difficulties, accreditation and quality control are still essential elements of the higher education landscape and are probably going to get even more so in the coming years. Accreditation and quality assurance can help to ensure that HEIs are able to deliver high-quality education that satisfies the changing needs of students, businesses, and other stakeholders as the global higher education scene grows more competitive and complicated. HEIs can position themselves for success in the twenty-first century by embracing best practices in accreditation and quality assurance and delivering education that is adaptable, creative, and significant.

The Role of Research in Higher Education

The foundation for innovation, discovery, and the expansion of knowledge is provided by research, which is a crucial part of the higher education environment. The advancement of research has long been a top priority for higher education institutions (HEIs), who also bear much of the credit for the most important scientific and technological advances of the 20th century.

Higher education research plays a variety of roles. On the one hand, research lays the groundwork for new technologies, goods, and services and is a vital driver of innovation and discovery. By producing fresh perspectives and solutions to challenging issues, research can also assist in addressing societal difficulties and enhancing quality of life.

Research is a significant contributor to economic development and growth at the same time. In addition to stimulating innovation and competitiveness in already-existing businesses, research can result in the emergence of new industries and jobs. As a result, research plays a significant role in fostering economic growth by opening up new options for people, communities, and countries[9].

HEIs are essential to the advancement of research because they offer the facilities, funds, and assistance required to carry out high-caliber research. This covers research funding, availability of cutting-edge tools and technology, and assistance for academic staff and undergraduate and graduate students conducting research.

HEIs contribute significantly to both the advancement of research and the training of the next generation of scholars and researchers. HEIs aid in the development of the abilities and knowledge required for future success in the research sector by giving undergraduate and graduate students the chance to participate in research activities. Higher education research has numerous advantages, but there are also issues that need to be resolved. The need to balance research with other key responsibilities, such teaching and service, is one of the biggest problems. Additionally, funding for research may be scarce, and competition for funding may be fierce. Finally, it's important to make sure that research is carried out ethically and responsibly and that society as a whole benefits from it.

Overall, research in higher education plays a crucial role in the expansion of knowledge, the creation of new businesses and technologies, and the enhancement of both the individual and collective quality of life. HEIs can position themselves for success in the twenty-first century by embracing best practices in research, investing in the infrastructure and supplies required to support research activities, and advancing innovation and discovery while promoting economic growth and development.

Rankings and Institutional Performance

Rankings have grown in significance as a method for measuring and assessing the performance of higher education institutions (HEIs) in recent years. Rankings offer a framework for evaluating the standing and caliber of HEIs and can aid in directing decisions about financial support, investment, and student enrolment.

Various criteria, such as research output, the caliber of the faculty and students, internationalization, and institutional reputation, are frequently used to determine rankings. Depending on the technique employed by the ranking organization, these characteristics are frequently given varying weights. The most well-known ranking companies include, among others, Shanghai Ranking, QS, and Times Higher Education[14].

Institutional performance is one of the rankings' most important effects. Higher education institutions that do well in rankings are frequently regarded as more prestigious and alluring to professors and students. This may result in greater enrollment, more qualified applications, and a better standing among peers.

Rankings have also come under fire for having flaws and biases at the same time. Rankings, according to some critics, place an excessive emphasis on research production while failing to appropriately take into consideration other crucial aspects including instructional effectiveness, involvement in the community, and social impact. Others contend that rankings may not accurately represent the true quality of HEIs because they can be influenced by variables like institutional reputation and location[13].

Rankings will probably continue to be significant in higher education despite these difficulties. Rankings will continue to be an important tool for HEIs to display their quality and reputation as pressure to compete for funds and students grows.

HEIs must embrace strategies and procedures that complement the measures employed by ranking organizations if they want to prosper in a rankings-driven world. Investing in research infrastructure, attracting top staff and students, fostering international collaborations, and enhancing institutional reputation through marketing and public relations are a few examples of what this could include.

HEIs must be cautious to avoid being unduly preoccupied with rankings at the expense of other crucial concerns. Rankings are simply one method for assessing institutional performance, and there are numerous other aspects, including as student outcomes, community involvement, and societal effect, that affect how successful HEIs are[10].

