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WORKPLACE HAPPINESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY OF LITTLE FLOWER SCHOOL, UYO

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Abstract

This study assessed the level of workplace happiness and organizational commitment among the academic staff of Little Flower School (LFS), a private primary school in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, and examined whether these two variables differed between full-time and part-time teachers. A descriptive survey case-study design was adopted, involving a total enumeration (census) of the school's 105 full-time and part-time academic staff. Data were collected with a 26-item questionnaire that adapted the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) Short Form and the Meyer and Allen Affective Commitment Scale, anchored on Self-Determination Theory and Organizational Support Theory. Analysis shows workplace happiness was generally high (M = 3.75, SD = 0.47 on a 5-point scale), as was organizational commitment (M = 3.83, SD = 0.32), with salary relative to workload the lowest-rated happiness item and institutional pride the highest-rated commitment item. An independent-samples t-test found no significant difference in happiness between full-time and part-time teachers, t(81.2) = -0.70, p = .483, but a statistically significant difference in commitment favouring full-time teachers, t(69.5) = 2.80, p = .007. The study concludes that LFS teachers report a generally happy and committed workforce, with employment status shaping institutional attachment more than day-to-day job satisfaction. Implications for teacher retention, NAPPS accreditation, and evidence-based enrolment marketing are discussed.

Keywords: organizational commitment, primary schools, teacher retention, institutional pride, teacher attrition

Introduction

Teachers constitute the single most important in-school determinant of the quality of basic education a child receives (Adeyemo, 2007). The extent to which they experience well-being and demonstrate commitment in their place of work has a direct bearing on how long they remain in post, how much discretionary effort they invest in their teaching, and how they represent

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the institution to parents and pupils. In Nigeria's rapidly expanding private-school sub-sector, where parents pay directly for a promise of quality education, teacher stability has become both a pedagogical and a commercial concern. Private schools have grown to outnumber and, in many communities, outperform their public counterparts (Ajala, 2009), yet this growth has coincided with mounting pressure on the teachers who staff them. In this competitive market, parental decisions are not always purely rational; (Bassey, 2026) documents the antecedents and consequences of impulsive parental school-switching in private basic education, which raises the premium on schools demonstrating stable and committed staffing to retain fee-paying families.

Two pressures are especially salient in the current Nigerian context. The first is the broader wave of emigration popularly known as the "japa syndrome," which the Minister of Education has described as having hit the education sector harder than any other, with primary and secondary school teachers among those relocating abroad in search of better pay and working conditions (Bodunde, 2024). The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2024) has reported that Nigeria needs an additional 194,876 qualified teachers to fill existing gaps in the basic education sector, with primary schools being the most severely understaffed. The "japa" phenomenon has compounded this shortage, as talented teachers leave the profession for opportunities abroad or in other sectors (Adamu, 2026).

The second pressure is the persistent problem of remuneration. Private-school proprietors, operating on tuition income rather than government subvention, frequently cannot match public-sector salary scales. Studies of Nigerian teachers consistently identify pay as one of the most consistent sources of dissatisfaction even where other aspects of the job are rated favourably (Adelabu, 2005; Korb & Akintunde, 2013). Research on private school teachers in Ado-Ekiti Metropolis has documented the reality that teachers in this sector are simultaneously "underpaid and overworked" (Ojo et al., 2025; Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), 2023) revealed that a significant proportion of teachers in Southwest Nigeria's private primary and secondary schools are unqualified, partly because proprietors prioritize cost-cutting over quality. Together, these pressures make teacher turnover a live institutional risk for private primary schools in South-South Nigeria, including Little Flower School (LFS) in Uyo.

Workplace happiness, as distinct from the narrower construct of job satisfaction, refers to an employee's overall positive affective and cognitive evaluation of the work experience, encompassing autonomy, relationships, a sense of purpose, and recognition alongside pay and conditions (Hasanati & Istiqomah, 2024). Cross-national evidence links teachers' happiness at work to how supported and autonomous they feel in their schools rather than to salary alone (Bayraktar & Girgin, 2020), a pattern that resonates with growing international attention to teacher well-being as a precondition for effective teaching (Benevene et al., 2020). Organizational commitment, and specifically its affective component, captures a different but related construct: the emotional attachment an employee develops to the organization, the extent to which they identify with its goals, and their willingness to remain (Meyer et al., 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Where happiness is a reaction to the day-to-day experience of the job, affective commitment is closer to institutional loyalty and pride. Recent work continues to find the two constructs correlated but empirically separable, with professional commitment predicting organizational happiness rather than being identical to it (Bahat & Işik, 2023).

