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Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION	3
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW: TOOLS FOR STRATEGICAL ALIGNMENT	3
2.1 MCKINSEY'S 7S MODEL	3
2.2BALANCED SCORECARD (BSC)	4
3.0 ASSUMPTIONS	5
3.1 HYPOTHETICAL BACKGROUND OF UOW MALAYSIA	5
3.2 HYPOTHETICAL DIFFICULTIES	5
4.0 THE APPLICATION OF CHOSEN TOOLS	8
4.1 MCKINSEY'S 7S MODEL	8
4.1.1 Shared Values	9
4.1.2 Strategy	9
4.1.3 Structure	10
4.1.4 Systems	10
4.1.5 Skills	
4.1.6 Staff	11
4.1.7 Style	11
4.1.8 The Relationships of 7S	11
4.2 BALANCE SCORECARD (BSC)	12
5.0 EVALUATION PLAN	15
6.0 CONCLUSION	
7.0 REFERENCES	19

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, information systems have played an important role in every business industry for a few decades. As a backbone and critical tool for maintaining competitiveness, all executive managers commit to reducing the gap between the support of information systems and organizational objectives, which is known as IS alignment. They are responsible for ensuring that the information systems are useful for the organization, meeting its needs without exceeding them or falling short of expectations.

This report will explore the tools commonly used by organizations to achieve IS-business alignment, how these tools help UOW Malaysia align their strategy, and the plan for evaluating IS-business alignment.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW: TOOLS FOR STRATEGICAL ALIGNMENT

Either the non-profit organizations or profit organizations mostly rely on the IS to survive. IS are normally in charge of their day-to-day work, communication, trend forecasting, and other business processes. Therefore, the IS alignment is becoming an extremely significant affair to be addressed.

There are two common tools being chosen for this report: McKinsey's 7S and Balanced Scorecard. Both are the tools most used in business strategic adjustment.

2.1 MCKINSEY'S 7S MODEL

Channon and Caldart stated that McKinsey's 7S model was designed by McKinsey & Co in 1980's, which is a tool for strategy assessment (2014). In this model, the current situation and structure will be holistically analyzed, through the interdependent 7 elements, and they are hard elements (strategy, business structures, systems) and soft elements (management styles, shared values, human resources, and capabilities) (Demir and Batuhan, 2019).

The hard elements are concrete and measurable, so they are easier to control in comparison to the intangible soft elements (Pinfield and Rutter, 2018). Through those elements analysis, the business will be able to analyze the gap between the current situation and their vision. However, it does not give a performance measurement for the organization.

Moreover, McKinsey's 7S model is difficult to assess the degree of fit since there are too many soft elements. Lastly, 'this tool also has been criticized for lacking enough empirical evidence to support its explanation'. (Biznews, 2021). This might also be the reason why only a few articles criticize and appraise its effectiveness.

2.2BALANCED SCORECARD (BSC)

BSC is the abbreviation of Balanced Scorecard, which is one of the commonly used tools in business strategy planning tools or performance metrics, despite being introduced a long time ago (Tawse and Tabesh, 2023). According to the statement of the Balance Scorecard Institute website and some of the articles which are mentioned in later, they stated that the Balance Scorecard was developed by Robert Kaplan and David Norton in 1992 (n.d.).

Instead of making the financial an only objective and strategy that the organization has vision about, the BSC also focuses on the customer, internal business process, learning and growth perspective (Kaplan, 2009). Including the financial perspective, BSC provides a more comprehensive view for the organization to investigate the strategic alignment via measurement and visualization of visions.

Researchers believe that the existence of BSC significantly impacts the strategy implementation, integration, and performance measurement for a business in terms of positivity (Tawse and Tabesh, 2023). This is also the reason why BSC still has a standing position. In general, Balanced scorecard provides the executive managers with a holistic approach, view to the consideration in business strategy and IS alignment.

