



## The Influence of Agile Leadership, Rewards and Career Development on Employee Performance

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyze the influence of Agile Leadership, Rewards, and Career Development on Employee Performance at the National Amil Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province. Methodology/approach – The research employed a quantitative approach with an associative research method. The population consisted of all 31 employees of BAZNAS North Sumatra Province, and the sampling technique used was non-probability sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to all employees. Findings – The results indicate that Agile Leadership does not have a significant effect on employee performance, while Rewards and Career Development each have a positive and significant effect. Simultaneously, the three variables significantly influence employee performance. The adjusted R-square value of 0.880 shows that 88% of performance variation can be explained by these variables. Novelty/value – This research highlights the importance of reward and career development systems in enhancing employee performance in nonprofit organizations such as BAZNAS.

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### INTRODUCTION

In today's organizational landscape, rapid technological change and global uncertainty have transformed the way institutions manage their human resources. Organizations are expected to be more flexible, responsive, and efficient in order to remain competitive while meeting the needs of stakeholders. This reality also applies to non-profit organizations, which often face additional constraints related to accountability and limited resources. The National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province plays a central role in managing zakat, infaq, and sadaqah for the Muslim community. BAZNAS employees are responsible for ensuring that funds are distributed effectively,

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transparently, and in accordance with Islamic principles. However, recent evaluations show a decline in employee performance, marked by delays in completing tasks, a lack of initiative, and limited collaboration between teams. To overcome these challenges, leadership style is an essential determinant. Agile leadership, as a contemporary leadership approach, emphasizes adaptability, empowerment, and collaborative decision-making. Previous studies have shown that agile leaders encourage innovation and responsiveness in dynamic environments. However, the application of this approach in non-profit organizations has yet to be fully explored (Achmad & Mz, 2022; Aesah et al., 2023; Anggraini & Johannes, 2024; Iskanto, 2020; Iskanto et al., 2021).

In addition to leadership, incentives are a crucial factor in driving employee performance. A well-structured incentive system, both financial and non-financial, motivates employees to work beyond minimum expectations. Various studies have proven that fair compensation and positive recognition have an impact on job satisfaction, retention, and productivity. Career development is also essential in maintaining long-term employee performance. Providing clear career paths, training opportunities, and skills development programs encourages employees to grow with the organization. Conversely, a lack of career development opportunities can lead to decreased engagement and higher turnover rates. The existing literature generally confirms that leadership, incentives, and career development each have a significant impact on performance. However, most previous research has focused on the corporate or profit-oriented sector. Studies that simultaneously analyze these three factors in non-profit organizations, especially in zakat management institutions, are still limited. This highlights a gap in understanding how human resource management practices operate in this unique context (Adeyemi, 2024; Anggraini & Johannes, 2024; Benon et al., 2025; Iskanto et al., 2021).

Non-profit organizations such as BAZNAS face the dual challenge of ensuring operational efficiency while maintaining social and religious accountability. Employee performance in these institutions cannot be measured solely on the basis of productivity; it must also reflect trust, integrity, and service to the community. This makes studies on leadership, incentives, and career development at BAZNAS important. Empirical evidence from a preliminary survey at BAZNAS North Sumatra shows diverse perceptions among employees regarding leadership effectiveness, fairness of the reward system, and clarity of career development opportunities. These findings reinforce the need for comprehensive research that integrates these three variables into a single framework (Benon et al., 2025).