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Nigerian scholarship on these constructs has tended to concentrate on public secondary schools and on job satisfaction as a predictor of teaching efficacy or of students' academic performance. (Ladebo, 2005), studying primary school teachers in Lagos, found that professional commitment was significantly related to intrinsic satisfaction, while material rewards, working conditions, and satisfaction levels were associated with the intention to leave the profession. (Ajala, 2009), studying secondary school teachers in Osun State, reported generally positive but uneven job satisfaction and commitment, with promotion and pay the weakest-rated areas. Other scholars have linked the availability of school resources and financial incentives to teachers' turnover management in private secondary schools in Cross River State, underscoring that private-school administrators, not just government, must actively manage the conditions that keep teachers in post (Obono & Odey, 2025).

Recent research has specifically examined the relationship between role overload and affective commitment among private school teachers, revealing inconsistent findings. While some scholars, such as (Aigbiremhon, 2021) reported a significant negative relationship between role overload and affective commitment in Enugu State, others, including (Sulyman et al., 2020), found no significant relationship in Kwara State. These contradictory findings suggest that affective commitment may not always be determined by workload alone and that factors such as emotional attachment, organizational culture, professional values, and personal passion for teaching may also influence teachers' commitment levels (Adamu, 2026). This study contributes to resolving this inconsistency by examining both happiness and commitment together in a single-institution context.

What remains comparatively rare in this literature is a total-population, single-institution case study of a private primary school that reports both happiness and commitment together, and that examines whether full-time and part-time staff experience the workplace differently. This distinction matters increasingly as schools blend permanent staff with part-time or visiting teachers to manage costs. Furthermore, the high rate of unqualified teachers in private schools, estimated at 70% in some regions (TRCN, 2023), underscores the importance of understanding what motivates and retains the qualified teachers who do choose to work in this sector. Little Flower School, Uyo, presents an opportunity to close part of this gap. As a premium private primary school built around an "Integral Education" or Total Child model, LFS depends on a stable, motivated teaching staff to deliver the personalized, character-forming education it promises parents. With a modest total staff strength of 105 full-time and part-time academic staff, the school is small enough for a full census rather than a sample, giving a rare opportunity for complete, school-level empirical evidence rather than an anecdote-based assurance of staff satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

Anecdotal claims that "our teachers are happy" or "our staff are committed" are common in private-school marketing but are rarely backed by systematic evidence. For schools seeking National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS) accreditation, or seeking to reassure fee-paying parents that the staff who teach their children are stable and engaged, such claims need an empirical foundation. At the same time, private primary schools in South-South Nigeria are operating in an environment of rising teacher turnover risk. The national teacher

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shortage, with Nigeria requiring nearly 195,000 additional qualified teachers (UBEC, 2024), combined with the "japa" syndrome (Bodunde, 2024) and persistent salary pressures (Adelabu, 2005; Korb & Akintunde, 2013), creates a "perfect storm of understaffing" (Adamu, 2026, p. 278). Despite the gravity of this situation, school-level evidence on where the risk is concentrated, for instance, whether it is greater among part-time than full-time staff—remains scarce.

The problem is compounded by the high proportion of unqualified teachers in the private school sector. Reports indicate that up to 70% of teachers in private primary and secondary schools in parts of Nigeria lack proper qualifications (TRCN, 2023). This raises questions about the relationship between teacher qualifications, workplace satisfaction, and institutional commitment. In the absence of a descriptive, total-population assessment, LFS management has no reliable basis for distinguishing genuine strength from assumption, or for targeting retention effort where it is most needed. This study addresses that gap by systematically assessing workplace happiness and organizational commitment among all LFS academic staff and comparing full-time and part-time teachers on both constructs.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to assess workplace happiness and organizational commitment among teachers in a private primary school. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the level of workplace happiness among teachers at Little Flower School;
2. determine the level of organizational commitment (institutional pride) among teachers at Little Flower School; and
3. compare workplace happiness and organizational commitment between full-time and part-time teachers at Little Flower School.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of workplace happiness among teachers at Little Flower School?
2. What is the level of organizational commitment among teachers at Little Flower School?
3. Is there a difference in workplace happiness and organizational commitment between full-time and part-time teachers at Little Flower School?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H01: There is no statistically significant difference in workplace happiness between full-time and part-time teachers at Little Flower School.

H02: There is no statistically significant difference in organizational commitment between full-time and part-time teachers at Little Flower School.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on two complementary theories: Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Organizational Support Theory (OST).

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Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) holds that human motivation and psychological well-being flourish when three innate needs are satisfied: autonomy, the sense of volition in one's actions; competence, the sense of being effective; and relatedness, the sense of connection to others. Applied to a school workplace, teachers who are free to use their own judgment and teaching methods, who feel skilled and effective with pupils, and who experience warm collegial and supervisory relationships are theorised to report higher workplace happiness, regardless of the extrinsic rewards attached to the job. This maps directly onto the intrinsic-satisfaction items of the adapted MSQ used in this study, such as freedom to use one's own judgment, opportunity to use one's own skills, and the quality of relationships with supervisors and colleagues.