According to numerous studies, BSC contributes positively to the organization. For example, Lttner, Larcker and Randall stated the firms implementing BSC always achieved superior financial performance compared to those without it (2023). Nevertheless, BSC still has some limitations to a certain degree. For example, SMEs are difficult to implement, the reason could be the process problem or design failures. The larger scope of strategic management makes it difficult for SMEs to manage it in terms of uncertainty, innovation, and evolution of business (Rompho, 2011).

3.0 ASSUMPTIONS

3.1 HYPOTHETICAL BACKGROUND OF UOW MALAYSIA

University College Name	Image 1. The University Badge of UOW Malaysia (UOW Malaysia, 2023)
History of UOW Malaysia	UOW Malaysia (UOWM) is one of the most famous private university colleges in Malaysia since it was established in 1970. It is in an urban area of Selangor. After 2013, UOW Malaysia started to establish branch campuses by merging or acquiring university colleges overseas. To this day, UOW has 10 campuses around the world, and they are located in countries like Australia, Dubai and Hong Kong and so on.
Courses/ Programs Provided	UOW Malaysia provides various programs for both undergraduate and doctoral programs. Such as Business, Health Science, Computing & Creative Media, Engineering, Law program, etcetera.
Business Visions / objectives	 Spearheading the forefront of global educational institutions Delivering exceptional services across all facets

Table 1. The Information of UOWM

3.2 HYPOTHETICAL DIFFICULTIES

As mentioned before, UOWM is a private university which means that they need to operate it as a business. They must ensure the capability of extracting customers (students), organizational communication, financial issues and so on. Initially, UOWM enjoyed steady growth in all aspects, such as the growth of customer quantity, business value, education quality and so on.

Due to government policy, there are so many private universities in the market. They all have different strategies to survive in the market such as providing cheaper programs, avant-garde, or special programs, and collaborating with other prestigious universities. However, they are suffering from various difficulties since the COVID-19 pandemic.

UOW Malaysia's strategic position is providing excellent programs at a medium-high price. Then, it doesn't have any partner university, it only affords its own courses. Their main competitors are 2 universities, which are Taylor University and Sunway University. They are all the universities which provide excellent course structure as well, but the price is higher than the UOW Malaysia. They also focus on the student experiences, that is the reason Tailor and Sunway Universities have become strong competitors in the market.

In 2021, UOW Malaysia realized their customers are decreasing, which means that their competitiveness and financial situation are having issues. After their analysis, they found that there are many reasons, and they are interrelated. The following table and points are the difficulties that UOW is currently facing:

Reason's Name	Interpretation and Historical Events		
Ineffective enrolment management and other administration processes are due to outdated organizational culture and systems.	 "Oracle" is the main system for administrative management processes. However, the latest update was in 2012. So, the system has demoded user interface and inhuman design. This software is the median for a variety of administrative processes that encompass communication, student enrollment and so on. It is becoming ineffective gradually. The ineffective enrolment management and other administration processes are attributable to an outdated organizational culture and outdated systems in use. 		
Outdated course programs are resulting from limited data insights and data silos	 The courses that are currently provided by the UOW Malaysia have been for a long time without modernization. In addition, there has not been an increase in the number of subjects available to students for a long time. It might be due to UOW Malaysia generating vast amounts of data from different sources, but those resources are underutilized. It means that they are not able to use the data to predict future trends in related disciplines and the other rapidly developing new disciplines. 		

