## Role Stressor and Work Adjustment of University Lecturers in Delta State

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#### Abstract

**Background:** Role stressor is incredibly inevitable in nature and has elevated to a top workplace concern. Despite its high prevalence worldwide, researchers have paid less attention to those employed by the education system in Nigeria.

**Objective:** The study examined the effect of role stressors on the work adjustment of university lecturers in Delta State.

**Methodology**: The study used a cross-sectional research design and the questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. A total of 300 lecturers took part in the study. The respondents were sampled using the stratified random sampling technique. The correlation, ANOVA and linear regression analysis were used to analyze data for the study.

**Result**: Role stressors significantly influence how people adjust to their jobs. Interactions between individuals and their surroundings that are considered as stressful or that are beyond their capacity for adaptation can lead to human stress and endangering their long-term well-being.

**Conclusion:** Role stressor has a positive and significant impact on university lecturers' ability to adjust to their jobs in Delta State.

**Unique Contribution:** The study has helped to establish the nexus between role stressors and lecturers' ability to adjust to their jobs in the education system in Delta State.

**Key Recommendation:** Stress management techniques should be incorporated into Nigerian public institutions. Ergonomics, which lessens physical stress on a worker's body, should also be taken into consideration.

Keywords: Role stressors, work adjustment, role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload

## Introduction

Individuals who are juggling obligations at home and at work may experience frustration, fatigue, sadness, boredom, and a loss of control over their emotions. As a result, stress begins to creep in, and if not properly managed, it can lead to decreased efficiency and stress for family members (Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2018). Professional and family obligations frequently conflict, which raises the likelihood that someone will experience stress and depression. It has been noted by Orji and Makubu (2020) that the realities of the Nigerian educational system have given university lecturers far more responsibilities than are outlined in their memorandum of engagement as employees. In essence, they are expected to perform tasks in the fields of teaching, research, and community service regardless of the number of applicants each year. In universities, lecturers' work-life

balance is crucial to how well they perform their duties. This is due to the fact that it influences other determinants, such as their health, productivity, and performance outcome, in addition to directly affecting their job performance (Tojue, et al., 2023). However, giving lectures at a university comes with its own demands and difficulties. Maladjustment will occur if those prerequisites and obstacles are not met. To do his or her job with as little effort as ethically possible, the lecturer needs to match his or her competencies (skills, competence, expertise, state of mind, behaviours', and so on) with the requirements of the university's job descriptions (Xu, & Wang, 2023).

Work adjustment necessitates a relationship that exists between human beings and the environment in which they work. People require the appropriate behaviours, adaptability, abilities, dispositions, education, competencies, and other tools to adapt to the exigencies of the environment in which they live. The environment and people must both be satisfied in order for them to coexist peacefully (Uysseveldt et al., 2021). The demands of these tasks have forced university lecturers to continuously modify their aptitudes, know-how, experience, attitudes, and behaviours, among other things, with little or no consideration for the consequences for their productivity, health, or other task-related outcomes. Work adjustment also takes into account the fact that "the individual and environment" can sometimes not mesh perfectly; a person might choose the wrong career, while a hiring manager might pick the wrong candidate. A correlation can change over time, even if it is strong. The person's abilities might develop to a degree where they surpass their roles. It is also possible for an employer's rewards or the nature of the job to change (Tamunomiebi & Mezeh, 2021).

The researchers noticed that contextual performance (additional role behaviour) and role stressors can be linked to the maladjustment, which results from a mismatch between "person and environment". Contextual performance is a term that describes actions that enhance an organization's culture and climate, such as volunteering for extra work, persevering with zeal, assisting and collaborating with others, adhering to policies and procedures, and supporting or defending the organization (Orji & Makubu, 2020). Contextual activities are significant because they improve organizational effectiveness by influencing the social, psychological, and organizational contexts that drive task activities and processes. It tends to be simpler to identify employees who are suitable for their present position, individuals who may profit from any kind of corrective training, and individuals who should be eligible for subsequent assignments or promotions to roles that require recognition of their unique skills and abilities through assessing the worker's achievements within the setting of his or her duty in the organization. Contextual endeavours, especially, involve volunteering to carry out task responsibilities that are not officially part of the job and working with others around the organization to accomplish tasks. This study sought to determine the impact of role stressors on university lecturers' capacity to adapt to their positions at universities in Delta State.