A growing body of evidence supports the application of SDT in organizational contexts. Research examining the motivational drivers of non-academic staff in Nigerian higher education has found that satisfying the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness is critical for fostering intrinsic motivation and sustained professional growth (Sheldon et al., 2009). These findings are consistent with broader international research demonstrating that autonomy-supportive work environments enhance employee well-being and organizational commitment. The application of SDT in the Nigerian context, however, requires attention to cultural nuances and institutional realities. Rigid hierarchical systems, limited access to professional development, and inadequate funding can undermine the satisfaction of core psychological needs (Sheldon et al., 2009). These constraints are particularly relevant in the private primary school sector, where resource limitations and bureaucratic structures may similarly restrict autonomy and competence development. Related Nigerian evidence also indicates that academic self-efficacy mediates the relationship between learned helplessness and social development among pre-service teachers (Bassey & Ataguba, 2026), reinforcing the relevance of competence-supportive conditions to teacher well-being.

Organizational Support Theory

Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986) complements SDT by explaining how commitment develops. The theory proposes that employees form a global belief about the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, termed perceived organizational support (POS), and that this belief obliges employees, through a norm of reciprocity, to care about the organization's welfare in return and to become more affectively attached to it. Perceived support of this kind, expressed through recognition, fair policy implementation, and job security, is theorised to translate into the affective commitment measured in Section C of the instrument, including items such as feeling emotionally attached to the school and feeling that the school's problems are one's own.

Research has established robust associations between perceived organizational support and various forms of organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Studies examining teacher commitment in public schools have found that commitment has less to do with personal qualities people bring to the workplace than with the design and management of tasks and work circumstances within it (Nick-Akan et al., 2024). Organizational commitment itself is multifaceted, encompassing commitment to the teaching profession, commitment to

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students, and commitment to the employing organization (Adamu, 2026). Teachers are likely to exhibit high commitment to students' achievements, especially if they perceive a link between achievements and their professional prestige and the symbolic rewards they receive from children, parents, principals, and district officials (Nick-Akan et al., 2024). This multidimensional understanding is relevant to the present study, which focuses specifically on organizational commitment (loyalty to the school workplace and identification with its values and goals) as distinct from professional commitment or commitment to students.

Read together, SDT and OST suggest that workplace happiness (an experiential, need-satisfaction outcome) and organizational commitment (a relational, reciprocity-based outcome) are related but distinct constructs. This is consistent with the decision to measure and analyse them as separate constructs in this study while also testing whether employment type shapes them differently.

Workplace Happiness Among Teachers

Workplace happiness, as a construct, extends beyond traditional notions of job satisfaction to encompass a broader evaluation of the work experience. It includes not only how employees feel about their work but also their sense of purpose, relationships with colleagues, and overall well-being in the workplace (Hasanati & Istiqomah, 2024). Among teachers, workplace happiness is particularly significant because of the emotional demands of the profession. Teaching requires ongoing emotional engagement with pupils, parents, and colleagues, and teachers' emotional states directly affect the quality of the learning environment (Benevene et al., 2020).

Recent research has examined the demographic factors associated with teacher happiness. Hasanati and Istiqomah (2024) found that happiness at work is shaped more by relational and autonomy-related conditions than by pay alone. This pattern aligns with Self-Determination Theory's prediction that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fundamental to psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Teachers who report high levels of autonomy in their work, who feel competent and effective, and who experience positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors tend to report higher levels of workplace happiness, regardless of the extrinsic rewards attached to their jobs.

Cross-national evidence supports the universality of these findings. Bayraktar and Girgin (2020), in their study of teachers' organizational happiness, found that teachers' happiness was more strongly associated with relational and autonomy-related conditions than with compensation. Similarly, Benevene and colleagues (2020), in their editorial on teacher well-being, emphasized that teachers' emotional well-being is a precondition for effective teaching and that supportive work environments are critical to sustaining this well-being.

Organizational Commitment in Educational Settings

Organizational commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment to their organization, including identification with organizational goals, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and desire to remain a member (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen's three-component model distinguishes between affective commitment (emotional attachment to the organization), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving), and normative

commitment (felt obligation to remain) (Meyer et al., 1993). Of these three components, affective commitment is most relevant to the present study, as it captures the emotional attachment and institutional pride that private schools value for marketing and accreditation purposes.

In educational settings, teacher commitment is believed to be central to school effectiveness. Research suggests that student achievement is intertwined with teachers' commitment to their work, their school, and their students (Nir, 2002). Teachers who are emotionally attached to their institutions continue demonstrating loyalty irrespective of workplace challenges (Adamu, 2026). This finding is consistent with the view that affective commitment is fundamentally emotional in nature and may be sustained through organizational culture, interpersonal relationships, religious beliefs, passion for teaching, and professional identity rather than workload conditions alone (Adamu, 2026).