	UOW Malaysia did not provide an ideal e-learning platform
	for their students. The current platform, "Open Learning", for
	e-learning is not stable in terms of performance. Furthermore,
	the UI and UX of this platform is also unsatisfactory. Use of
	the platform is also uneven across tutors, and some don't
	even use it. This leads to confusion among students. This also
	relates to the problem of organization culture, for example
	the staff resist the changes and so on.
Ineffective Student Engagement and	UOW Malaysia also doesn't provide the application for
Support in terms of IS	students to manage their student life, but their competitors
	did provide. This type of application can provide functions
	like getting university official announcements, reserving for
	the library seats and so on.
	They also did not provide a website that contains the same
	literature article, textbooks, past year examination papers and
	so on for all the students from different campuses around the
	world. The current website is providing incomplete resources
	for the students.
	As the system that is being used by the UOW Malaysia is old. The system security is highly concerned by the UOW
	Malaysia as there so much confidential information, such as
	staff and student personal information, some of the financial
	records and so on, has been used in "Oracle".
	• In 2018, the system "Oracle" had been hacked by some
IS security and risk management crisis	malicious hackers. After this, UOWM realized their student
	expressed dissatisfaction in the annual students' satisfaction
	survey.
	UOWM believes that the time of the cybersecurity crisis
	severely affects their reputation and students' satisfaction and
	that has become one of the reasons they are losing their
	students.
	With the increase of students, many facilities on campus are
Lack of Scalable Infrastructure	not enough for students to use, including WiFi, library
	resources, canteens and so on.

Table 2. Difficulties of UOWM

4.0 THE APPLICATION OF CHOSEN TOOLS

The implementation of McKinsey's 7S model and BSC is highly compatible to align the UOWM's strategies. According to the report from Kaplan, the BSC is an important element to complement the limitations of McKinsey's 7S (2005). Generally, these tools have some common characteristics, they all provide holistic views to observe the business strategy position. In this case, McKinsey's 7S is more focusing on the internal business perspective whereby BSC is concerned with the specific objectives in each perspective and measurement of performance. Furthermore, McKinsey's 7S provides guidelines to help organizations to identify the gap between current situations and ideal visions. So, UOWM will be able to plan the tactic for the strategy's achievement. Lastly, all the elements in McKinsey's 7S model and BSC are intended to complement each other so they are interrelated.

As previously stated, the problems that are facing UOW Malaysia is the financial problem that is caused by the loss of customers. The root cause of losing customers is the IS backwardness. Such difficulties have pushed UOWM further away from their commercial goals that were established when they had been established.

UOW Malaysia's Visions:

- Spearheading the forefront of global educational institutions.
- Delivering exceptional services across all facets.

4.1 MCKINSEY'S 7S MODEL

The most important knowledge in McKinsey's 7S model is the hard elements and soft elements. Athuraliya has given the definition for 7S (2023).

Hard Elements:

- Strategy This helps UOWM to sustain competitiveness by responding to external changes and leveraging opportunities to gain new advantages and leveraging opportunities or resources to gain new advantages.
- Business structures This helps UOWM to review the business structures and organization and coordination of units and divisions, reporting lines and task distribution. In short, it is the representation of an organizational chart.
- Systems This helps UOWM to identify the core and support activities that form the operational backbone. Such as human resources, marketing and so on.

Soft Elements:

- Management Styles This helps UOWM to review their organizational structure or culture in terms of leadership. Such as the way of communication and so on.
- Shared Values This helps UOWM to recognize the superordinate goals, it will serve as the foundation for other 6S.

- Human Resources This helps UOWM to know the importance of their staff and develops new plans for recruitment, remuneration and other motivational considerations.
- Capabilities This helps UOWM to identify the skills set of their human resources. This is an important element to be successful in IS alignment as it directly relates to daily operations.

By the process of identifying these elements, UOWM can know the means, and the indispensable elements to achieve the business visions mentioned above in terms of stage by stage.

4.1.1 Shared Values

UOWM's visions drive the shared values basically. To achieve the visions, UOWM commits to excellence in education, such as providing high-quality education and since their core business is giving education for customers. They also want to put emphasis on putting students at the center of its operations. From the organizational management perspective, they tend to encourage collaboration among students and staff to improve the learning style, teamwork cooperation and so on. Lastly, UOWM should ensure their means to achieve the visions is ethical and legal.