In the long run, rankings will continue to be significant in higher education. HEIs can position themselves for success in the twenty-first century by implementing best practices and establishing success strategies while also staying focused on other crucial concerns. This will advance innovation and discovery and contribute to economic growth and development.

Best Practices in Accreditation and Quality Assurance

In order to ensure that institutions and programs meet or surpass defined criteria of excellence, accreditation and quality assurance are essential components of higher education. To guarantee that their programs are successful, efficient, and responsive to the requirements of their students, faculty, and stakeholders, universities of the future must apply best practices in accreditation and quality assurance.

Establishing a culture of continuous improvement that emphasizes innovation, experimentation, and

risk-taking is one best practice. The creation, execution, and assessment of educational programs and services must reflect this culture. All stakeholders, including academics, students, administrators, alumni, and external partners, must be included in an institution's thorough quality assurance system.

Adopting a data-driven strategy for accreditation and quality assurance that emphasizes the gathering, analyzing, and use of data to guide decision-making is another best practice. Institutions must create accurate and credible indicators of stakeholder satisfaction, teacher productivity, institutional performance, and student learning. Additionally, they must use data to set objectives, create action plans, assess performance, and identify areas of strength and weakness.

Peer review is a third best practice that should be used both internally and externally. While external peer review involves evaluation by impartial experts from other institutions or organizations, internal peer review involves self-assessment and self-evaluation of programs and services. Peer review helps organizations identify opportunities for development by offering insightful comments on the efficacy and quality of programs and services.

A fourth best practice is to guarantee that the systems for accreditation and quality assurance are open, inclusive, and cooperative. Institutions must be transparent and open with all stakeholders when discussing its objectives, norms, procedures, and results. Stakeholders must be given opportunity to offer feedback and input during the design and implementation of quality assurance processes.

The accreditation and quality assurance procedures used by institutions must also be in line with their mission, vision, and values. They must have a dedication to social responsibility, student success, and academic brilliance. They must also uphold moral standards and ideals that encourage openness, responsibility, and integrity.

In order to be responsive to the shifting demands of its students, faculty, and stakeholders, universities of the future must implement best practices in accreditation and quality assurance. They must create an environment where continuous improvement is valued, use a data-driven approach, engage in peer review, ensure cooperation and openness, and match their processes with their purpose, vision, and values. By doing this, businesses can make sure that they are offering top-notch, useful, and pertinent programs and services that cater to their stakeholders' requirements and develop society.

Emerging Trends in Accreditation and Quality Assurance

Processes for certification and quality assurance are not an exception to the ongoing transformation of higher education. Emerging trends in this field are concentrated on increasing accreditation's efficiency and transparency, raising the standard of instruction provided by institutions, and guaranteeing that students obtain a quality education that satisfies their requirements and equips them for success in the workforce[5]. Among the new developments in certification and quality control are:

- **Outcome-Based Education (OBE):** The goal of outcome-based education (OBE), a method of teaching, is to assess students' learning and match the curriculum to the demands of the workplace. OBE makes sure that graduates have the information and abilities required for career success.
- **Digital credentialing:** Displaying one's learning accomplishments with digital credentials is safe and portable. They give students a way to show potential employers their knowledge and abilities, and they can aid schools in monitoring student learning results.

- **Competency-Based Education (CBE):** Rather than focusing on the amount of time spent in a classroom, CBE measures learning via the demonstration of skills and knowledge. CBE courses frequently allow students to learn at their own pace because they are flexible and self-paced.
- **Adaptive learning:** Using technology, adaptive learning helps each learner have a unique learning experience. In order to assist pupils master the material, it evaluates their strengths and weaknesses and offers specialized information and comments.
- **Peer Review:** A group of educators review and assess the educational programs offered by an institution as part of the peer review evaluation process. Peer evaluation offers an outside viewpoint on the caliber of instruction delivered by a given institution.
- **Cross-Border Accreditation:** Cross-border accreditation is becoming increasingly prevalent as higher education becomes more globally oriented. With this strategy, institutions are accredited internationally to make sure they adhere to high quality standards.
- **Learning Analytics:** To enhance educational results, learning analytics is the process of gathering and evaluating data regarding student learning. Institutions can use learning analytics to pinpoint problem areas for students and offer individualized support to help them achieve.
- **Micro-Credentials:** Micro-credentials are brief, narrowly focused courses that impart certain knowledge or abilities. They can be stacked to create a bigger credential and are frequently used in professional development and continuing education programs.
- **Open Educational Resources (OER):** OERs are educational materials that are freely available for anyone to access, use, and share. They offer a less expensive option to conventional textbooks and can increase access to education for those who might not have the money to buy pricey textbooks.
- **Student-Centered Learning (SCL):** SCL centers the educational experience around the needs and interests of the students. It emphasizes individualized instruction, teamwork, and the improvement of analytical and problem-solving abilities.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Continuous Improvement is the process of continuously evaluating and enhancing educational initiatives. It entails obtaining information, assessing it, and implementing adjustments to raise the standard of instruction offered by a particular institution.
- **Internationalization:** Internationalization is the process of integrating experiences and perspectives from around the world into the educational process. Global viewpoints may be incorporated into the curriculum, international connections with other universities, and study abroad programs on another continent.
- **Social Responsibility:** Being socially responsible is making a commitment to using education to improve society. It entails encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion while educating pupils to be responsible citizens of the world.
- **Digital Transformation:** DT is the process of incorporating technology into every facet of the educational process. It can include virtual reality, instructional apps, online learning platforms, and other technological tools that improve the learning process.



Fig. 1: Current Trends in Accreditation and Quality Assurance

Higher education could change as a result of these new trends in accreditation and quality assurance, becoming more effective, efficient, and attentive to the requirements of both students and the workforce. If institutions follow these patterns, student results, institutional performance, and overall educational quality are expected to improve.

Leveraging Technology and Data Analytics in Accreditation and Quality Assurance

In higher education institutions (HEIs), the use of technology and data analytics has grown in significance for the accreditation and quality assurance procedures. Institutions that use cutting-edge technologies and analytics tools are better able to boost student outcomes, enhance the quality of their programs, and react to shifting trends and demands in higher education. In this section, we'll go over the numerous applications of technology and data analytics for HEI accreditation and quality control.

Learning Management Systems (LMS): LMSs, or learning management systems, are software programs that let organizations plan, deliver, and monitor educational courses and programs. Students can access course information created and delivered by instructors through an LMS from any location with an internet connection. Additionally, LMS offer resources for evaluating student learning, monitoring student progress, and examining data on student engagement.

Student Information Systems (SIS): Systems for managing student data, including as admissions, registration, and financial aid, are known as student information systems (SIS). SIS can be used to

monitor graduation rates, monitor student development, and evaluate the efficiency of student assistance programs. Institutions can develop a more thorough picture of student performance and learning outcomes by combining SIS with LMS.

Assessment and Evaluation Tools: Assessment and evaluation tools are software programs that assist institutions in gauging the success of their educational initiatives. These resources may include questionnaires, tests, exams, rubrics, and other assessment methods. Institutions can gather information on student performance, pinpoint areas that need improvement, and make data-driven decisions to improve program quality by using assessment and evaluation tools.

Predictive analytics: To find trends and forecast future results, predictive analytics uses data, statistical algorithms, and machine learning approaches. Predictive analytics can be applied in higher education to find at-risk students, forecast student retention, and boost graduation rates. Employing predictive analytics, institutions can develop more successful student support initiatives and intervene early to help struggling students.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI is a subfield of computer science that focuses on building intelligent machines that are capable of learning, thinking, and other tasks that typically require human intelligence. AI has the potential to tailor learning for students, streamline administrative processes, and improve research capacity in higher education.

Big Data Analytics: The analysis of enormous and intricate data sets in order to spot patterns, trends, and insights is known as big data analytics. Big data analytics can be used in higher education to evaluate student performance, pinpoint areas that need development, and monitor institutional success. Institutions can make data-driven decisions to enhance program quality and student outcomes by examining big data.



Fig. 2: Applications of technology and data analytics for HEI accreditation and quality control

The utilization of technology and data analytics has grown in significance for accreditation and quality assurance in higher education[7]. Utilizing these tools, institutions can raise the caliber of their programs, improve student outcomes, and adapt to shifting trends and requirements in higher education. Higher education institutions (HEIs) who use technology and data analytics will be more successful in the quickly changing higher education environment.

Strengthening Research Impact and Collaboration

Any higher education institution (HEI) must prioritize research as a fundamental component. It is essential for fostering innovation and progress, accelerating economic expansion, and addressing societal problems. Prioritizing research gives HEIs a clear advantage when it comes to luring and keeping academics, staff, and financing. Furthermore, research-focused HEIs are better placed to generate ground-breaking studies and scholarship that have a positive influence on the world [4].

HEIs should concentrate on developing a research ecosystem that promotes collaboration, innovation, and quality in order to increase research impact and collaboration. This entails encouraging cross-disciplinary research and partnerships with outside groups, utilizing technology and data analytics to assist research activities, and providing the necessary infrastructure and resources.

Addressing complex societal concerns requires multidisciplinary research, and HEIs must foster a climate that promotes and supports interdisciplinary research collaborations. HEIs can promote innovation and develop research that can address major concerns by dismantling conventional departmental silos and fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration.

By collaborating with outside groups including business, governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations, HEIs can also foster the impact of research and collaboration. Such collaborations can give external organizations access to cutting-edge research and technology while simultaneously giving HEIs access to financing, expertise, and resources.

Research activities can also benefit from the use of technology and data analytics, which can give academics and researchers new tools and approaches. HEIs can employ data analytics to learn more about current research trends and pinpoint areas that need more focus. They can also employ technology to streamline research processes and enable researcher collaboration.

Last but not least, HEIs should offer the infrastructure and tools required to support research activities, including funds, facilities, tools, and employees. HEIs can ensure that they maintain their competitiveness and continue to produce research that has a substantial impact on society by giving researchers the tools they need to undertake cutting-edge research.

HEIs are better prepared to conduct research that has a major influence on society when research activities and collaborations are prioritized. HEIs can increase the impact of their research and collaboration while maintaining their competitiveness in the global higher education market by encouraging interdisciplinary research, partnerships with external organizations, use of technology and data analytics, and provision of the necessary resources and infrastructure.

Innovations in Ranking Methodologies

The methods used to rank colleges and other higher education institutions (HEIs) have undergone a substantial change in recent years. New ways to ranking have arisen that take a more comprehensive view of institutional performance, in contrast to previous ranking systems that have concentrated on a small number of variables, such as academic reputation and research productivity.

Utilizing bibliometric data, which gauges the influence and impact of research publications, is one such strategy. As a result, research performance may be evaluated more objectively, and institutions can compare their own performance to that of their peers. Measures of student outcomes, like as job rates and incomes after graduation, as well as measures of social effect, such as community participation and sustainability, are other unique metrics that have gained popularity in recent years.

The application of machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms to examine massive datasets and spot patterns and trends is another revolution in ranking approaches. With this method, rankings can be made more dynamic, responsive to changes in institutional performance, and tailored to the requirements and interests of various stakeholders.

In addition, rather of providing a universal ranking of all institutions, there has been a tendency toward creating rankings that are targeted to certain subjects or fields of study. This strategy takes into account the possibility that several universities may excel in various fields and empowers teachers, staff, and employers to make more educated choices about where to work or study[6].

All things considered, these advancements in ranking systems have the potential to offer more thorough and in-depth evaluations of institutional performance while also encouraging increased accountability and openness in higher education. However, there are also worries that relying too heavily on rankings may cause institutions to narrowly focus on a small number of indicators and ignore other crucial components of their mission and purpose.

Challenges and Opportunities for HEIs

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are faced with a variety of obstacles and opportunities as they work to focus on accreditation, quality control, research, and ranking. The necessity for HEIs to strike a balance between the requirements of certification and quality assurance with the need for innovation and flexibility is one of the major challenges. For institutions looking to preserve a competitive edge in the continually evolving educational world, finding this balance is extremely important.

The requirement for HEIs to maintain and enhance research quality and impact presents another difficulty. This problem is particularly pertinent given the growing importance of research and the requirement for output that is both pertinent and significant. HEIs must work to develop a setting that encourages excellence in research and teamwork while efficiently allocating resources.

Moreover, it can be difficult to keep up with the constantly changing methodologies used to rank HEIs. Institutions must make sure that their procedures follow the most recent advances and trends, including the use of metrics to gauge societal effect and sustainable growth. HEIs must also make an effort to strike a balance between putting their academic mission and values first and satisfying the objectives of ranking systems.

Despite these obstacles, HEIs have a number of chances to raise their profile and effectiveness. Advanced analytics tools and the expanding availability of data give HEIs the chance to make decisions that are supported by the best available evidence. HEIs can use technology to advance teaching, learning, and research while encouraging creativity and improving the educational experience for their students[2].

In addition, the advent of new types of certification and quality assurance, such competency-based accreditation and program-based accreditation, gives HEIs the chance to create programs that meet the needs of both employers and industry as well as changing student needs. Additionally, improved workforce development and economic growth can be achieved by enhancing collaboration between HEIs, business, and other stakeholders.

In conclusion, HEIs that place a high priority on certification, quality control, research, and ranking confront both opportunities and obstacles. In a fast evolving educational environment, HEIs can improve their position and efficacy by managing these difficulties and exploiting opportunities.

Implications for Future Research

An important field of study in recent years has been the investigation of the numerous facets of

accreditation, quality assurance, research, and ranking in higher education institutions (HEIs). The best practices, new trends, and difficulties faced by HEIs in these areas are still not fully understood despite tremendous progress. As a result, this study advocates for more research in the area to find innovative approaches and solutions that can improve the effectiveness and quality of HEIs.

The application of technology and data analytics to accreditation, quality control, research, and ranking is a promising topic for future study. Big data, artificial intelligence, and machine learning developments provide HEIs with new potential to use data and technology to improve a variety of elements of their operations, such as certification, quality control, and ranking.

The creation of more creative and inclusive methods for accreditation, quality assurance, research, and rating is another topic that needs further study. This could involve looking into new ranking techniques that consider a wider range of elements, such as diversity, sustainability, and social impact. Additionally, more study is required to better understand how accreditation and quality assurance affect student learning outcomes, HEI sustainability, and overall effectiveness.

Finally, future research should concentrate on addressing the difficulties and chances that HEIs face in these fields. For instance, HEIs must figure out how to strike a balance between the requirements of accreditation, quality control, and ranking and their aim to offer affordable, excellent education to a variety of student populations. Additionally, they must navigate the complexities of the world's higher education system, which include escalating competition for students and funding, shifting demographic trends, and geopolitical unpredictability.

This paper's conclusion emphasizes the importance of further investigation into the issues and opportunities related to accreditation, quality control, research, and ranking at HEIs. By delving further into these problems, we can find fresh approaches and resolutions that can improve the efficiency and goals of HEIs.

CONCLUSION

Universities must change as higher education's future develops quickly if they want to be competitive and relevant in the global market. Accreditation, quality control, research, and rating are critical areas that institutions must prioritize to ensure their success, as this article has shown. For institutions looking to boost their performance, the best practices and new trends in these fields—including utilizing technology and data analytics, enhancing research impact and collaboration, and advances in ranking methodologies—provide invaluable insights.

There are many opportunities for universities to prosper despite the difficulties faced by higher education, such as decreasing financing, rising competition, and the need for ongoing innovation. Universities can set themselves up for future success by adopting new technologies and approaches, forming alliances with other organizations and stakeholders, and placing a priority on student success.

Universities must, however, deal with their difficulties in order to fully take advantage of these opportunities. These include navigating shifting accreditation and quality assurance standards, maintaining academic rigor and tradition while maintaining the need for innovation, and addressing the rising demands for accountability and transparency.

Future studies should concentrate on these difficulties and chances to offer more information and suggestions for institutions. Universities may stay ahead of the curve and secure their success in the quickly evolving higher education market by continuing to research innovative ideas and procedures.

In order for universities to prosper in the future, accreditation, quality control, research, and ranking must be given top priority. Universities can negotiate the constantly shifting terrain of higher education and stay competitive and relevant for years to come by embracing innovations and resolving difficulties.

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