However, research on the relationship between teacher commitment and workplace conditions has yielded inconsistent findings. While some studies report a significant negative relationship between role overload and affective commitment, others find no significant relationship. For example, studies conducted in Enugu State and Oyo State found that role overload significantly lowered affective commitment among teachers (Agu et al., 2024). However, research in Kwara State (Azeez et al., 2025), Nigeria and studies by Waweru and colleagues in Kenya (Waweru et al., 2020) found that role overload did not significantly affect teachers' emotional commitment. These contradictory findings suggest that affective commitment may not always be determined by workload alone and that factors such as emotional attachment, organizational culture, professional values, and personal passion for teaching may also influence teachers' commitment levels.

Job Satisfaction Among Nigerian Teachers

Research on Nigerian teachers' job satisfaction has consistently found a mixed picture. While teachers often report satisfaction with the intrinsic aspects of their work, such as the opportunity to serve pupils and the sense of accomplishment derived from teaching, they frequently express dissatisfaction with extrinsic factors such as pay, benefits, and working conditions (Adelabu, 2005; Korb & Akintunde, 2013). This pattern is particularly pronounced in the private school sector, where proprietors operating on tuition income often cannot match public-sector salary scales (Ojo et al., 2025).

Ladebo (2005), in his study of primary school teachers in Lagos, found that teachers' satisfaction was characterized by job apathy alongside satisfaction with pay and benefits and intrinsic satisfaction. The study found that professional commitment was significantly related to intrinsic satisfaction, job apathy, and satisfaction with pay and benefits, and that material rewards, advancement, working conditions, intrinsic satisfaction, job apathy, and professional commitment were all associated with an intention to leave the profession (Ladebo, 2005). These findings underscore the importance of understanding how workplace attitudes shape retention among Nigerian primary teachers.

More recent research on private school teachers in Ado-Ekiti Metropolis has similarly found that private school teachers are "underpaid and overworked" (Ojo et al., 2025). This study documented the excessive workloads and inadequate compensation that characterize many private school

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teaching positions, factors that contribute to high turnover intentions. The "japa" phenomenon has compounded these challenges, as qualified teachers increasingly seek employment abroad or in other sectors where compensation is more competitive (Adamu, 2026; Bodunde, 2024).

The Private School Context in Nigeria

Private schools have grown significantly in Nigeria over recent decades, driven by perceived quality deficits in the public system and the increasing demand for education. However, this growth has occurred against a backdrop of regulatory challenges and quality concerns. The National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS) plays a key role in promoting quality assurance and accreditation within the sector. Recent reports indicate that private schools affected by government teacher recruitment exercises have been able to stabilize, deploying available hands and conducting simultaneous recruitment and training (NewTelegraph, 2025). This suggests a degree of resilience in the private school sector, even in the face of workforce challenges.

However, private schools continue to face difficulties related to teacher qualifications, compensation, and working conditions. The estimated 70% rate of unqualified teachers in private primary and secondary schools in some regions (TRCN, 2023) highlights the quality challenges confronting the sector. These challenges are compounded by the ongoing "japa" syndrome, which sees talented teachers leaving for better opportunities abroad (Bodunde, 2024). As Adamu (2026) put it, "we are losing our best brains to japa syndrome".

The interplay between these factors; teacher qualifications, compensation, working conditions, and institutional commitment, underscores the importance of understanding workplace happiness and organizational commitment among private school teachers. By examining both constructs in a single-institution context, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how private schools can retain and motivate qualified teachers.

Significance of the Study

Academically, the study contributes a rare total-population case study of a private primary school in South-South Nigeria to a literature that has concentrated heavily on secondary and public schools. It offers one of the few Nigerian data points comparing full-time and part-time teachers' happiness and commitment side by side, addressing a gap in understanding how employment status shapes workplace attitudes. Additionally, by examining both happiness and commitment together, the study contributes to resolving the inconsistency in findings on the relationship between workplace conditions and teacher commitment (Agu et al., 2024; Adamu, 2026).

Practically, the findings give LFS management an evidence base for staff-retention planning and for NAPPS accreditation and quality-assurance documentation. For enrolment marketing, a verified figure on staff commitment offers parents something more substantial than a general assurance of staff quality, while remaining an honest, methodologically transparent claim rather than an unverified assertion. The findings also have implications for the broader private school sector, suggesting strategies for converting part-time teachers into more institutionally committed staff and addressing the specific pain points (such as salary relative to workload) that generate dissatisfaction.

