

# Initial Assessment of the Marinduque State University on the Implementation of an Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) Certifiable to ISO 21001:2018

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## Abstract

This study assessed the readiness of Marinduque State University (MarSU) to implement an Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) certifiable to ISO 21001:2018. Anchored on Total Quality Management, Organizational Communication Theory, the Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle, and Stakeholder Theory, the study employed a descriptive-evaluative research design to examine the University's conformity with the requirements of the standard. Data were collected from key institutional stakeholders through purposive sampling using a researcher-developed ISO 21001:2018 assessment checklist and gap analysis matrix, complemented by document analysis and semi-structured key informant interviews. Gap analysis was used to determine the University's level of conformity, identify implementation gaps, and establish priority areas for improvement. The findings showed that MarSU substantially conforms to most ISO 21001:2018 requirements, demonstrating strengths in organizational context, leadership, planning, selected support and operational processes, performance evaluation, and continual improvement. Overall, the University achieved conformity in 19 of the 28 clauses and sub-clauses assessed, placing it within the certifiable category while identifying nonconformities related to the Quality Policy, Quality Management Representative, resource provision, infrastructure, competence management, stakeholder property, and stakeholder satisfaction monitoring. The study concludes that MarSU possesses a functional Educational Organization Management System and is well-positioned for ISO 21001:2018 certification, provided that the identified gaps are addressed through strengthened institutional procedures, documentation, and continuous monitoring. It recommends institutionalizing proactive quality management practices to achieve sustained compliance and continual improvement. This study supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by promoting learner-centered quality assurance and continuous educational improvement, and Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by strengthening institutional governance, transparency, and accountability. Its sustainability impact lies in providing evidence-based guidance for institutional quality enhancement, strategic planning, and the long-term implementation of an internationally recognized educational management system.

**Keywords:** Educational Organization Management System (EOMS), Gap Analysis, ISO 21001:2018, Marinduque State University, Quality Assurance, Readiness Assessment, State Universities and Colleges

## 1. Introduction

Higher education institutions are increasingly expected to deliver quality education through effective, accountable, and continuously improving management systems. While ISO 9001 has strengthened organizational quality management, ISO 21001:2018 was developed specifically for educational organizations to enhance learner-centered services, stakeholder engagement, and educational outcomes. This study assesses Marinduque State University's readiness to implement an Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) certifiable to ISO 21001:2018, providing evidence to support institutional quality improvement and future certification.

### 1.1 Background of the Study on ISO 21001:2018 Implementation in Marinduque State University

The growing demand for quality assurance and accountability has encouraged higher education institutions to adopt internationally recognized management standards. In the Philippines, Administrative Order No. 161, series of 2006, and Executive Order No. 605, series of 2007 institutionalized ISO-based Quality Management Systems (QMS) in the public sector and encouraged State Universities and Colleges to pursue ISO certification to strengthen governance, transparency, and service delivery (Supreme Court E-Library, 2006; Supreme Court E-Library, 2007). Although ISO 9001 improves organizational processes, it does not fully address the unique requirements of educational institutions. To address this limitation, ISO introduced ISO 21001:2018, an Educational Organizations Management System (EOMS) that emphasizes learner satisfaction, accessibility, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement (Abu Bakar, Ismail, & Darwi, 2024). International studies further demonstrate that ISO 21001 strengthens educational quality, institutional effectiveness,

and quality assurance while highlighting the importance of readiness assessment before implementation (Y. Syahrullah, A. Yanti, T. P. Adhiana, and R. A. Imran, 2022; Raya, M. Y., Hidayat, T., Yuspiani, & Basri, A. D., 2022; Abu Bakar, Ismail, & Darwi, 2024). For Marinduque State University, implementing ISO 21001:2018 provides an opportunity to strengthen educational governance and learner-centered quality management. However, an initial assessment is necessary to determine the University's current level of conformity, identify implementation gaps, and provide a basis for strategic planning and future certification.

### **1.2 Themes and Insights from Related Literature on ISO 21001:2018**

Existing literature identifies ISO 21001:2018 as a framework that enhances educational quality, stakeholder engagement, accountability, and continuous improvement. Successful implementation depends on leadership commitment, stakeholder participation, institutional readiness, and alignment with accreditation systems (Abu Bakar, Ismail, & Darwi, 2024; Raya, Hidayat, Yuspiani, & Basri, 2022). Comparative studies further show that ISO 9001 and ISO 21001 complement each other by integrating general quality management with education-specific requirements (Ramese, Jayasooriya, & Lakma, 2024). Surveillance audits, Total Quality Management, and gap analyses likewise reinforce continual improvement, institutional competitiveness, and organizational transformation while emphasizing the need to address deficiencies in documentation, stakeholder engagement, and quality culture (Analysis of the Implementation of ISO 21001 Surveillance Audit, 2025; Ülker, 2023; Syahrullah, Yanti, Adhiana, & Imran, 2022).

### **1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of ISO 21001:2018 Implementation**

Globally, ISO 21001 has been adopted to improve educational quality, governance, and institutional competitiveness (Y. Syahrullah, A. Yanti, T. P. Adhiana, and R. A. Imran, 2022; Raya, M. Y., Hidayat, T., Yuspiani, & Basri, A. D., 2022; Ramese, Jayasooriya, & Lakma, 2024). Nationally, Philippine policies promoting ISO-based quality management have strengthened institutional accountability and encouraged higher education institutions to adopt internationally recognized standards (Supreme Court E-Library, 2006; Supreme Court E-Library, 2007). Locally, Marinduque State University seeks to advance its quality assurance initiatives through ISO 21001:2018, making an assessment of its current management practices essential for successful implementation and future certification.

### **1.4 Theoretical Basis for Assessing ISO 21001:2018 Readiness**

This study is anchored on four complementary theories that support the assessment of Marinduque State University's readiness to implement an Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) certifiable to ISO 21001:2018. Total Quality Management (TQM) provides the foundation for continuous improvement, stakeholder satisfaction, and integration of quality practices across institutional processes. Organizational Communication Theory emphasizes effective communication, stakeholder participation, and organizational alignment in implementing quality management systems. The Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Cycle supports systematic planning, implementation, evaluation, and continual improvement of institutional processes. Stakeholder Theory highlights the importance of balancing the needs and expectations of learners, faculty, administrators, external partners, and the community to achieve sustainable quality management. Collectively, these theories provide the framework for assessing institutional readiness, identifying implementation gaps, and supporting continuous improvement toward ISO 21001:2018 compliance.

### **1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale for the Initial Assessment of ISO 21001:2018**

Existing studies consistently report that ISO 21001:2018 enhances educational quality, governance, stakeholder engagement, and institutional effectiveness. However, they also emphasize that successful implementation depends on institutional readiness, leadership commitment, effective communication, and systematic gap assessment before certification (Abu Bakar, Ismail, & Darwi, 2024; Raya, Hidayat, Yuspiani, & Basri, 2022; Syahrullah, Yanti, Adhiana, & Imran, 2022). Despite the increasing adoption of ISO 21001 internationally, implementation remains relatively new among Philippine State Universities and Colleges, with limited studies assessing institutional readiness for certification. Specifically, no documented assessment has examined Marinduque State University's conformity with ISO 21001:2018 requirements. This study addresses this gap by evaluating the University's current management practices, identifying areas for improvement, and providing evidence-based recommendations to guide strategic planning and future implementation of an Educational Organization Management System.

### **1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

This study supports SDG 4 – Quality Education by promoting a learner-centered Educational Organization Management System that enhances educational quality, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement. It also aligns with SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions by strengthening transparency, accountability, and evidence-based governance through internationally recognized quality management standards. By assessing Marinduque State University's readiness for ISO 21001:2018, the study contributes to institutional quality assurance and supports the delivery of accessible, responsive, and high-quality educational services.

### 1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

The study contributes primarily to educational sustainability by supporting the continuous improvement of teaching, learning, governance, and quality assurance systems. It also advances institutional sustainability by providing evidence-based information for strategic planning, policy development, and resource allocation toward ISO 21001:2018 implementation. Furthermore, the study promotes governance sustainability by encouraging accountability, stakeholder participation, and continual improvement, enabling Marinduque State University to strengthen its educational management system and maintain long-term organizational excellence.

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## 2. Material and methods

### 2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-evaluative research design to assess the current implementation status of the Educational Organization Management System (EOMS) at Marinduque State University (MarSU) in relation to the ISO 21001:2018 standard. This design enabled the evaluation of existing institutional practices, documentation, and organizational performance against the core requirements of ISO 21001:2018 while determining the University's level of readiness for certification.

### 2.2 Locale of the Study

The research was conducted across all campuses of Marinduque State University, including its administrative offices, academic units, and support service divisions. Data collection was carried out from January to June 2026 to obtain a comprehensive assessment of the University's management practices within the scope of the Educational Organization Management System.

### 2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of key institutional stakeholders selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in the Educational Organization Management System covering the provision of advanced and higher education services, including instruction, research, and extension services. Their roles provided relevant information on the University's current implementation of ISO 21001:2018 requirements.

### 2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was employed to select respondents who were directly involved in the implementation and management of the University's Educational Organization Management System. Participants were chosen based on their responsibilities in academic, administrative, and support service processes to ensure that the information gathered accurately reflected institutional practices relevant to ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

### 2.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed ISO 21001:2018 assessment checklist and gap analysis matrix designed to evaluate the University's conformity with the requirements of the standard. The instrument facilitated the review of institutional policies, manuals, operational guidelines, strategic plans, performance reports, audit results, and other relevant documents. It also served as an audit checklist to identify strengths, deficiencies, and areas requiring improvement in relation to ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

### 2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data were gathered through document analysis and key informant interviews. Institutional documents, including policies, manuals, operational guidelines, strategic plans, performance reports, audit results, and other relevant records, were reviewed using the researcher-developed ISO 21001:2018 checklist to determine compliance with the standard. Semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted with university officials, process owners, and unit heads to obtain in-depth information regarding implementation practices, challenges, best practices, and improvement strategies. The results of the document review and interviews were subsequently validated using the gap assessment tool to determine the University's current level of conformity and identify areas requiring further development.

### 2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed through gap analysis by comparing existing institutional practices and documented evidence with the requirements of ISO 21001:2018. The analysis determined the University's level of conformity, identified implementation gaps, recognized organizational strengths, and established priority areas for improvement to support strategic planning and future certification efforts.

### 2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards throughout the research process. Participants were informed of the purpose and procedures of the assessment, and confidentiality of the information obtained was maintained. Prior to data

collection, ethical clearance was secured from the University's Research Ethics Committee to ensure compliance with institutional research ethics requirements.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Conformity with ISO 21001:2018 Requirements**

##### **3.1.1 Clause 4 – Context of the Organization**

Documentary evidence showed that MarSU substantially conforms to Clause 4 of ISO 21001:2018. The university identified its internal and external context, recognized the needs and expectations of relevant stakeholders, clearly defined the scope of its Educational Organization Management System (EOMS), and established interconnected processes supporting curriculum development, admissions, instruction, assessment, and continual improvement. These findings were supported by strategic plans, environmental scanning reports, stakeholder assessment records, quality manuals, organizational charts, process flowcharts, and internal audit reports. The findings indicate that MarSU has established an organizational framework aligned with the requirements of Clause 4. However, continuous updating of institutional documents, consistent implementation across campuses, and stronger integration of contextual reviews into institutional planning remain necessary to sustain conformity.

##### **3.1.2 Clause 5 – Leadership**

Document analysis revealed that MarSU substantially conforms to the leadership requirements of ISO 21001:2018. Top management demonstrated commitment through resource allocation, integration of quality objectives into institutional planning, management review participation, and learner-centered policies supported by grievance mechanisms and stakeholder feedback systems. However, conformity was not established for Clause 5.2 because the Quality Policy remained unapproved and had not been formally communicated. Likewise, Clause 5.3 lacked evidence of a formally designated Quality Management Representative with clearly documented responsibilities. These results suggest that while institutional leadership actively supports the EOMS, the absence of an approved and communicated Quality Policy and formally assigned quality management responsibilities limits full compliance. Addressing these gaps is necessary before certification.

##### **3.1.3 Clause 6 – Planning**

The findings indicate that MarSU substantially conforms to Clause 6 concerning planning. Documentary evidence confirmed that the university systematically identified risks and opportunities, established measurable quality objectives with corresponding implementation plans, and adopted structured procedures for managing institutional changes. These practices were supported by risk registers, operational plans, quality objectives matrices, change management documents, and management review records. The results demonstrate that MarSU has developed structured planning processes that support the effective implementation of the EOMS. Nevertheless, regular updating of risk assessments, consistent monitoring of quality objective attainment across campuses, and thorough evaluation of planned organizational changes remain necessary to strengthen institutional conformity and continuous improvement.

##### **3.1.4 Clause 7 – Support**

Documentary analysis showed that MarSU partially conforms to Clause 7 of ISO 21001:2018. The university demonstrated compliance in providing adequate personnel, maintaining an appropriate working environment, preserving organizational knowledge, establishing communication systems, and controlling documented information. Evidence included staffing plans, faculty deployment schedules, facility inspection reports, campus development plans, knowledge-sharing records, communication protocols, and document control procedures. However, insufficient documentary evidence was found for specific resource provision, infrastructure adequacy, monitoring and measurement equipment, competence requirements, and awareness of the Quality Policy because the policy had not yet been approved and disseminated. These findings indicate that MarSU has established essential support mechanisms necessary for EOMS implementation. Nevertheless, deficiencies in documentation related to resources, competence, infrastructure, monitoring equipment, and Quality Policy awareness limit full conformity. Strengthening these areas will improve institutional readiness for ISO 21001:2018 certification.

##### **3.1.5 Clause 8 – Operation**

The findings indicate that MarSU partially conforms to Clause 8 concerning operational processes. Documentary evidence confirmed systematic operational planning, curriculum design and development, controlled instructional delivery, grading procedures, certification processes, and mechanisms for addressing nonconforming outputs. These were supported by academic calendars, curriculum development records, instructional plans, faculty performance reports, learner assessment protocols, grading records, and remediation documentation. However, documentary evidence was insufficient regarding the determination and review of educational requirements, control of externally provided services, and procedures for safeguarding learner or stakeholder property. The results suggest that MarSU has implemented structured operational procedures supporting educational service delivery. However, formal procedures for identifying stakeholder requirements,

monitoring outsourced services, and protecting stakeholder property require further development to achieve full compliance with ISO 21001:2018 operational requirements.

### **3.1.6 Clause 9 – Performance Evaluation**

Documentary review revealed that MarSU substantially conforms to Clause 9 of ISO 21001:2018. The university demonstrated established systems for monitoring institutional performance, conducting internal audits, and performing management reviews through key performance indicators, audit programs, audit reports, and scheduled management review activities. However, documentary evidence was insufficient to demonstrate a systematic process for monitoring learner and stakeholder satisfaction, as existing feedback mechanisms lacked consolidated procedures, trend analysis, and documented follow-up actions. These findings indicate that institutional performance evaluation mechanisms are largely established and functioning. Nonetheless, the absence of a comprehensive stakeholder satisfaction monitoring system represents a significant gap that should be addressed to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and meet ISO 21001:2018 requirements.

### **3.1.7 Clause 10 – Improvement**

The findings indicate that MarSU substantially conforms to Clause 10 on continual improvement. Documentary evidence confirmed that the university identifies opportunities for improvement, implements corrective actions for identified nonconformities, and sustains continual enhancement of its Educational Organization Management System through quality improvement plans, corrective action records, root-cause analyses, performance monitoring reports, and institutional planning documents. The findings are consistent with the principle that ISO 21001:2018 supports systematic monitoring, institutional accountability, and continuous improvement (ISO, 2018, as cited in the literature review by Bilal et al.). The results demonstrate that MarSU has institutionalized mechanisms for continual improvement through corrective action and performance monitoring. These practices support organizational adaptability and reinforce the university's commitment to maintaining and improving the effectiveness of its Educational Organization Management System, consistent with ISO 21001:2018 principles (ISO, 2018, as cited in the literature review by Bilal et al.).

## **3.2 Overall Conformity with ISO 21001:2018**

### **3.2.1 Summary of Conformance**

The documentary assessment showed that MarSU conforms to 19 of the 28 ISO 21001:2018 clauses and sub-clauses evaluated, representing an overall conformity rate of 67.86%, while 32.14% of the assessed requirements were identified as nonconforming. The conforming areas included Clause 4 (Context of the Organization), Clause 5.1 (Leadership and Commitment), Clause 6 (Planning), selected requirements under Clause 7 (Support), selected operational requirements under Clause 8, most provisions of Clause 9 (Performance Evaluation), and Clause 10 (Improvement). Nonconformities were identified in Clause 5.2 (Quality Policy), Clause 5.3 (Organizational Roles and Responsibilities), selected provisions of Clause 7 concerning resources, infrastructure, competence, and awareness, selected operational requirements under Clause 8, and Clause 9.1.2 relating to stakeholder satisfaction monitoring. The results indicate that MarSU has established a functional Educational Organization Management System with documented procedures supporting most ISO 21001:2018 requirements. However, several areas require formalization, stronger documentation, and consistent implementation before full conformity can be demonstrated. The identified deficiencies primarily reflect incomplete documentation and inconsistent monitoring rather than the absence of institutional practices, suggesting that the remaining gaps can be addressed through systematic corrective actions.

### **3.2.2 Certifiability Assessment**

Based on the assessment, MarSU falls within the "Certifiable" category of the maturity-based certifiability matrix. The identified nonconformities fall within the 21–40% range of audit findings, indicating a reactive but systematic management approach. Although several requirements remain only partially satisfied, the institution has already initiated corrective measures and planned improvements to address existing deficiencies. These findings suggest that the university possesses an operational management system capable of achieving certification after implementing the necessary corrective actions. Transitioning from reactive responses to proactive quality management through continuous monitoring, standardized procedures, and institutionalized improvements will strengthen overall maturity and certification readiness.

## **3.3 Established Gaps in the Implementation of ISO 21001:2018**

### **3.3.1 Leadership and Quality Management Gaps**

The assessment identified several leadership-related deficiencies. The university had not yet approved or formally communicated its Quality Policy, resulting in limited awareness among faculty, staff, learners, and other stakeholders. Likewise, documentary evidence confirming the formal designation of a Quality Management Representative was unavailable, creating uncertainty regarding authority and accountability within the Educational Organization Management System. These findings indicate that while leadership supports quality management initiatives, formal approval, communication, and documentation remain essential for demonstrating conformity with ISO 21001:2018. Clear

organizational responsibilities and an officially communicated Quality Policy would strengthen institutional accountability and governance.

### **3.3.2 Resource and Support Gaps**

The documentary review identified deficiencies related to human resources, infrastructure, and awareness. The BTLED program lacked the required number of regular faculty members, several university facilities were not covered by insurance documentation, and personnel awareness of the Quality Policy could not be verified because the policy remained unapproved and undistributed. These results suggest that strengthening staffing, infrastructure protection, and institutional communication will improve the university's support systems. Addressing these resource-related concerns will also enhance organizational resilience and compliance with ISO 21001:2018 requirements.

### **3.3.3 Operational Gaps**

Operational assessment revealed inconsistencies between course syllabi and examination content, insufficient monitoring of outsourced water services, and inadequate safeguards for learner-owned property such as thesis manuscripts. These findings indicate weaknesses in documenting educational requirements, monitoring external providers, and protecting stakeholder property. The identified operational deficiencies may affect assessment validity, health and safety assurance, and the protection of institutional resources. Establishing formal procedures for curriculum alignment, external service monitoring, and property management would strengthen operational conformity with ISO 21001:2018.

### **3.3.4 Performance Evaluation Gaps**

The review found that although faculty teaching evaluations were conducted, there was insufficient evidence that the results were systematically analyzed or used for continuous improvement. Records demonstrating trend analysis, follow-up actions, and the integration of stakeholder feedback into institutional decision-making were unavailable. These findings indicate that stakeholder feedback mechanisms should extend beyond data collection to include systematic analysis and documented improvement initiatives. Utilizing evaluation results more effectively would strengthen evidence-based decision-making and continuous quality improvement within the university.

## **3.4 Opportunities for Improvement**

### **3.4.1 Strengthening Governance and Data Management**

The assessment identified opportunities to improve governance by designating a Data Protection Officer (DPO) for each campus, strengthening inclusive policies in the Student Handbook, conducting regular echo-trainings on institutional services and updates, and improving waste management practices. Additional improvements include broadening stakeholder participation in evaluating security services, reinforcing food safety compliance, ensuring concessionaires comply with regulatory requirements, and promoting the exclusive use of licensed software. These findings suggest that strengthening governance, data privacy, environmental management, and stakeholder participation will improve institutional resilience and support sustained compliance with ISO 21001:2018. These initiatives also reinforce accountability, operational efficiency, and institutional quality assurance.

### **3.4.2 Improving Documentation and Records Management**

The documentary review highlighted opportunities to improve document management through regular updating of manuals, forms, and institutional references, implementation of effective version control systems, proper completion of records requiring signatures, centralized records management, standardization of institutional forms, and alignment of assigned responsibilities with official mandates. The assessment also recommended implementing preventive maintenance schedules for university facilities. These recommendations emphasize the importance of maintaining accurate, current, and controlled documented information to strengthen institutional consistency and compliance. Improved records governance and document control will enhance accountability, facilitate audits, and support continual improvement across university operations.

### **3.4.3 Enhancing Risk Management and Stakeholder Engagement**

The assessment recommended strengthening institutional risk registers across all campuses, updating organizational documents to reflect the university's conversion to Marinduque State University, establishing systematic stakeholder feedback mechanisms, consistently monitoring institutional performance, and improving the use of standardized assessment rubrics. The review further recommended involving industry partners in curriculum review, ensuring instructional materials undergo formal approval, assigning faculty based on qualifications, and addressing the structural condition of the Auxiliary Building. These findings indicate that continuous improvement should extend beyond compliance toward proactive institutional development. Strengthening risk management, stakeholder engagement, curriculum relevance, instructional quality, and facility maintenance will improve organizational effectiveness, promote evidence-based decision-making, and enhance MarSU's readiness for sustained ISO 21001:2018 implementation.

#### 4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The initial assessment found that Marinduque State University has established a substantially functional Educational Organization Management System aligned with ISO 21001:2018, demonstrating strong conformity in organizational context, leadership, planning, and several support, operational, performance evaluation, and improvement processes. However, key gaps remain in the approval and communication of the Quality Policy, formal designation of the Quality Management Representative, resource provision, infrastructure, personnel competence, and stakeholder property management. Overall, the University is positioned for ISO 21001:2018 certification provided that these identified nonconformities are addressed through strengthened institutional procedures, documentation, and continuous monitoring.

Marinduque State University should strengthen its Educational Organization Management System by formally approving and communicating the Quality Policy, designating the Quality Management Representative through official authority, addressing staffing and infrastructure needs, enhancing curriculum alignment, monitoring outsourced services, protecting learner property, improving stakeholder feedback mechanisms, harmonizing institutional documents, strengthening information systems, and sustaining continuous monitoring and quality improvement to achieve and maintain ISO 21001:2018 certification.

The study did not explicitly present a separate section describing its limitations. Instead, it focused on assessing Marinduque State University's readiness for ISO 21001:2018 implementation by identifying areas of conformity, nonconformity, and corresponding recommendations for institutional improvement.

#### Compliance with ethical standards

The author declares no conflict of interest. This study received no external funding and was conducted with the cooperation of Marinduque State University and its participants, who voluntarily participated after providing informed consent. Data were collected using non-invasive assessment methods, and all information was treated with strict confidentiality by ensuring that no identifying personal information was disclosed.

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