4.1.2 Strategy

The shared values and visions of UOW that have been defined previously and the difficulties have become the motivation to develop the tactics and strategies. According to the current difficulties, UOWM clearly understands and predicts the root causes are that the available information system is not in line with their business visions and current needs. Basically, the problems are the following:

- 'Oracle' as the system for managing the administrative processes such as enrolment and so on is not user friendly. It lacks communication mechanisms like ERP to facilitate data interoperability and so on.
- UOWM's staff underutilize the data silos, they are not able to use those internal or external data for the observation of customers behaviors and the trends of rapidly developing new disciplines.
- 'Open Learning' as the e-learning platform for students is not good enough for students to use. The usage among lecturers is also uneven.
- Lacking a website to provide e-resources for all students from different campuses.
- The Cybersecurity system is not robust.
- The scalable infrastructure such as Wi-Fi, library resources are undesirable.

Based on this background, UOWM could invest in information systems, such as invest in scalable infrastructure, update, or even redesign their current system to make sure they are what the end user desires. These changes are considered as the key factors they can remain and gain the new advantages in the future. They believe that once they have a reliable information system service for the end users. And a reliable system that can help in

improving their provided courses then their education quality will be increased and finally stand out from competitors which are Tailor University and Sunway University.

4.1.3 Structure

The divisional structure is the most appropriate organizational structure for the UOWM. The following is the organizational structure of UOWM.



Image 1. UOWM Organizational Structure

The IS should be able to support this type of structure, for instance, the communication is direct and accurate. It will not be redundant and decrease the difficulty of staff to get information, such as the attendance record, tuition payment status and so on. The efficiency and effectiveness of IS can streamline the communication then decrease the chance of delivering wrong information. In the best case, IS will flatten the organizational structure, it even shortens the information delivery pathway. It helps to reduce the time needed and trouble to deal with anything in daily operation.

4.1.4 Systems

In this instance, the administrative processes will be the primary activities such as student enrolment, tuition payment status, marketing, etc, should get the assistance from the information system. Since IS could help them to standardize the processes and ensure such services quality. For example, the current inconvenient system makes the student enrolment process troublesome, then each admin might have different administrative

procedures. This makes the processing speed and procedures inconsistent. The improvement of the IS system will help them to align and track the procedures at the same pace, it will increase the confidence of students and staff.

Additionally, the support activities such as the information system related stuff's improvement and maintenance are also the important factor to the business processes.

4.1.5 Skills

In fact, UOWM still focuses on providing excellent education programs for their students. This is an obvious core competency of UOWM. The implementation of IS is used to support the core competencies and enhance the values that can be provided from UOWM to their students. IS also can help UOWM only focus on their main core competency, which is providing high quality education, like focusing on how to improve the process of teaching and so on. The other activities like accounting, marketing will be enhanced by using IS. It saves the energy of staff and the cost of hiring huge amounts of employees.

By identifying this, UOWM can understand what they need are the employees who are able to use the IS to collaborate with each other. And the lecturer who can provide the knowledge for their students.

4.1.6 Staff

The current KPIs of employees in UOWM are still acceptable. They all understand what they should do, need to do, and how to do. So, the only gaps from current situation to ideal skills are that the staff should get used to the new system. So, the training might be an inevitable process in future. In the best case, the KPI measurement could be performed automatically by using IS.

If UOWM wants to improve the communication process, they cannot only rely on the information system. When they are recruiting, the style of collaboration of the employees should be considered seriously as well.

4.1.7 Style

UOWM wants to build a working and learning environment that is highly collaborative. It means that UOWM should develop a plan that encourages the action to achieve this vision.

4.1.8 The Relationships of 7S

The relationship among the 7S is all linked with one another. This image indicates the concept of the 7S relationships. It is inspired by Cascade Team (n.d.). So, UOWM can clearly understand how the elements influence the form of IS and their strategies.