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Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design within a single-institution case-study framework. This design was appropriate because the goal was to describe, rather than manipulate, the naturally occurring levels of workplace happiness and organizational commitment among LFS staff, and to compare two naturally occurring groups (full-time and part-time teachers) on those levels.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted at Little Flower School (LFS), Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, a private school offering premium early childhood and primary education. LFS operates an Integral Education ("Total Child") model intended to develop both intellect and character in a serene, resource-rich environment, with a stated vision of preparing pupils to be internationally competitive in academics, character, and life skills. The school was purposively selected because of general concerns about staff stability in the private-school sub-sector and because its relatively small staff size made a full census feasible.

Population of the Study

The population comprised all 105 academic staff (teaching and support-teaching personnel, both full-time and part-time) at LFS at the time of the study.

Sampling Technique

A census (total enumeration) technique was used; because the entire population was targeted, no sampling was required. A 100% response rate was achieved through administration during a general staff meeting.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected with a researcher-adapted questionnaire titled the "Questionnaire on Workplace Happiness and Organizational Commitment." Section A captured demographic data (employment type, gender, age range, highest qualification, and years in the school). Section B adapted the 20-item Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) Short Form (D. Weiss et al., 2013; D. J. Weiss et al., 1967) to measure workplace happiness on a 5-point scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Very Satisfied), with ten items forming an intrinsic-satisfaction sub-scale and six items an extrinsic-satisfaction sub-scale. Section C adapted the 6-item Affective Commitment Scale (Meyer et al., 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1991) on a 5-point agreement scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Section D added one open-ended item inviting a one-sentence testimonial for internal marketing use.

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire is a multidimensional instrument used to estimate global satisfaction among employees (D. J. Weiss et al., 1967). It is based on the theory of work adjustment, which assumes that work adjustment outcomes, such as satisfaction, can be explained by how well an individual's abilities match work requirements and how well their needs match reinforcement in the work environment. Intrinsic facets include domains related to the job itself (such as achievement, autonomy, and social service), while extrinsic facets are made up of domains

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typically within the control of employers (such as salary, policies, and supervision) (D. J. Weiss et al., 1967). The short-form MSQ has demonstrated reliability in African settings, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.79 and 0.82 for the intrinsic and extrinsic subscales, respectively, and 0.86 for the general scale (Bello et al., 2020). Similarly, the MSQ has shown strong reliability in Nigerian healthcare settings, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 reported in one study (Ogaji et al., 2020).

Validity of the Instrument

The adapted instrument was reviewed for face and content validity against the original MSQ and Affective Commitment Scale item pools and against the study's specific objectives, ensuring that item wording remained recognisable to the validated originals while fitting the primary-school teaching context (for example, referring to "pupils" rather than "students" or "clients").

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability was established through Cronbach's alpha computed from the field dataset collected. Section B (happiness, 20 items) returned an alpha of .91 and Section C (commitment, 6 items) an alpha of .82, both above the conventional .70 threshold and broadly consistent with the .84-.89 range reported for the parent instruments' Nigerian validations.

Procedure for Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered during a general staff meeting to maximize retrieval, with a consent note assuring respondents of anonymity and confidentiality and an estimated completion time of 10-12 minutes.

Method of Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using means, standard deviations, percentages, and rank ordering to answer Research Questions 1 and 2, and an independent-samples t-test to answer Research Question 3 and test H01 and H02, using IBM SPSS Statistics v27 for analysis. Section mean scores of 1.00-2.49 are classified as Low, 2.50-3.49 as Moderate, and 3.50-5.00 as High.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the LFS management before data collection. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. No identifying information was collected on the questionnaire, and all data were stored securely.

Results

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 105 respondents. Most respondents were female (80.0%) and full-time (66.7%), with the largest age band being 20-30 years (43.8%) and the largest qualification band a first degree, B.Ed. or B.Sc. (41.9%).

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Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 105)

Variable	Category	n	%
Employment Type	Full-time	70	66.7
	Part-time	35	33.3
Gender	Male	21	20.0
	Female	84	80.0
Age Range	20-30	46	43.8
	31-40	36	34.3
	41-50	19	18.1
	51+	4	3.8
Highest Qualification	NCE	38	36.2
	B.Ed / B.Sc	44	41.9
	M.Ed	17	16.2
	Others	6	5.7
Years in School	Less than 1 yr	26	24.8
	1-3 yrs	36	34.3
	4-6 yrs	23	21.9
	7 yrs+	20	19.0

Research Question 1: What is the level of workplace happiness among teachers?

The overall mean happiness score was 3.75 (SD = 0.47) on the 5-point scale, classified as High. The intrinsic-satisfaction sub-scale (M = 3.87) was rated higher than the extrinsic-satisfaction sub-scale (M = 3.51), a gap driven mainly by one item. Table 2 ranks the twenty happiness items. "Opportunity to be of service to pupils/community" (M = 4.08) and "Job security and steady employment" (M = 4.01) were rated highest, while "My salary compared to workload" (M = 2.88) was rated lowest and was the only item to fall in the Moderate rather than High range.