#### **Review of Related Literature**

The word "role" describes a desired pattern of conduct. According to Bayl-Smith and Griffin (2018), a role is a connection between a role sender and an incumbent. A specific position within an organization, known as the role sender, communicates expectations to the role incumbent. Expected roles, perceived roles, and actual roles are the three different categories of roles. What is expected of a person is what they are expected to do. In contrast to the envisioned role, which is

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how the individual feels they should behave in order to perform the expected role, the actual role is the manner in which the individual actually behaves within the organization. Role stressors or role stress are any aspects of organizational roles that negatively impact employees. According to Prasad et al. (2023), role stressors are connected to societal roles, which are correlated with grouped expectations. Organizational, individual, and interpersonal factors all have an effect on an employee. Organizational factors include structure, role requirements, physical setting, task characteristics, level within the organization, and organizational practices. Age, sex, and length of employment with the organization are examples of particular variables (which apply to both the role creators and the focal person). The interpersonal factors in the relationship between the role senders and the focal person include how frequently they speak, how important the senders are to the focal person, where they are physically, how visible they are, how they respond to feedback, and how much they participate. Supervisors, coworkers, or subordinates within the organization are examples of the role senders (Kanchan et al., 2018).

Role stressors are anxieties that a worker feels as a consequence of both organizational and jobspecific elements in the form of expectations and constraints that have been placed on them Kahn et al. (1964) cited in Kanchan et al. (2018). According to the theory of role stress, workplace variables lead role senders to form expectations for their roles, which they then transmit to the recipient as role pressures, which then result in illness symptoms. Role stressors include elements like role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload. Role ambiguity occurs when someone is unsure of their responsibilities and the level of authority they have to carry out their duties (Uysseveldt et al., 2021). Role overload refers to when workers have additional duties than they can manage. When a person's own ability is exceeded by an established set of role expectations, role overload occurs. Quantitative or qualitative data may be used. A person experiences quantitative role overload when they have too many tasks to complete or not enough time to complete them, whereas qualitative role overload happens when they are unable to complete a task; when someone plays several possibly unrelated roles at once, role conflict results. Incompatible expectations linked to a social position have also been proposed as an explanation.

A job stressor is any quality that poses a risk to the workplace. A working person has a role that is explicitly or implicitly assigned to them in a organization or a set of tasks that they are required to do. These demands and expectations for the role put pressure or stress on the person performing. Role stressors are divided into three categories based on their diverse nature and quality. According to Liaw et al. (2018), three distinct stressors that can lead to stress are role conflict, role overload, and role ambiguity. The absence of clarity regarding a role's responsibilities, authority, and duties is referred to as ambiguity. Role conflict occurs when a person must juggle competing needs from leaders or staff members, or take on a duty that is beyond their capabilities. Role ambiguity typically refers to a worker's ignorance of his or her own workplace's obligations and responsibilities. It is the circumstance in which a person lacks a clear understanding of the demands of his or her role within the company or organization. The worker's sense of role ambiguity stems from a lack of knowledge about what is expected and needed of his position. Role conflict is defined as inconsistencies in a job job description, inconsistent expectations for performance, or conflicting duties (Xu & Wang, 2023) ). According to the role theory, role conflict arises when two people have demands that are incompatible, which is the main reason why decisions are made incompetently. When a person joins an organization, he is given a very straightforward explanation of his role as well as the organization's goals and job descriptions. Role overload is determined by

how much an employee feels their responsibilities or expectations exceed their capacity to manage them with the resources at their disposal without sacrificing quality (Jian, 2014).

According to Zeidner and Endler (2006), the term "adjustment" refers to continuing cognitive or behavioural coping mechanisms used to cope with, reduce, or control conceivably difficult situations. Management, on the other hand, speaks of adjustment strategies. Because there is no all-inclusive treatment for stress, the only thing that is attainable is its management, as Cox, et al. (2000) point out, adjustment is a critical component of the stress-related response. Traditional adjustment can be explained using two distinct theoretical perspectives. The traditional animal experiment and the psychoanalytic ego psychology model (Dewe, et al., 2010) both offer pertinent data on stress management. Adjustments in an animal model were used to describe behaviours that regulate dismissive conditions in the environment with the goal to avoid, flee from, or conquer threat conditions. The animal model of adjustment places less importance on the cognitiveemotional multifaceted nature that is typically a crucial aspect of human functioning and more on avoiding and evasion behaviours. Adjustment is defined as adaptable and practical thoughts and behaviours that address problems and reduce stress (Odebode, et al., 2019). The psychoanalytic egoistic psychological model emphasizes an individual's connection with his or her surroundings in terms of recognizing and thinking, in contrast to the animal model, which focuses on the biological processes that occur in the person's attachment to the environment.

According to Health Safety Executive (2006), there are healthy ways to deal with stress, such as adopting a healthy lifestyle, diet, social solidarity, and employment that can deepen social ties. It's also important to avoid unhealthy ways of responding, such as overeating or underrating, binge drinking, angry outbursts, and defensiveness, as these behaviours can result in poor sleep, decreased exercise, and social isolation. If there is support available, negative reactions, anxieties, and ongoing emotional issues can be lessened; however, if there are additional external factors that are stressful for the person, they may become worse. For instance, social support networks can offer emotional support and practical resources when needed. Social support enhances a person's sense of belonging to a larger social network because it makes them feel valued and cared for by others. Similar to this, Yohanes et al. (2022) contend that effective stress management at work leads to increased work productivity, increased labor efficiency, decreased absenteeism, good cohesion and friendly relationships with all co-workers, and successful mission and vision accomplishment. Redesigning the work, receiving stress management training, designing the environment, creating stress management training, and creating organizational systems for better work and management are some of the stress management techniques that can be used within the various organizations. Additionally, counseling can aid in stress management and helping people move on with their lives, according to Obiora et al. (2023). Employees are assisted in managing stress at work through counseling, which is typically provided by employee assistance programs.

In order for organizations to survive and grow in a highly competitive environment, both the organizations and their employees need to be aware of the role stress variables and work to manage or reduce them. Assessing role stress variables, lowering those stress variables and locating sources of stress are the next steps. For instance, role conflict, role ambiguity, or role overload could all be sources of stress. Employers, managers, role senders, and mentors can all be held responsible for the decreased sources of role stress variables. Mentoring is one of the most effective ways to lessen role stress at work. Mentors are highly qualified people who belong to that role set and are

interested in assisting and advancing a person's career (Obiora et al., 2023). In their study, Kahn et al. (1964) cited in Uysseveldt et al. (2021) found that the role manager exhibits low job satisfaction, substantial amounts of tension, diminished trust in the organization, and desire to leave the organization when duties and responsibilities are unclear to the primary employee or the focal person's noticed role does not match with the anticipated role. Mentors can help the focal person understand their role by giving them information about it and options for handling role demands, such as conflict-prone role expectations. According to Yohanes et al. (2022), the role ambiguity is reduced through the use of good feedback from coworkers and members of the role set. For instance, academics encounter role ambiguity as a result of irregular feedback, which is the major cause of stress. High-quality communication between superiors and followers can reduce intentions to leave an organization, according to Uysseveldt et al. (2021). In their meta-analytical study, Xu and Wang (2023) discovered that conflict and role ambiguity have a negative impact on employee satisfaction. Higher levels of role conflict and ambiguity were associated with lower levels of job satisfaction. According to Shruti, Pranab, and Jha (2012), role stressors and job stress are positively correlated, while job stress and job satisfaction are negatively correlated.

## **Theoretical Framework**

## **Theory of Work Adjustment**

René Dawis, George England, and Lloyd Lofquist from the University of Minnesota propounded the theory of work adjustment (TWA), also referred to as the Person-Environment Correspondence theory, for the first time in 1964 (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). It is a byproduct of over 50 years of study at the University of Minnesota and is connected to the work of Williamson, Darley, and Hagenah. TWA has a big impact beyond just giving information for guidance on career counselling sessions. TWA conceptions of work have been embraced by American government agencies in charge of employee well-being and public health. TWA thus holds the power to influence governmental decisions and policies. For example, TWA had a significant influence on the Centers for the Control of Diseases and Prevention's model of job stress. Another example of the influence of TWA at this level is the incorporation of TWA's fundamental factors into the Industrial Information Network. Particularly pertinent to the topic of this special issue is the integration of TWA concepts into a broad framework of therapy in person-environment interaction counseling (Lofquist & Dawis, 1991). According to Davis and Lofquist (1984), TWA views work as a cooperative and beneficial connection that exists between the worker and the workplace. Simply put, one could consider people to be workers who provide the labor required in the place of employment in exchange for having many of their financial, psychological, and social needs met. TWA offers a framework for both illustrating the ongoing interaction between the employee and the work environment (work adjustment) and for projecting the results of that match (the forecasting model); as Hesketh and Griffin (2005) pointed out, TWA has a deceptive simplicity. The predictive model is based on the fundamental tenet that people act to meet their needs (Dawis, 2004). Reinforcers are natural occurrences that meet needs.

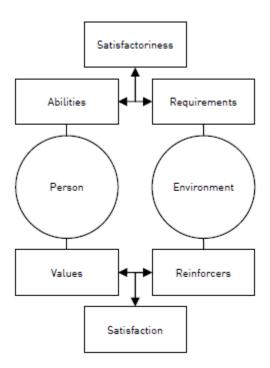
Few theories, according to Hesketh and Griffin (2005), are thorough enough to be used in career choice, training, selection, and organizational interventions. TWA achieves this by emphasizing both workplace and worker satisfaction equally and using symmetrical processes to describe both. Even if a worker is happy with their job, they may still perform below what is considered acceptable by their employer and run the risk of being fired. On the other hand, even if an employer is happy with a worker's performance, the employee may not be and decide to look for other

employment. Obviously, mutual satisfaction between an employer and employee results in the most stable employment situations. The TWA predictive model aligns reinforcers at work with worker needs.

TWA's fundamental premise is that people try to achieve and maintain harmony with their surroundings. Work adjustment is the term used to describe this process. Once an individual and an occupation have been initially matched, the remaining time in that occupation is spent adjusting to shifting work conditions. Some are the result of outside factors like corporate mergers, layoffs, or job redesign. Others are internally motivated, for instance, to balance the competing demands of work and family while pursuing and/or achieving promotion (Xu &Wang, 2023). They also assert that if a person's abilities (knowledge, skills, experience, behaviours, attitude, etc.) closely match the requirements of the position or the organization, they are more likely to perform well on the job and be viewed favorably by the employer. In a similar vein, a person is more likely to find their work to be rewarding if the reinforcers (rewards) of the job or organization closely align with the values the employee wants to achieve through their work. They list the following six guiding ideals that everyone aspires to uphold:

- 1. Achievement: conditions that promote accomplishment and advancement;
- 2. Status: circumstances that promote recognition and prestige;
- 3. Comfort: circumstances that promote a lack of stress;
- 4. Altruism: a state that encourages cooperation and service to others;
- 5. Safety: the occurrence of predictability and stability;
- 6. Autonomy: circumstances that boost individual initiative and control.

It is believed that a person's levels of satisfaction and satisfactoriness are good indicators of whether they will stick with a job, succeed at it, and advance



## Figure 1: The amount of time that people or environments will try to adjust before giving up.

**Source:** Dawis and Lofquist (1984): A Psychological Theory of Work Adjustment According to the theory, there may not be a perfect fit between a person and their surroundings, possibly as a result of a bad career choice or a poor hiring choice in the hands of the employer. Even a solid correspondence can become less effective over time. Due to obligations outside of work, the person's targets may change, or their abilities may develop to an extent where they surpass their role. Additionally, an employer's benefits or the demands of the job could change. Depending on how flexible they are, a person or environment may be able to tolerate some disparity within their abilities and necessities as well as between the principles they hold and reinforcers. Flexibility in the individual and the environment will vary from one another (Dawis, 1994). The availability of alternatives as well as external and internal variables like organizational customs and personality traits will all have an impact on how flexible a person is. When the lack of connection is so grave that adaptability is no longer possible, some sort of adjustment frequently takes place:

- People who are proactively adjusting try to change their workplace. They could attempt to modify the job's responsibilities and conduct standards to better fit their abilities. Instead, they might attempt to alter the reinforcements of the job by aiming to obtain alternative rewards, such as improved working conditions, greater variety, or increased responsibility. The environment may try to change a person's abilities through instruction or their morals or expectations in another way in order to actively adjust them.
- 2. People can try a reactive adaptation by changing their behaviour in order to better suit the situation, their personal priorities, or their professional values. Identical to this, the surroundings may change the responsibilities of a role to better utilize an individual's natural strengths or change the rewards in an effort to increase satisfaction with work.

As a result, there are two possible modes of adjustment behaviour: active and reactive. In the active mode, employees make changes to the workplace to improve communication, such as asking their employers to regularly permit telecommuting. Workers who are in reactive mode make changes to themselves in an effort to better fit in with the workplace. A case in point would be getting training to enhance job skills. The following in-form research hypothesis was tested in order to meet the study's goal:

Hro: There is no significant influence of role stressors on the work adjustment of university lecturers in Delta State.

## **Research Methods**

The study used a cross-sectional research design and participants for this study were lecturers from three universities in Delta State: Delta State University, Abraka, Delta University, Agbor, and Delta State University of Science and Technology, Ozoro (this includes all lecturers from the cadre of Graduate Assistant to Professor). A total of 300 lecturers were sampled using the stratified random sampling technique. Participants were divided into groups according to the universities' various departments. Using a straightforward random sampling technique, five faculties were

chosen from each university, and four departments were selected at random from each faculty, yielding a total of 60 departments. By using a stratified random sampling technique and the cadre of the lecturers as the basis for stratification, five lecturers were sampled from each department. A self-created questionnaire with the name Role Stressor and Work Adjustment Questionnaire (CPRSWA) was the instrument used in the study to gather data. In order to accurately reflect the construct of interest, items for this scale were carefully created from the pertinent literature. A copy of the scale was thoroughly examined by experts in the fields of public administration, political science, and guidance and counseling in order to guarantee the construct and content validity of the scale. Two sections made up the questionnaire: Section 1: Information on Role Stressor was covered in this section. The three role-related stressors of role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload were measured using 20 items in the form of questions. It used a Likert scale with a response range of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (undecided). Its second section included information on work adjustments. To measure work adjustment, 20 items with likert scale response options ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (undecided) were used. Inferential statistics were used to examine the data gathered with the aid of SPSS software version 23.0. 237 of the 300 questionnaires that were given out to respondents were retrieved and examined, or 79% of the total number while an initial pilot study of 20 workers without replacement was carried out to establish the study reliability and validity using Smart PLS Criterion.

Table 1. Valuaty and Kenability Kesuits								
Construct	Number	Composite	Cronbach's	Average				
	of items	Reliability	Alpha	Variance Extract				
Role stressors	7	0.845	0.733	0.519				
work adjustment	9	0.871	0.767	0.558				

**Table 1: Validity and Reliability Results** 

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 shows that the values range from 0.845 to 0.871 for composite reliability and 0.733 to 0.767 for Cronbach's alpha respectively for the three constructs. This implies that all the constructs are reliable as the values of composite and the Cronbach's alpha coefficients are above the threshold of 0.70 (Hair, et al., 2017). The reliability results are supported by the discriminant validity values of Average Variance Extract (AVE), which are also above the standard of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, the two constructs for this study showed high reliability and internal consistency.

# **Results and Discussion**

# **Bivariate Analysis (Test of Relationship)**

Bivariate analysis is used to examine the connection that exists between the independent and dependent variables. If p < 0.05, reject the hypothesis based on evidence of an insubstantial relationship; if p > 0.05, accept the hypothesis based on indication of a substantial correlation between the variables. This decision rule applies to all bivariate test results.

## Table 2: Correlation of Role stressor and Work adjustment

	Variables		Role stressor	Work adjustment
Spearman's rho	Role stressor	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 237	.781** .000 237
	Work adjustment	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	.781** .000 237	1 237

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) **Source:** SPSS Output, 2023

Using Spearman's correlation coefficients techniques, Table 2 demonstrates the connection between a role stressor and a work adjustment. Role stressor has a very strong significant and positive association with work adjustment at (rho = 0.781, and P = 0.000-0.05%). This finding implies that role stressors can promote or hasten work adjustment. The impact of role stressors on the work adjustment of university lecturers in Delta State was estimated using a linear regression, but correlation does not imply causation.

# Table 3: The results of ANOVA and linear regression analysis of the effect of role stressor on work adjustment

	Model		ANOVA		Coefficients				
Independent	Summary								
variables	R	<b>R</b> <sup>2</sup>	F.	DF	Sig. F	B	Std.	Т	Sig. t
Role	.865	.712	773.230	1	.000	.865	.025	25.379	.000
stressor									

Independent variable: Work Adjustment

According to Table 3, the findings show that there is a statistically significant connection between role stressor and work adjustment, with the correlation coefficient (R = 0.865) showing an association between the independent variable (role stressor) and the dependent variable (work adjustment). The role stressor has been shown to have determined 71.2% of the variation in work adjustment, with the remaining variation being accounted for by other variables that were not included in this model, according to the value of the predicting coefficient ( $R^2 = 0.712$ ). Furthermore, the variable (F. = 773.230) at (sig. = 0.000), which confirms the regression's significance at the significance level (0.05), can be seen. Additionally, the table displays that ( $\beta = 0.865$ ) and (t = 25.379) at (sig. = 0.001), indicating that the role stressor effect is significant and that an increase in role stressor by one unit results in an increase in work adjustment by 86.5%. In order to accept the alternative hypothesis (Hr1), which states that role stressor, significant effect of role stressors on work adjustment, is rejected.

The results of the hypothesis test proved that role stressor significantly affect how people adjust to their jobs. Interactions between individuals and their surroundings that are considered as stressful or that are beyond their capacity for adaptation can lead to human stress and endangering their long-term well-being. Role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload have made lecturing stressful. According to different studies (Shruti et al., 2012; Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2018), these role stressor components are connected to low job engagement, organizational dedication, anxiety, and tension, and intention to leave the organization. The study's findings are in line with that on role stressors, which is mainly written in Western nations.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this study, university lecturers in Delta State were asked to report on how role stressors interfered with their ability to adjust to their jobs. The study's finding showed that role stressors significantly and positively impacted the capacity of university lecturers in Delta State to adapt to their jobs. The ability of a lecturer to manage role stressors while carrying out difficult tasks and responsibilities will strongly influence subsequent positive attitudinal and behavioural outcomes such as adherence to the law, high-quality services, satisfaction, commitment, and adherence to university ethics. As a result, these favorable effects might improve organizational excellence. In light of this study's findings, the following suggestions have been made:

- 1. To improve the health of employees and intrapersonal relationships, stress management techniques should be incorporated into Nigerian public institutions. Ergonomics, which lessens physical stress on a worker's body, should also be taken into consideration. This can increase lecturers' commitment and satisfaction.
- 2. In order to improve their level of work adjustment, lecturers must learn about their desires and values much more specifically and to the same the degree as they learn about their skills and abilities. The study concludes that values and needs must be established in the same way that knowledge and skills are. In this type of learning, career consultants, university administrators, and HR managers must show respect for the lecturer's family and take into account individual differences.
- 3. Career counselors should encourage lecturers to develop their own self-awareness. First and foremost, they must be experts at determining needs, values, skills, and abilities based on the readily available common information. Standardized measures can be beneficial and are probable to be used by professionals, but daily observations can be beneficial and less intrusive if career counselors are skilled at using them in assessment. Counselors must first comprehend each lecturer's response abilities and reinforcement requirements in order to be able to teach them how to evaluate themselves. In addition to having the necessary skills, human resource managers and counselors should be conscious of their own desires and values, or more specifically, their own requirements for reinforcement.
- 4. Lecturers must educate themselves on students' adjustment styles in addition to their needs, values, and skills. They must also study various methods of environmental adjustment. It is not necessary to gain this knowledge all at once. Skilled counselors can use particular cases to demonstrate a particular factor at a time and its unique features for both the individual and the environment involved in the case. The satisfaction of the lecturer, satisfactoriness, and tenure can all be used as markers for success if the aforementioned recommendations are carried out. It's critical to ascertain whether a lecturer enjoys or dislikes their workplace. This evaluation ought to be given equal weight to the traditional evaluation of how well the lecturer satisfies the needs of the classroom, the family, and

society.

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