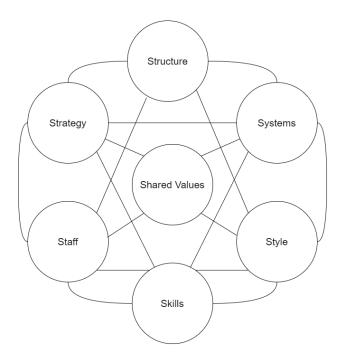


Image 2. The Representation of 7S Relationship

4.2 BALANCE SCORECARD (BSC)

In UOWM case, McKinsey's 7S model helps to understand the difficulties, current and ideal situation gap analysis. Besides that, it helps business to determine their 7S and understand the interrelationships among them. So, BSC will help to categorize and identify the strategies and tactics that are needed by UOWM then measure the performance in order to achieve the business visions.

By using McKinsey's 7S model, the business visions and problems were clearly identified but the tactics, initiative, and strategies in 4 perspectives in BSC is not clear, which are financial, customer, internal business process and learning and growth perspectives.

The following are the definitions of four perspectives:

- Financial This helps UOWM to identify financial performance, objectives, and the use of financial resources.
- Customer This helps UOWM to identify organizational performance and objectives from the perspective of the customer.
- Internal Business Process This helps UOWM to identify the performance of quality and efficiency that are related to the UOWM's services.
- Learning and Growth (Organization Capacity) This helps UOWM to identify the human capital,
 technology and infrastructure, culture that may be able to grow.

So, BSC provides competency which is categorize the tactics into strategies in four perspectives. An example for the importance of categorization of tactics into specific strategies, the "Oracle" needs to be updated to meet the requirements of UOWM. In this statement, it doesn't demonstrate what reason drive "Oracle" needs to be

updated. So, BSC will let UOWM know that it will help them to increase revenue in terms of optimizing cost-efficiency.

Based on this, the unclear tactics or initiatives can also become distinct, and it will contribute to the strategies. Then, the determination of KPIs for each strategy will be easier. The measurement of performance will be discussed later.

Four Perspectives	Strategies	Objectives and Tactics
Financial	Increase Revenue	Objective: Increase revenue generation through improved student enrolment and retention rate. Initiative: Develop new programs that are in trend and promote their current available programs by using data-driven decision making. Provide excellent services, environment for their students, such as WiFi, high quality e-resources and system for them to use.
	Optimize Cost- efficiency	Objective: • Reduce operational costs by increasing revenue and streamlining administrative processes. Initiative: • Implement "Oracle" system upgrade and process improvement to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, so it can reduce the administrative expenses.
Customer	Enhance student satisfaction engagement	Objective: • Provide excellent services, environment for their students. Initiative: • Upgrade the systems such as "Oracle" and e-learning platform "Open Learning" based on UI and UX.
	Improve Communication, Collaboration	Objective:

		 Establish an information transparent environment for the students then improve communication and collaboration. Initiative: Ensure the necessary information will be available for all the parties using systems.
Internal Business Process	Streamline Administrative Processes	Objective: • Streamline administrative processes. Initiative: • Integrate and automate the systems and standardize the operations by upgrading the current IS to a comprehensive system that facilitates data interoperability.
	Enhance Data Management	Objective: • To enable data-driven decision making and enhance data management in UOWM. Initiative: • Implementing data analytics capabilities to gain insight into students' behaviors and trends in market.
	Robust Cybersecurity	Objective: • To ensure the cybersecurity of UOWM since there is so many valuable confidential information. Initiative: • Strengthen cybersecurity measure to ensure the safety, integrity of data.
Learning and Growth (Organization Capability)	Collaborative Culture	Objective: • Establish an information transparent environment for the students then improve communication and collaboration. Initiative: • Ensure the necessary information will be available for all the parties using systems.
	Continuous Learning	Objective: • Foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation. Initiative:

	The IS alignment will influence the structure of the		
		organization and their tasks to a certain degree. Training	
		should be required for the whole organization.	

Table 3. The Strategy in BSC

One of the important tools in BSC is the strategy map. It is the analogy of connections among strategic objectives (Future Learn, 2022). In short, it will help the UOWM to define the strategic objectives and understand the cause-and-effect connection among them. This is a critical step to select the appropriate KPIs for each strategy.

The following image indicates the relationships of each strategy objective:

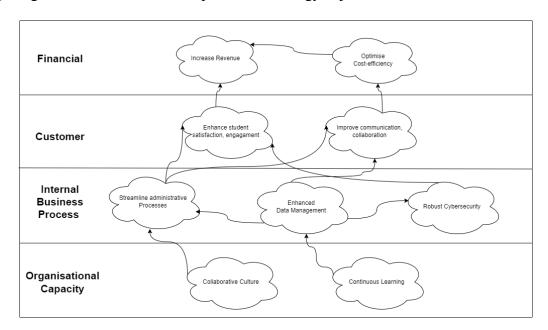


Image 3. The Strategy Map

Nowadays, the automation of IS also plays an important role for Balanced Scorecard. It will be able to automatically communicate performance information within the UOWM (Strategy Management Institute, 2023). It also means that the relationship between IS and BSC is interactional. Therefore, UOWM managers can easily track the result in BSC faster.

5.0 EVALUATION PLAN

KPI always is the standard to measure the performance of IS-business alignment. It will indicate whether the changes really bring positive consequences for the UOWM. Based on the BSC, the key performance indicators will not reflect for the financial only, it also can apply on the customer, internal business process and organization capability. These elements are the critical points to operate their business in visions. As a result, UOWM will assess their performance on this time IS alignment from a holistic view. The following are the KPIs for each perspective in BSC:

- 1. Financial Perspectives:
- Strategy Objectives:

- Increase revenue
- Optimize cost-efficiency

• KPIs:

- o Increase the percentage of enrolments by 20% within another 12 months.
- Reduce operational costs by 15%

2. Customer Perspective:

- Strategy Objectives:
 - o Enhance student satisfaction engagement
 - o Improve communication, collaboration

• KPIs:

- Achieve student satisfaction rating of 85% or higher through regular surveys and feedback mechanisms in the new system.
- Increase the using rates of e-resources and learning platform by 30% as it indicates the degree of student engagements from certain perspective.

3. Internal Business Process Perspective:

- Strategy Objectives:
 - Streamline Administrative Processes
 - Enhance Data Management
 - o Robust Cybersecurity
- KPIs:
 - Achieve a 20% reduction in data silos and improve data accessibility by implementing an integrated data management system.
 - o Reduce the number of security breaches by 50% in contrast to the last 12 months.

4. Learning and Growth Perspective:

- Strategy Objectives:
 - o Collaborative Culture
 - Continuous Learning

• KPIs:

- o Increase the average technical competency score of staff by 15% through regular competency assessment within 6 months.
- o Increase the satisfaction of staff in terms of the level of ease to get the information by 60%.

UOWM strongly believes that all the KPIs will serve as the benchmark for them to evaluate the success or failure of IS alignment. If the KPIs are hit in various perspectives which means that the investment of IS is successful and reasonable. However, the process of assessment is not like that clear of what KPIs are required to achieve.

For example, UOWM is required to transform, upgrade, update their all-current information system. It also means that the system function upgrade allocation time and so on is also a critical point to be focused since it is impossible to upgrade all the IS in one shot.

In the process of upgrading, the effectiveness of using IS might be decreased as the gap time occurs. So, UOWM cannot perceive the decrease of effectiveness where the gap time is the failure of IS alignment. However, they should also develop a standard for the acceptable range of it, such that any new changes could not make it 50% less effective than it was before the change.

Lastly, the tools to get the information will be regular qualitative and quantitative surveys, it will serve as the reliable data for UOWM to evaluate the performance. Since the surveys are being used by the UOWM related people, it also helps to engage them as the members in IS alignment and encourages open communication within university.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The contributions of McKinsey's 7S and BSC to the case of UOWM are unspeakable. Basically, they become the fundamental tools of IS alignment for this case and help UOWM to achieve their business visions. In traditional business industry, both tools and models are used for strategy alignment. When IS becomes an integral part of business, they naturally become an important part of business strategy so they could be used.

Again, both tools concentrate on different perspectives in strategy alignment, and have their own strengths and limitations. The combination of both tools also brings the benefits of complementary disadvantages, such as BSC provides a more robust measurement to track the performances while McKinsey's 7S model helps to gain insight into UOWM internal viewpoints. However, UOWM still must consider the only disadvantage that both cannot address, which is the cost of using tools.

A more comprehensive method means more effort to explore the needed views. Normally, it is costly and relies on the capabilities to which an organization has. UOWM as a university and always has intelligentsias as their employees, so the implementation of IS alignment by using those tools must be affordable and logical.

As we know, IS alignment is not a temporary thing, it should be taken care of throughout the whole life of business. So, UOWM should always consider the newest or innovative tools to do the alignment. It might take plenty of new advantages for the business. For example, IS BSC, it is developed based on the traditional BSC, but it is oriented to the measurement of IS performance (Kidd,2019). It may help to enhance their strategy alignment.

Finally, the measurement criteria also need to take into account external factors, so in the future, UOWM may also need to use tools that can take into account external factors in their planning measurements such as PESTEL. This helps them make controllable adjustments to their plans in response to volatile changes in the market. In

other words, the current two tools will not be their tools for the business lifetime, they need to change	e with the
market.	

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 $\label{token} Token=IQoJb3JpZ2luX2VjEB0aCXVzLWVhc3QtMSJIMEYCIQCqBTBgE1rke0JxREjLA2U7JVnhh7vr4WkszBabAm0YDgIhAJvHZf0CGBzNnukAm4OBWmQJB8exKAugKqBVVJZYZjrhKrMFCHYQBRoMMDU5MDAzNTQ2ODY1IgwiIjWt6zsG7mFaAnAqkAVNf6UIudnLv4gwiGS79ZASvBXaHqFwUM1Wi0IHqN8Vuvk09qzBQ%2F%2FGv0P7RJM7qbl4hEbimuifx%2BvpSL2DFYlJIv99VUTDY5cOmkWzpwqD7mltg8PzFnQOhrL3%2FV5H6TG60THmPr4sJOXDtmE5ROsaYyhv4TiD43P70gi1z8cMu07ccwiEqcyVsK5%2BtJBggovYCA5YdJr62jMKNbcTrRXA1ir8pUwKseGiM%2B7odmqnZteIczKC2BXXlcUeb7kvN3Uyl78FJyctrwVFb9S6iNjEy7rjhJgewagMD%2BQbtFhktDJqxTUzhhoByZ19ODngR8j9Hmj6GWEyqwxC7uGkaUG%2FjcnvtTcivXe9nkdpShBKkc9ZmTFy2LTSPfUXo6BvWZvehTcEBf%2F9FqSxb98PEaMjOyOfAYfQZXBNNn6xpofrHBRpeNOG8xiXHKYYuzOVcrRrCFTPe1IB9IxL%2Fxjx1ZgNgwXWECWaSJhB8NJ0L8QQ6NdkoxOou2mrs%2FOwVAtMqHirlZNI1OyUrhXYS3HpLCTTAnMi1njSnqsjhmJjfoH%2Fl0WftTFMShT0tFdJl7o8ji4wFZNTIGwVGZpKZESudQKA0by87vywm769vatSFhQ29dx7YZI%2BloS7eLoTKrPnRXLq34n0vDMfP6bR6h0EsFsi%2BFnY8eENlbdgKUtUJ2vxezEKOrN9Y(Accessed: June 18, 2023).$

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