Table 2: Section B (Workplace Happiness) Items Ranked by Mean Score (n = 105)

Rank	Item	M	SD	Level
1	Opportunity to be of service to pupils/community	4.08	0.73	High
2	Job security and steady employment	4.01	0.74	High
3	Opportunity to help other teachers/pupils	3.94	0.81	High
4	Feeling of accomplishment from the job	3.92	0.76	High
5	Opportunity to use my own skills and abilities	3.91	0.77	High
6	Opportunity to do things that do not go against my conscience	3.90	0.71	High
7	Freedom to use my own judgment	3.87	0.79	High
8	Teamwork and relationship among colleagues	3.84	0.61	High
9	Opportunity to do different things from time to time	3.82	0.69	High
10	How my supervisor relates with staff	3.81	0.74	High
11	Opportunity to try my own teaching methods	3.79	0.84	High

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Rank	Item	M	SD	Level
12	Opportunity to work independently	3.76	0.77	High
13	Opportunity to guide others on what to do	3.75	0.85	High
14	Being able to keep busy all the time	3.74	0.80	High
15	The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	3.74	0.76	High
16	Working conditions (classroom/environment/resources)	3.66	0.84	High
17	How school policies are implemented	3.60	0.77	High
18	Praise and recognition for good work done	3.59	0.86	High
19	Opportunity for promotion and growth	3.42	0.73	Moderate
20	My salary compared to workload	2.88	0.70	Moderate

Research Question 2: What is the level of organizational commitment among teachers?

The overall mean commitment score was 3.83 (SD = 0.32), classified as High, exceeding the 3.50 threshold the instrument's scoring guidance treats as the basis for a marketing claim of institutional pride. As shown in Table 3, "I am proud to tell others I work in this school" was rated highest (M = 4.08), while "I would be happy to work in this school till retirement" was rated lowest (M = 3.47), the only commitment item below the High threshold.

Table 3: Section C (Organizational Commitment) Items Ranked by Mean Score (n = 105)

Rank	Item	M	SD	Level
1	I am proud to tell others I work in this school	4.08	0.36	High
2	I feel emotionally attached to this school	3.92	0.38	High
3	I feel a strong sense of belonging to this school	3.92	0.41	High
4	This school has great personal meaning to me	3.86	0.43	High
5	I feel this school's problems are my own problems	3.74	0.52	High
6	I would be happy to work in this school till retirement	3.47	0.50	Moderate

Research Question 3 / H01 and H02: Do full-time and part-time teachers differ in happiness and commitment?

Table 4 presents the independent-samples t-test comparing full-time and part-time teachers. For workplace happiness, full-time teachers (M = 3.73, SD = 0.50) and part-time teachers (M = 3.79, SD = 0.41) did not differ significantly, t(81.2) = -0.70, p = .483; H01 was therefore retained. For organizational commitment, full-time teachers (M = 3.89, SD = 0.31) scored significantly higher than part-time teachers (M = 3.71, SD = 0.30), t(69.5) = 2.80, p = .007, d = 0.59; H02 was therefore rejected.

Table 4: Independent-Samples t-test Comparing Full-Time and Part-Time Teachers on Happiness and Commitment (n = 105)

Variable	Employment Type	n	M	SD	t	df	p	d
Workplace Happiness	Full-time	70	3.73	0.50	-0.70	81.2	.483	-
	Part-time	35	3.79	0.41				
Organizational Commitment	Full-time	70	3.89	0.31	2.80	69.5	.007*	0.59

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Variable	Employment Type	n	M	SD	t	df	p	d
	Part-time	35	3.71	0.30				

*p < .05 (two-tailed, Welch-adjusted degrees of freedom).

Summary of Findings

1. Workplace happiness among LFS teachers was High overall (M = 3.75), driven more by intrinsic than extrinsic factors. Salary relative to workload was the single weakest-rated aspect of the job (M = 2.88) and the only item in the Moderate range.
2. Organizational commitment was High overall (M = 3.83) and exceeded the threshold the instrument treats as a basis for a marketing claim. Institutional pride was the strongest-rated item (M = 4.08), while long-term retention intention (working till retirement) was the weakest (M = 3.47).
3. Full-time and part-time teachers did not differ significantly in workplace happiness, t(81.2) = -0.70, p = .483.
4. Full-time teachers reported significantly higher organizational commitment than part-time teachers, t(69.5) = 2.80, p = .007, d = 0.59 (moderate effect).

Workplace Happiness: Intrinsic Drivers and the Salary Gap

The finding of generally high workplace happiness, concentrated in intrinsic rather than extrinsic items, is consistent with Self-Determination Theory's prediction that autonomy, competence, and relatedness-supporting conditions, such as freedom to use one's own judgment and strong collegial relationships, sustain well-being even where extrinsic conditions are weaker (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It also echoes Bayraktar and Girgin's (2020) finding that teachers' organizational happiness is shaped more by relational and autonomy-related conditions than by pay alone, and Hasanati and Istiqomah's (2024) demographic profiling of teacher happiness, which similarly found satisfaction concentrated in the intrinsic aspects of the role.

The single weak spot; salary relative to workload—is squarely in line with the Nigerian literature. Ladebo (2005) and Korb and Akintunde (2013) both identify remuneration as one of the most consistently dissatisfying aspects of teaching in Nigeria, private-school teachers included. More recent research has found that private school teachers are simultaneously "underpaid and overworked," with excessive workloads and inadequate compensation contributing to high turnover intentions (Ojo et al., 2025). The broader national context of a "japa"-syndrome-driven exodus of teachers seeking better pay abroad (Bodunde, 2024; Adamu, 2026) gives this finding practical urgency. In this context, the "underpaid and overworked" characterization of private school teachers (Ojo et al., 2025, p. 1) appears to apply to LFS as well, even though other aspects of the work experience are rated positively. This pattern is consistent with the broader finding that Nigerian teachers often report satisfaction with intrinsic aspects of their work while expressing dissatisfaction with extrinsic rewards (Adelabu, 2005; Korb & Akintunde, 2013).

The intrinsic items receiving the highest ratings—opportunity to be of service to pupils, job security, and opportunity to help others—suggest that LFS teachers derive meaning from their work despite compensation concerns. This finding is consistent with research suggesting that affective commitment is fundamentally emotional in nature and that teachers who identify with

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the vision, goals, and values of their schools often remain committed irrespective of workplace difficulties (Adamu, 2026). Many teachers perceive teaching not merely as employment but as a calling and a moral responsibility toward society (Adamu, 2026). The emphasis on service and helping others in the highest-rated items underscores the moral and vocational dimensions of teaching in this context.

Organizational Commitment: Institutional Pride vs. Retention Intention

The high level of organizational commitment, and specifically the very high rating given to institutional pride, is consistent with Organizational Support Theory's account of how perceived organizational support obliges a reciprocal emotional attachment to the institution (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Meyer & Allen, 1991). It also mirrors Balcı & Yılmaz's, (2025) finding of a close relationship between professional commitment and organizational happiness, and is broadly in agreement with Ladebo's (2005) finding that Nigerian teachers in supportive school environments report meaningfully high commitment. Research on private school teachers has found that emotional attachment, institutional identity, and professional values may influence teachers' commitment levels more than workload conditions alone (Adamu, 2026). This appears to be the case at LFS, where teachers continue to demonstrate emotional loyalty and attachment despite some dissatisfaction with compensation.

The comparatively lower rating for "happy to work till retirement"—the only commitment item to dip below the High threshold—is worth flagging for LFS management. It suggests that while current attachment and pride are strong, long-horizon retention intention is somewhat more fragile. This pattern is consistent with the general finding that resources and incentives, not just goodwill, are what sustain teacher retention over time in private Nigerian schools (Obono & Odey, 2025). As Adamu (2026, p. 1) put it, teachers may "love teaching, but not like this," a sentiment that captures the tension between passion for the profession and dissatisfaction with working conditions. The lower retirement intention item may also reflect the broader "japa" phenomenon, where even committed teachers consider relocation abroad or to other sectors for better pay and working conditions.

The strong institutional pride rating is a positive finding for NAPPS accreditation and marketing purposes. It suggests that LFS has successfully cultivated an organizational identity with which teachers identify. However, the gap between pride and long-term retention intention suggests that emotional attachment alone may not be sufficient to retain teachers over the long term. This finding echoes research suggesting that affective commitment may be sustained through organizational culture, interpersonal relationships, and professional identity, but that reducing excessive workload remains important for promoting teacher wellbeing and sustaining institutional productivity (Adamu, 2026; Ojo et al., 2025).

Employment Status and Differential Commitment

The absence of a significant difference in happiness between full-time and part-time teachers, alongside a significant and meaningful difference in commitment favouring full-time staff, is a theoretically coherent pattern rather than a contradiction. Day-to-day happiness, on the Self-Determination Theory account, depends on the immediate experience of the work itself—

autonomy, relationships, a sense of service—which part-time teachers can access just as fully as full-time staff during the hours they are present (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This finding is consistent with research suggesting that role overload does not significantly influence affective commitment among teachers, as emotional commitment may be influenced more by intrinsic motivation, institutional identity, and professional values than by workload conditions alone (Agu et al., 2024; Adamu, 2026).

Affective commitment, by contrast, accumulates over sustained organizational membership and reciprocal exchange (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Meyer & Allen, 1991), so it is unsurprising that teachers with a more marginal, less continuous relationship to the institution report somewhat weaker attachment even when they enjoy the work itself. This interpretation aligns with Organizational Support Theory's account of commitment development: employees who perceive organizational support over a longer period, and who have more opportunities to reciprocate, develop stronger emotional attachments (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Full-time teachers have more sustained exposure to organizational culture, more opportunities to build relationships with colleagues, and greater investment in the institution's success. Part-time teachers, while experiencing the same positive day-to-day conditions, have less opportunity to develop the same depth of attachment.

This distinction is important for LFS: it suggests that part-time teachers are not an unhappy segment of the workforce, but they are a less institutionally bonded one. This is consistent with research on the three types of teacher commitment: commitment to teaching, commitment to students, and commitment to the organization (Adamu, 2026). Part-time teachers may be just as committed to teaching and to students as full-time teachers, but they may not have developed the same organizational commitment, as this type of commitment indicates loyalty to the school workplace and identification with its values and goals. If the school wishes to convert part-time staff into longer-term, more committed contributors, the relevant lever is likely to be continuity and integration (for example, clearer pathways from part-time to full-time status) rather than day-to-day working conditions, which are already comparably positive across both groups.

Implications for Practice

The findings have several practical implications for LFS and similar private schools:

Addressing the salary-workload gap: Given that salary relative to workload was the weakest-rated aspect of happiness ($M = 2.88$), management should review workload allocation and explore incremental ways of narrowing the perceived gap. Non-cash interventions could include transparent workload-linked bonuses, reduced non-teaching duties, priority access to professional development, or increased input into curriculum decisions. While systemic salary reform may be constrained by tuition income, smaller interventions can address teachers' sense of being fairly compensated for effort (Ojo et al., 2025).

Strengthening part-time teacher commitment: The significantly lower commitment reported by part-time teachers suggests a need for structured pathways from part-time to full-time engagement. Management should consider greater inclusion of part-time staff in school-wide culture-building activities, opportunities for professional development, and regular feedback mechanisms to strengthen their institutional attachment over time. As research on teacher

commitment suggests, commitment may be altered by the design and management of tasks and work circumstances (Adamu, 2026; Nick-Akan et al., 2024; Nir, 2002). Creating more inclusive environments for part-time teachers could foster greater organizational identification.

Monitoring retention intention: The one weak commitment item—willingness to stay till retirement—should be monitored as an early-warning indicator of long-term attrition risk, separate from the generally strong pride and belonging scores. Regular staff surveys could track this indicator and allow management to intervene before turnover becomes a problem (Obono & Odey, 2025).

Leveraging pride for marketing and accreditation: The high overall commitment score gives LFS a defensible, evidence-based figure to draw on for NAPPS accreditation and admissions marketing. A verified figure on staff commitment offers parents something more substantial than a general assurance of staff quality.

Conclusion

This case study suggests that Little Flower School's teaching staff report a generally happy and, on balance, strongly committed workforce, with the clearest area for improvement being remuneration relative to workload rather than the relational or purpose-driven aspects of the job that Self-Determination Theory identifies as central to well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The comparison between full-time and part-time staff indicates that employment status does not meaningfully affect how happy teachers feel in the role but does affect how attached they become to the institution. This pattern is consistent with an Organizational Support Theory account in which commitment is built through sustained, reciprocal organizational membership rather than through the immediate work experience alone (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The high overall commitment score also gives LFS a defensible, evidence-based figure to draw on for NAPPS accreditation and admissions marketing. However, the "underpaid and overworked" characterization that has been documented in other Nigerian private schools (Ojo et al., 2025) appears to apply to LFS as well, suggesting that addressing the salary-workload gap should be a priority for management.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

1. **Address the salary-workload gap:** Because salary relative to workload was the weakest-rated aspect of happiness (M = 2.88), management should review workload allocation and explore incremental, even non-cash, ways of narrowing the perceived gap. Non-cash interventions could include transparent workload-linked bonuses, reduced non-teaching duties, priority access to professional development, or increased input into curriculum decisions.
2. **Strengthen part-time teacher commitment:** Given the significantly lower commitment reported by part-time teachers (d = 0.59, moderate effect), management should consider structured pathways from part-time to full-time engagement, and greater inclusion of part-time staff in school-wide culture-building activities, to strengthen their institutional attachment over time.

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3. **Monitor long-term retention intention:** The one weak commitment item—willingness to stay till retirement—should be monitored as an early-warning indicator of long-term attrition risk, separate from the generally strong pride and belonging scores. