Exploring the Link between Organizational Change and Employees' Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on organizational change and employees' performance. The study specifically determined the impact of technological change on employees' job performance and the effect of change in the organization's culture on employees' training and development. This study adopted a survey and descriptive research design to explore how organizational change influences employee performance in selected state-owned universities in North Central Nigeria. The target population consisted of 985 staff across academic and non-academic categories. A sample size of 284 respondents was determined. The questionnaire's reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha to measure internal consistency, while construct validity was ensured through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) via Structural Equation Modeling. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (simple linear regression). Findings showed that technological change has a significant positive effect on employee job performance, and that changes in organizational culture have a significant positive effect on employee training and development. The study recommended that organizations prioritize implementing technological changes to enhance employee job performance, ensuring that employees are adequately trained and supported during transitions. Furthermore, organizations need to foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptability to support employee training and development.

Keywords: Organizational Change, Employee's Performance, Technological Change, Organizational Culture Change, Structural Change, Employee's Job Stress

INTRODUCTION

Organizational change has emerged as an indispensable strategy for institutions striving to sustain growth, relevance, and competitiveness in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment (Kalandarovna & Qizi, 2023; Omale, 2016). Within the context of state universities, change is frequently necessitated by policy reforms, evolving educational demands, financial constraints, and rapid technological advancements (Alenezi, 2023; Ololube, 2018). As universities seek to align with global standards and respond to national reforms, the implementation of change initiatives becomes central not only to improving institutional efficiency but also to enhancing employee performance and organizational outcomes (Kotter, 2018). When strategically designed and effectively executed, change initiatives can streamline processes, bolster employee morale, and synchronize individual efforts with overarching institutional goals (Luthans, 2019; Widjaja, 2023; Yusof, 2024). Conversely, poorly managed change—characterized by inadequate communication or insufficient support—can engender resistance, diminish staff motivation, and disrupt institutional operations (Abimaje, 2018).

The complexities of managing change are particularly pronounced in higher education institutions, where both internal and external pressures necessitate continual adaptation. In Nigerian state universities, these pressures manifest through national educational reforms, fluctuating student demographics, funding volatility, and shifting societal expectations (Ololube, 2018). These dynamics compel institutions to periodically reassess and realign their operational models, curricula, and administrative structures to remain viable and competitive (Omale, 2016). Failure to proactively respond to such shifts risks institutional stagnation or decline (Galaitsi et al., 2023; Ololube, 2018). Yet the success of change efforts largely depends on how well institutions manage the human dimensions of transformation—particularly the experiences and responses of employees undergoing these transitions (Errida & Lotfi, 2021; Luthans, 2019; Waddell et al., 2024).

Employee performance is inextricably linked to organizational change, as personnel are directly affected by shifts in structure, leadership, policy, and operational procedures. Kotter (2018) contends that the effectiveness of change initiatives depends on the extent to which employees are adequately prepared and supported to embrace new ways of working. Clear communication, targeted training, and inclusive participation are critical to fostering a positive reception to change and minimizing disruptions to performance (Martinez & Farooqi, 2023; Ololube, 2018). In contrast, abrupt or top-down change approaches often generate uncertainty, stress, and resistance among staff, ultimately impeding institutional progress (Abimaje, 2018). Consequently, participatory change management approaches that engage employees in planning and decision-making processes are essential to cultivating ownership, commitment, and sustained performance (Jung et al., 2020; Kotter, 2018).

In the Nigerian university context, resistance to change remains a persistent challenge, often rooted in a lack of transparency, limited employee involvement, and inadequate professional development opportunities (Ololube, 2018; Abimaje, 2018). These limitations are further compounded by the high demands placed on academic staff to meet research, teaching, and service expectations amidst constrained resources. Without strategic planning and support mechanisms, change efforts risk undermining staff morale and triggering disengagement (Omale, 2016; Saraiva & Nogueiro, 2025). Institutions must therefore adopt holistic change management frameworks that address not only structural and procedural shifts but also the emotional and psychological well-being of employees (Luthans, 2019).

Supporting employee well-being during organizational transitions is fundamental to achieving positive change outcomes. Institutions that invest in continuous learning, feedback systems, and a supportive work environment are more likely to experience smoother transitions and enhanced performance (Kotter, 2018). Providing access to training, counseling, and other resources equips employees with the tools needed to navigate change confidently and competently (Luthans, 2019). Moreover, involving staff in decision-making processes fosters a sense of agency and alignment with institutional objectives, thereby reinforcing engagement and reducing resistance (Omale, 2016).

In Nigerian state universities, fostering such a supportive climate is particularly crucial given the institutional challenges of limited funding and systemic inefficiencies (Ololube, 2018).

The drivers of change in universities are multifaceted, with technological, cultural, structural, and economic factors each playing a significant role in shaping employee experiences and institutional performance. Technological advancements—such as the integration of digital platforms, automation, and artificial intelligence—have transformed academic operations, requiring staff to acquire new skills and adapt to evolving workflows (Adeniji et al., 2020). While these innovations hold potential for improved productivity, they also pose challenges related to job security and skill acquisition, especially when change is introduced without adequate training or support (Dawson, 2019).

Cultural transformations are equally critical, as they influence institutional norms, values, and behaviors. In academic settings, cultural change often involves promoting inclusivity, innovation, and student-centered learning. However, when cultural shifts are misaligned with employee values or poorly communicated, they can result in disengagement and organizational friction (Cameron & Quinn, 2021). Similarly, structural changes—such as departmental reorganizations or changes in reporting relationships—can significantly affect communication patterns and job responsibilities, necessitating clear communication and transition planning to avoid confusion and performance decline (Burke, 2017).

Economic considerations also bear heavily on change outcomes. In public universities, funding constraints, budget cuts, and wage stagnation can adversely affect staff morale, productivity, and retention (Dawson, 2019). Nigerian state universities, in particular, grapple with inconsistent funding that limits their ability to invest in capacity building or incentivize performance (Burke, 2017). Nonetheless, periods of favorable economic conditions offer opportunities to support employee development and enhance institutional resilience through strategic investments in human capital.

Understanding the interplay among these drivers is essential for designing and implementing effective change management strategies that address the unique challenges faced by Nigerian universities. While some scholars underscore the transformative potential of well-executed change initiatives (Kotter, 2018), others caution against the adverse consequences of poorly managed change, including stress, burnout, and attrition (Ololube, 2018). These divergent perspectives highlight the critical importance of communication, planning, and employee engagement in facilitating successful transitions. The broad purpose of the study was to assess the impact of organizational change on employees' performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Change

Organizational change is a purposeful process through which organizations adapt their structures, strategies, processes, or culture in response to shifting internal or external conditions (Cameron & Green, 2019). This transformation is critical for maintaining efficiency, competitiveness, and sustainability in a dynamic environment shaped by globalization, technological advancements, and evolving consumer expectations (Hayes, 2018). Change may manifest in the adoption of new technologies, restructuring of departments, or the implementation of novel managerial approaches. However, successful organizational change extends beyond operational modifications; it requires active employee engagement and a reconfiguration of organizational culture and behavior (Kotter, 2012).

Employee involvement is central to overcoming resistance, which often stems from fear of uncertainty or exclusion from the change process (Stephen, 2020). When employees participate in shaping the transformation, they develop a sense of ownership, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation. Participatory approaches, coupled with clear and transparent communication, help to align organizational goals with employee commitment, reducing resistance and fostering a collaborative environment (Hayes, 2018). In addition, leadership plays a pivotal role in guiding organizations through change. Transformational leaders, who inspire and empower their teams, are particularly effective in mobilizing support and driving innovation during transitions (Northouse, 2021). Furthermore, organizational culture—defined by shared values and norms—can either facilitate or hinder change. A culture that embraces innovation and inclusivity strengthens adaptability, while a toxic or misaligned culture may undermine progress (Schein, 2017).

Employee's Performance

Employee performance refers to how efficiently and effectively individuals complete tasks and contribute to organizational goals. It includes both individual and team outputs and is measured by factors such as work quality, timeliness, competency, and alignment with strategic objectives (Aguinis, 2019). High performance is essential for operational efficiency, innovation, and customer satisfaction (Khan et al., 2020). Performance has two key dimensions: effectiveness, or achieving desired outcomes, and efficiency, which involves maximizing output with minimal resources (Sawaean & Ali, 2020). Modern performance evaluation also considers initiatives such as employee training and development (Kuvaas et al., 2017).

Employee training and development significantly enhance performance by improving skills, boosting confidence, and increasing job competence, thereby increasing efficiency and effectiveness in task execution. Well-trained employees are more adaptable and aligned with organizational goals. Conversely, job stress negatively impacts performance by reducing concentration, motivation, and overall productivity.

High stress levels can lead to burnout, absenteeism, and errors, undermining work quality and output. Thus, while training and development are key drivers of high performance, managing job stress is equally crucial to sustaining consistent and optimal employee contributions to organizational success. Both factors are vital for long-term performance enhancement.

Technological Change and Employees' Job Performance

Technological change plays a crucial role in shaping employee performance by transforming work processes, increasing efficiency, and opening new avenues for innovation and growth. The adoption of digital tools, automation, and artificial intelligence (AI) enhances productivity by reducing manual tasks and enabling employees to concentrate on strategic and creative functions (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2016). Tools like real-time data analytics support better decision-making, while platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams facilitate seamless collaboration across locations (Bai et al., 2021).

However, rapid technological advancements also introduce challenges. Employees may struggle to adapt, especially if they lack the necessary technical skills or confidence, leading to stress, job dissatisfaction, and performance decline (Venkatesh et al., 2016; Ford, 2022). The fear of job displacement due to automation can further heighten anxiety and resistance to change. Without effective change management strategies, organizations risk increased turnover and reduced productivity (Kotter, 2012).

Change in Organizations Culture and Employees' Training and Development

Organizational culture—defined as the shared values, beliefs, and norms that influence employee behavior—plays a vital role in shaping training and development outcomes (Schein & Schein, 2021). When an organization undergoes cultural change, especially toward values such as collaboration, innovation, or customer-centricity, it often prompts a renewed emphasis on employee development. A culture that supports learning fosters an environment where employees are encouraged to acquire new skills, share knowledge, and pursue continuous growth (Cameron & Quinn, 2021). For example, a collaborative culture enhances training effectiveness through peer learning and open communication, thereby improving performance.

However, cultural change can also pose challenges to employee training and development. Shifting from a hierarchical to a team-based or adaptive culture may require employees to embrace unfamiliar learning styles, increased autonomy, or new competencies, which can be overwhelming (Burke, 2017). Resistance may arise when employees perceive the new culture as threatening or misaligned with their previous experiences (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2016).

Structural Change and Employee's Job Stress

Structural change in organizations—such as reorganizations, mergers, or transitions from functional to matrix structures—can significantly impact employees' experience of job stress (Galbraith, 2014). While such changes aim to improve efficiency, foster collaboration, and eliminate redundancies, they often disrupt established routines, creating uncertainty and tension (Ford, 2022). For example, in a matrix structure, employees may face dual reporting relationships and conflicting demands, which can increase role ambiguity and workload, contributing to stress and decreased job satisfaction.

The psychological impact of structural change is especially pronounced when employees perceive threats to their roles, job security, or career progression (Burke, 2017). Stress levels tend to rise when changes are imposed without adequate consultation or when communication is unclear. Employees may feel disempowered, confused about new expectations, or fearful of losing status and responsibilities. These factors not only affect individual well-being but can also result in resistance to change, reduced productivity, and higher turnover intentions (Kotter, 2012).
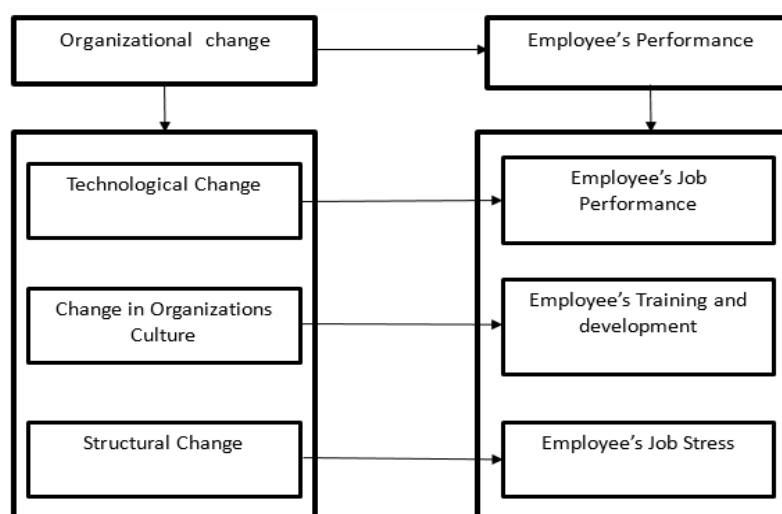

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Authors(2024)

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey and descriptive research design to explore how organizational change influences employee performance in selected state-owned universities in North Central Nigeria. The target population consisted of 985 staff across academic and non-academic categories. To ensure representativeness, a random sampling technique was used. Using Taro Yamane's formula at a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 284 respondents was determined. The research instrument—a structured questionnaire—was divided into two sections: bio-data and research variables. It employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire covered constructs including job performance, training and development, job stress, technological change, structural change, and change in organizational culture, based on relevant scholarly sources.

The questionnaire's reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha to measure internal consistency, while construct validity was ensured through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) via Structural Equation Modeling (see Table 1). Data collection was conducted manually, resulting in a high return rate. For analysis, SPSS software was used, applying descriptive statistics, percentages, and simple linear regression to test relationships between variables.

Table 1 presents the results of the construct validity and reliability tests for six latent variables used in the study: Technological change, change in organizational culture, structural change, employee's job performance, employee's training and development, and employee's job stress. These constructs were assessed using key statistical indicators: Factor Loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's Alpha (α). All items across the constructs have loadings above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating that the observed variables (e.g., TCE1, COC2, STC3, etc.) are good measures of their respective latent constructs. All constructs show AVE values above 0.50 (e.g., Technological Change = 0.682; Structural Change = 0.515), suggesting acceptable convergent validity, meaning that the items within each construct adequately capture the variance of that construct. All constructs exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70 (e.g., Employee Training and Development = 0.775), indicating that the constructs are internally consistent and reliable. Each construct reports a Cronbach's alpha above 0.70 (e.g., Technological Change = 0.825), further confirming the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales used.

DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

The results in Table 2 indicate that 197 respondents, or 69.4% of the total, are male, while 87 respondents, or 30.6% of the total, are female. The results reveal that a larger percentage of the respondents were male. This can be attributed to the fact that the majority of selected state university employees are men; hence, we have more males than females.

Table 1.   Constructs Validity and Reliability

Indicator Variable	Loading	AVE	CR	Chron (α)
Technological Change				0.825
TCE1	0.881	0.681802	0.825713025	
TCE2	0.782			
TCE3	0.811			
Change in Organizations Culture				0.718
COC1	0.725	0.537513667	0.733153235	
COC2	0.754			
COC3	0.72			
Structural Change				0.734
STC1	0.713	0.514624667	0.71737345	
STC2	0.728			
STC3	0.711			
Employee's Job Performance				0.729
EJP1	0.742	0.555067	0.745028187	
EJP2	0.739			
EJP3	0.754			
Employee's Training and Development				0.813
ETD1	0.776	0.600829667	0.775132032	
ETD2	0.757			
ETD3	0.792			
Employee's Job Stress				0.761
EJS1	0.743	0.554711333	0.744789456	
EJS2	0.729			
EJS3	0.762			

Source: Amos-IBM

The results presented in the table show that 71 of the respondents, representing 25%, were single; 153 of the respondents, representing 53.9%, were married during the time of this study; 29 of the respondents, representing 10.2%, were divorced, while 31 of the respondents, representing 1.9%, were widows/widowers at the time of this study. The table clearly indicates that the majority of respondents at the time of this study were happily married. Table 2 indicates that 17 respondents, or 6.72% of the total, held an SSCE; 84 respondents, or 33.20%, held an OND or NCE; and 123 respondents, or 48.62%, held an HND or B.Sc. The table also reveals that 29 of the respondents, representing 11.46%, held M.Sc and MBA degrees. It can be deduced from the above interpretation that the majority of the respondents were B.Sc holders during the period of this study, i.e., the institutions used learned staff to ensure that their affairs went smoothly.

Table 2.   Demographics of Respondents

Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	197	69.4
	Female	87	30.6
Marital Status	Single	71	25.0
	Married	153	53.9
	Divorced	29	10.2
	Widow/Widower	31	10.9
Educational Level	SSCE	17	6.72
	OND/NCE	84	33.20
	BSC/HND	154	54.2
	MSC/MBA	29	11.46
Age Range	20–24	-	-
	25–30	73	28.85
	31–35	47	18.58
	36–40	101	39.92
	41 and above	32	12.65
Years of Experience	1–5 years	27	10.67
	6–10 years	134	52.96
	11–15 years	77	30.43
	16 years and above	15	5.93

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The results presented in the table show that none of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 25. 73 of the respondents, representing 28.85%, were between 25 and 30 years. The table also shows that 47 of the respondents, representing 18.58%, were between 31 and 35 years. Furthermore, the table shows that 101 of the respondents, representing 39.92%, were between 36 and 40 years old. The remaining 32 respondents, representing 12.65%, were 41 years and above. It can be deduced from the above interpretation that the smallest number of respondents were between 20 and 25 years old.

The result reveals that 27 of the respondents,, representing 10.67%,, were with the state universities between one to five years; 134 of the respondents, representing 52.96%, had 6–10 years of working experience with the state universities; the table also reveals that 77 of the respondents,, representing 30.43%, had 11–15 years of experience with the firm. Lastly, the table shows that 15 of the respondents, representing 5.93%, had 16 years of work experience with the industry. It can be deduced from the above interpretation that the majority of the respondents at the time of the study had 6–10 years of work experience.

Table 3.   Technological Change and Employee Job Performance

Model Summary	Value	β	Beta	t
R	0.873	-0.511 (0.132)	—	-3.877***
R²	0.763	1.035 (0.036)	0.873	28.391***
Std. Error	0.57192			

Source: Field Survey, 2024. NOTE: Figures in parentheses are std. errors. *** = sig. @ 1%

The regression results presented in Table 3 show a strong and statistically significant relationship between technological change and employee job performance. The model summary indicates a high R-value of 0.873, suggesting a strong positive correlation between the independent variable (technological change) and the dependent variable (employee job performance). The coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.763, meaning that 76.3% of the variance in employee job performance can be explained by technological change. The adjusted R² of 0.762 confirms the model's robustness even after adjusting for the number of predictors. The ANOVA results further support the model's significance with an F-statistic of 806.039 and a corresponding p-value of 0.000, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant overall. The coefficient for technological change is 1.035 with a standard error of 0.036 and a highly significant t-value of 28.391 (p < 0.001), showing that a unit increase in technological change is associated with a significant increase in employee job performance.

Table 4.   Change in Organizations Culture and Employee's Training and Development

Model Summary	Value	ANOVA	Value	Coeff	β	Beta	t
R	0.528	Regression SS	64.058	(Constant)	1.465 (0.187)	—	7.822
R²	0.279	Residual SS	165.725	Change in Org. Culture	0.510 (0.052)	0.528	9.850
Adj R²	0.276	Total SS	229.783				
Std. Error	0.81256	F-statistic	97.020				
		Sig.	0.000				

Source: Field Survey, 2024. NOTE: Figures in parentheses are std. errors. *** = sig. @ 1%

The regression analysis reveals a moderate positive relationship between Change in Organizational Culture and Employee Training and Development, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.528. The coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.279, indicating that approximately 27.9% of the variation in employee training and development can be explained by changes in organizational culture. The adjusted R² of 0.276 supports the model's reliability.

The overall model is statistically significant, as shown by the F-statistic of 97.020 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. The unstandardized coefficient (β) for organizational culture change is 0.510, with a standard error of 0.052, and the standardized Beta value is 0.528. The corresponding t-value is 9.850 and is also statistically significant at p = 0.000. This implies that a positive and significant relationship exists between changes in organizational culture and employee training and development, rejecting the null hypothesis of no relationship.

Table 5.   Structural Change and Employee's Job Stress.

Model Summary	Value	Value	Coefficients	β	Beta	t
R	0.651	113.871	(Constant)	0.573 (0.181)	—	3.164***
R²	0.424	154.929	Structural Change	0.680 (0.050)	0.651	13.582***
Adjusted R²	0.421	268.800				
Std. Error	0.78565	184.482				

Source: Field Survey, 2024. NOTE: Figures in parentheses are std. errors. *** = sig. @ 1%

The regression analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between structural change and employee job stress. The R value of 0.651 indicates a strong correlation, while the R² value of 0.424 shows that approximately 42.4% of the variance in employee job stress is explained by structural change. The adjusted R² value of 0.421 confirms the model's reliability when adjusted for the number of predictors. The ANOVA result with an F-statistic of 184.482 and a significance level of 0.000 confirms that the model is statistically significant. The regression coefficient for structural change is 0.680 with a standard error of 0.050, and the t-value of 13.582 (p < 0.001) indicates that the effect of structural change on employee job stress is highly significant. This suggests that as structural changes occur within the organization, they are likely to increase job stress among employees.

Discussion of Findings

Findings showed that technological change has a significant positive effect on employee job performance. This supports the hypothesis that technological advancements improve efficiency, streamline workflows, and ultimately enhance employee performance. Hammer and Champy (2020) highlight how technological improvements in processes can reduce workload and increase output, while Arif et al. (2021) similarly emphasize that technology adoption promotes higher productivity by reducing time spent on manual tasks.

This alignment with existing literature supports the view that technological changes have a significant impact on employee performance.

Findings revealed that changes in organizational culture has a significant positive effect on employee training and development. This implies that cultural shifts within an organization, such as a focus on learning and innovation, facilitate employee development. Cameron and Quinn (2021) emphasize that a supportive culture encourages employees to pursue growth, which reflects the impact of cultural change observed in this study. Likewise, Smith (2020) posits that organizations with training-oriented cultures see more effective development outcomes, affirming the role of culture in promoting employee learning.

Findings showed that structural changes in organizations has a significant positive effect on employee job stress. This underscores how adjustments in roles, workflows, or job structures can lead to increased stress levels as employees face uncertainties and the pressure of new expectations. Burke and Cooper (2019) suggest that restructuring introduces psychological stressors related to job security and role clarity, while Maslach and Leiter (2020) discuss how organizational change disrupts employee routines, contributing to elevated stress. This finding aligns with literature emphasizing the stress-inducing nature of structural changes.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical impact of organizational changes on various aspects of employee performance and adaptability within selected State Universities in North Central Nigeria, Nigeria. Technological change significantly enhances job performance, while a supportive organizational culture promotes training and development. However, structural changes tend to increase job stress, suggesting a need for careful change management. These suggest that organizations should strategically manage technological, cultural, and structural change to maximize employee potential and maintain high performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that:

i. Organizations should prioritize the implementation of technological changes to enhance employee job performance, ensuring that employees are adequately trained and supported during transitions. Additionally, continuous monitoring and adjustment of technological tools should be carried out to maximize their positive impact on employee productivity and overall performance.

ii. Organizations needs to foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptability to support employee training and development. Additionally, leaders should encourage a shift in organizational values and practices that align with learning, ensuring that changes in culture are consistently integrated into training programs.

Organizations should carefully manage structural changes to minimize the impact on employee job stress by providing clear communication, support, and training during transitions. Additionally, leadership should implement stress-reduction strategies and create a supportive work environment to help employees adapt to organizational changes more effectively.

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