This research contributes by simultaneously analyzing the impact of Agile Leadership, Incentive Systems, and Career Development on employee performance. By focusing on the non-profit context, this research expands the application of human resource management theory to a sector that is relatively underrepresented in academic studies. In addition, this research provides practical recommendations for improving organizational practices at BAZNAS. Therefore, the objectives of this study are: (1) to analyze the partial effect of Agile Leadership on employee performance, (2) to analyze the partial effect of the Incentive System on employee performance, (3) to investigate the partial effect of Career Development on employee performance, and (4) to evaluate the simultaneous effect of these three factors on employee performance at BAZNAS North Sumatra Province.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Agile Leadership**

Agile leadership refers to a leadership style that emphasizes adaptability, flexibility, collaboration, and rapid response to change. According to Geffers et al. (2024), agile leaders empower their teams to make decisions, encourage continuous learning, and create a psychologically safe environment that fosters innovation. Ratajczak (2023) adds that agile leadership supports digital transformation by fostering a culture of collaboration and adaptability, ensuring that organizations can maintain alignment with a dynamic environment. This leadership model differs from traditional hierarchical

leadership by prioritizing shared vision, humility, reflective learning, and empowerment (Holbeche, 2020). In public sector institutions such as BAZNAS, the implementation of agile leadership is essential in increasing employee engagement and efficiency, especially in responding to community needs quickly and accountably (Achmad & Mz, 2022; Aesah et al., 2023; Ansori, 2021).

### **Reward**

Rewards are incentives or compensation given by organizations to recognize employee contributions and motivate higher performance. Wibowo (2022) defines rewards as financial and non-financial compensation offered to employees in recognition of their achievements. According to Sari et al. (2021), rewards can be categorized into four main dimensions: salary and bonuses, welfare, career development, and psychological or social appreciation. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory supports this perspective, arguing that a fair and transparent reward system serves as an intrinsic motivator that increases job satisfaction and reduces turnover rates. Empirical evidence (Martinus et al., 2022; Gunawan et al., 2023) shows that rewards have a significant positive impact on employee performance, especially when aligned with performance evaluation and career development mechanisms. In the context of BAZNAS, the reward system plays a vital role in maintaining the motivation and productivity of employees who manage social and religious funds (Marlinda, 2021).

### **Career Development**

Career development refers to the ongoing process in which individuals improve their skills, knowledge, and experience to achieve career goals and organizational needs. Veithzal Rivai (2023) describes career development as the planning and implementation of activities that improve employee competence and readiness for higher positions. Similarly, Noe et al. (2022) explain that career development is a collaborative process between employees and organizations, focusing on training opportunities, mentoring, and organizational support. Key factors influencing career development include educational background, work experience, performance achievements, and networking opportunities. Romansyah et al. (2022) emphasize that structured career development programs significantly increase motivation and performance. At BAZNAS, limited career development opportunities highlight the importance of a transparent and fair development system to retain talented employees and improve organizational performance (Akmal et al., 2024; Arsyad et al., 2024).

### **Employee Performance**

Employee performance is influenced by various factors, including leadership, motivation, reward systems, and career development opportunities. In the digital era, the landscape of human resource management has been transformed by technological advancements. (Lubis, Yusriadi, Sulaiman, Sulaiman, & Triastuti, 2024). Employee performance is a crucial element in human resource management. According to Budiyanto and Mochklas (2020), it represents the extent to which organizational objectives are achieved through individual or team efforts in completing tasks, implementing programs, and following policies. Performance includes not just the results of work, but also the quality, efficiency, and consistency in the behavior exhibited by employees while performing their duties. Kartini Kartono (in Tanjung, 2020) defines performance as the ability to complete assigned tasks and meet the success criteria established by the organization. Similarly, Asmike and Sari (2022) characterize it as the tangible results employees achieve in carrying out their roles and responsibilities within the organization. Several factors affect employee performance, including organizational leadership, reward systems, and career development opportunities. Henry Simamora (in Yustiar & Siregar, 2020) divides these factors into three primary categories: individual factors (skills, experience, and personality), psychological factors (motivation, perception, and attitude), and organizational factors (leadership, structure, and resources). Effective leadership fosters a conducive work environment, reward systems drive motivation, and well-organized career development opportunities help maintain long-term commitment, all of which play a role in enhancing

performance. Employee performance can be evaluated using multiple dimensions. Budiyanto and Mochklas (2020) suggest assessing performance through leadership styles, organizational culture, and work motivation. On the other hand, Mangkunegara (2021) highlights key aspects such as work quality, quantity, timeliness, collaboration, and responsibility. In public sector organizations, additional dimensions like integrity, service quality, and accountability are essential for upholding public trust and institutional credibility.

For BAZNAS, employee performance is reflected in how efficiently staff handle the collection, distribution, and use of zakat funds with professionalism and transparency. The presence of clear performance standards, a fair reward system, and opportunities for career development directly impact the contributions of employees toward organizational goals. Therefore, enhancing employee performance necessitates an integrated strategy that combines adaptive leadership, equitable rewards, and career development opportunities, ensuring both individual and institutional objectives are achieved in a sustainable and effective manner.

### **Linking Agile Leadership, Reward, Career Development, and Performance**

The combination of agile leadership, incentive programs, and career development represents a comprehensive approach to human resource management. Agile leaders foster empowerment and cultivate a supportive work environment, which boosts the effectiveness of both incentive programs and career development efforts. Rigby et al. (2021) highlight that the agility of leadership plays a key role in shaping how incentives are perceived and how employees engage in continuous learning and career progression. Moreover, a well-structured incentive system strengthens the principles of agile leadership by motivating employees to take proactive steps and participate actively in enhancing their performance. Career development, on the other hand, sustains long-term employee engagement while aligning individual growth with the organization's objectives. When these three elements work together, they create a powerful synergy that enhances productivity, drives innovation, and ensures accountability in public institutions like BAZNAS.

- H1:** There is a positive and significant effect of Agile Leadership on employee performance at the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province.
- H2:** There is a positive and significant effect of Incentives on employee performance at the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province.
- H3:** There is a positive and significant effect of Career Development on employee performance at the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province.
- H4:** There is a positive and significant effect of Agile Leadership, Incentives, and Career Development on employee performance at the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province.

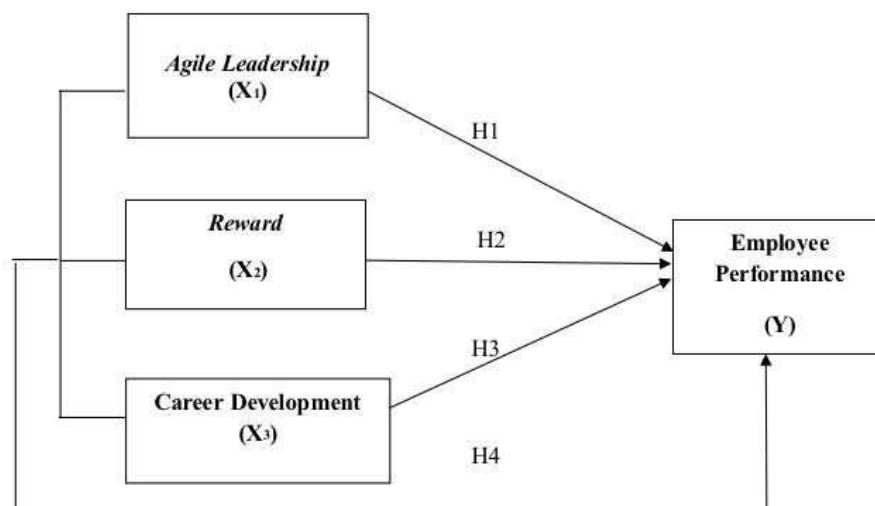


Figure 1. Research Equation

## METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach with an associative research design, aiming to examine the relationship and influence of Agile Leadership, Rewards, and Career Development on Employee Performance. The quantitative method was selected due to its ability to measure causal relationships objectively through statistical analysis, as widely applied in human resource management studies (Bahri, 2022; Ridwan et al., 2024). The population of this research consisted of all employees of the National Amil Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province, totaling 31 employees. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling, specifically a census (saturated sampling) method, where all population members were included as respondents. This technique was considered appropriate due to the relatively small population size (Ismail et al., 2022). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on validated indicators from previous studies, including agile leadership (Rigby et al., 2021), reward systems (Mangkunegara in Odelia et al., 2023), and career development (Junita, 2022). A five-point Likert scale was applied to measure respondents' perceptions consistently and reliably. Prior to data analysis, the research instruments were tested for validity and reliability to ensure measurement accuracy. The results indicated that all questionnaire items met the required validity and reliability criteria, allowing further statistical analysis. This procedure aligns with the recommendations of Dwianto et al. (2020) regarding quantitative research rigor. The data analysis techniques included descriptive statistical analysis, classical assumption tests, and multiple linear regression analysis. Hypothesis testing was conducted using partial (t-test) and simultaneous (F-test) analyses, along with the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) to assess the explanatory power of the independent variables on employee performance. This analytical approach is commonly employed in organizational and employee performance research (Siswanto et al., 2021).

## RESULT

### Effect of Agile Leadership, Reward, Career Development on Performance

In this research, the author used a questionnaire as a data collection method. The questionnaire was given to 31 respondents as a sample of the research using a Likert scale. Thus, the questionnaire scores range from 1 to 5. The author has summarized the results of the questionnaire distribution from 31 respondents, so the data can be processed and analyzed further for this research. The characteristics of the respondents in this study are as follows:

Table 1 Respondent Profile

Description	Item	Percent
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Gander	Male	90,3%
	Female	9,7%
Age	20-25	3,2%
	26-30	22,6%
	31-35	16,1%
	36-40	22,6%
	41-50	22,6%
	51-65	12,9%
Work Period	1-3 years	58,1%
	4-10 years	38,7%
	10-16 years	3,2%
Lest Education Level	Senior High School (SMA)	35,5%
	Diploma (D3)	6,5%
	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	48,4%
	Master's Degree (S2)	9,7%

The table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of respondents based on gender, age, work period, and latest education level, showing that the sample is predominantly male (90.3%) with females accounting for only 9.7%. Most respondents are in productive age groups, with the highest proportions found in the 26–30, 36–40, and 41–50 age ranges (each 22.6%), followed by those aged 31–35 years (16.1%) and 51–65 years (12.9%), while the youngest group aged 20–25 years represents only 3.2%. In terms of work experience, the majority of respondents have 1–3 years of work period (58.1%), followed by 4–10 years (38.7%), and only a small proportion have 10–16 years of experience (3.2%). Regarding education, nearly half of the respondents hold a Bachelor's degree (S1) at 48.4%, followed by Senior High School graduates (SMA) at 35.5%, Master's degree holders (S2) at 9.7%, and Diploma (D3) graduates at 6.5%, indicating that the respondent profile is dominated by relatively well-educated **individuals in early to mid-career stages**.

**Table 2 Realibility Test**

<b>Variabel</b>	<b>Nilai Cronbach Alpha</b>	<b>Description</b>
X1	0.753	Reliabel
X2	0.744	Reliabel
X3	0.885	Reliabel
Y	0.771	Reliabel

It is known that the Cronbach's alpha value for all research variables, namely Agile Leadership, Reward, and Career Development, is  $> 0.60$ , so it can be said that the overall reliability test results are reliable.

**Table 3 Agile Leadership Validity Test**

<b>Item Variabel</b>	<b>Calculated r</b>	<b>Tabel r</b>	<b>Description</b>
Vision Sharing	0.709	0.361	Valid
Humility	0.593	0.361	Valid
Reflection Learning	0.685	0.361	Valid
Empowerment	0.709	0.361	Valid

Base on table 3 The final result of the SPSS output for the Agile Leadership variable (X1) after statistical testing. The results of the validity test for 16 statement items on the Agile Leadership variable are declared valid because the corrected item total correlation value is  $> 0.361$ .

**Table 4 Reward Validity Test**

Item Variabel	Calculated r	Tabel r	Description
Salary	0.666	0.361	Valid
Welfare	0.615	0.361	Valid
Career Development	0.613	0.361	Valid
Psychological amd Sosial Rewards	0.566	0.361	Valid

Base on table 4 The esult of the SPSS output for the Reward variable (X2) after statistical testing. The results of the validity test for 16 statement items on the Reward variable are declared valid because the corrected item total correlation value is  $> 0.361$ . Thus, the data obtained from respondents can be trusted and reflect the actual Reward conditions of the employees who are the object of research. These results strengthen the quality of variable measurement and provide confidence that further analysis such as reliability and regression can be done with a valid data basis.

**Table 5 Career Development Validity Test**

Item Variabel	Calculated r	Tabel r	Description
Edecatonal Background	0.861	0.361	Valid
Work Experience	0.687	0.361	Valid
Job Performance	0.798	0.361	Valid
Opportunities and Prospects	0.813	0.361	Valid
Professional Network	0.627	0.361	Valid

The results of the validity test Base on table 5 for 20 statement items on the Career Development variable are declared valid because the corrected item total correlation value is  $> 0.361$ . Thus, the data obtained from respondents can be trusted and reflect the actual career development conditions of the employees who are the object of research. These results strengthen the quality of variable measurement and provide confidence that further analysis such as reliability and regression can be done with a valid data basis.

**Table 6 Employee Performance Validity Test**

Item Variabel	Calculated r	Tabel r	Description
Leadership Style	0.896	0.361	Valid
Organizational Culture	0.800	0.361	Valid
Work Motivation	0.896	0.361	Valid

Base on table 6 It can be seen that the final result of the SPSS output for the Employee Performance variable (Y) after statistical testing. The results of the validity test for 15 statement items on the

Employee Performance variable are declared valid because the corrected item total correlation value is  $> 0.361$

**Tabel 7 Normality Test**

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		31
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	2.92753501
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.126
	Positive	.078
	Negative	-.126
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.126
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 <sup>c</sup>
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilierors		

Base on table 7 It is known that the asymp. sig. (2-tailed) value is  $0.200 > 0.05$  significance level, so it can be concluded that the tested data is normally distributed. Therefore, based on the statistical test, it can be stated that the research data is suitable for regression analysis because it does not contain deviations from the normal distribution, both in terms of distribution shape and data spread.

**Table 8 Coefficient of Determination**

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Agile Leadership, Reward, Career Development → Performance	0.892	0,880

Base on table 8 The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the effect of strategy formulation on performance is 0.880, or 88%. This indicates that strategy formulation can explain 88% of the variation in performance results. The remaining 12% is due to other factors not analyzed in this study.

**Table 9 Results of Partial Effect Test**

Variable	Constant Value	Coefficient Value	T Count	Sig.	Description
Agile Leadership → Performance	- 0.031	0.140	- 0.225	0.824	not influential
Reward → Performance	0.700	0.097	7.239	0.000	Influential
Career Development → Performance	0.168	0.084	2.014	0.054	influential but not statistically significant

Based on Table 9, these results confirm the findings of Rifky Marda Pratama (2024), which show that Agile Leadership has no significant effect on employee performance. Although Agile Leadership is theoretically important, this study did not find a significant direct effect on performance. These results



for incentives support the findings of Ahmad Gunawan, Edi Sopandi, Mayylisa Salsabila, Muhammad Idham Pangestu, and Rachmah Assifah (2023), which show that incentives significantly affect employee performance. This means that incentives have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The higher the rewards received by employees, the higher their performance in carrying out their daily tasks. For career development, these results support the findings of Dwianto et al. (2020), which show that career development has an influence, but not a significant one, on employee performance.

**Table 10 Results of Simultaneous Effect Test**

Variable	F	Sig.	Description
Agile Leadership, Reward, Career Development → Performance	74.027	0.000	Simultaneously influenced

Based on Table 10, these findings are consistent with research conducted by Maria Ade Irma Kue, Nuryakin, and Arni Suwanti (2023), which shows that both factors simultaneously have a significant effect on performance. This supports the conclusion that alignment between incentives and career development has a significant impact on performance.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide meaningful insights into the influence of Agile Leadership, Incentives, and Career Development on Employee Performance at the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province. Simultaneous test results show that these three variables together have a positive and significant effect on employee performance ( $F = 74.027$ ;  $\text{Sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) with an Adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.880, indicating that 88% of employee performance variation can be explained by these variables. This high explanatory power highlights the importance of adaptive leadership, a fair reward system, and structured career development in improving organizational outcomes.

First, this study found that Agile Leadership did not have a significant partial effect ( $\text{Sig} = 0.824 > 0.05$ ). This finding reflects the structural characteristics of public institutions such as BAZNAS, which tend to maintain hierarchical and bureaucratic systems that limit flexibility and rapid decision-making. These results are in line with Rigby et al. (2021), who state that agile leadership requires a culture that supports openness and collaboration to be effective. However, this does not mean that agile leadership is irrelevant. Rather, it suggests that its impact may not be direct, but mediated by factors such as employee motivation or engagement (Pratama, 2024). Therefore, BAZNAS needs to transform its leadership behavior towards greater empowerment and participatory decision-making to realize the potential benefits of agile leadership.

Second, Reward shows a significant and strong positive influence on employee performance ( $t = 7.239$ ;  $\text{Sig} = 0.000$ ). This supports Herzberg's motivation theory, which emphasizes the role of recognition and incentives as primary motivators for employees. Consistent with Martinus et al. (2022) and Gunawan et al. (2023), rewards not only improve morale but also enhance responsibility and commitment. In BAZNAS, financial and non-financial rewards, such as acknowledgment and certificates, were found to play a crucial role in maintaining productivity and job satisfaction.

Third, Career Development has a positive but statistically insignificant effect ( $t = 2.014$ ;  $\text{Sig} = 0.054$ ). This can be attributed to limited promotion opportunities due to structural constraints typical in public institutions. Romansyah et al. (2022) argue that the absence of clear career paths can reduce motivation, even when training opportunities exist. Nevertheless, the qualitative implications remain strong: career development contributes to competence enhancement and long-term organizational sustainability, particularly when aligned with a fair reward system and supportive leadership (Ridwan et al., 2024).

In summary, while each variable contributes differently, the combined influence of Agile Leadership, Reward, and Career Development demonstrates that employee performance improvement in BAZNAS results from a synergistic interaction between leadership adaptability, fair recognition, and career clarity. This integrated perspective aligns with organizational behavior theory emphasizing that performance outcomes emerge from both structural and motivational factors.

Future research could investigate mediating variables such as organizational culture, employee engagement, or leadership style transformation to deepen the understanding of how adaptive leadership and motivation interact within public sector organizations.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study investigates the influence of Agile Leadership, Reward, and Career Development on Employee Performance at the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province. The results show that collectively, these three variables have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with an Adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.880, meaning that 88% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the combination of Agile Leadership, Reward, and Career Development, while the remaining 12% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Partially, Reward has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, indicating that fair compensation and recognition systems serve as a key motivational driver that enhances employee productivity, commitment, and job satisfaction. In contrast, Agile Leadership shows a positive but insignificant effect, suggesting that its influence in public institutions like BAZNAS may be limited by bureaucratic structures that restrict flexibility and employee empowerment. Career Development, while also positively related to performance, does not have a statistically significant impact, which reflects the limited promotion opportunities and less formalized career paths within the organization. Overall, the findings emphasize that improving employee performance in BAZNAS requires a synergistic approach that integrates adaptive leadership practices, fair reward mechanisms, and structured career development opportunities. Such integration will foster a supportive and performance-oriented work environment essential for achieving organizational objectives in the public sector. While this research provides substantial insight into the internal determinants of employee performance, it is limited by its focus on a single institutional context (BAZNAS North Sumatra). Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope by including multiple regional offices or comparable public organizations, and to explore the mediating effects of organizational culture, employee engagement, or leadership transformation in enhancing performance outcomes.

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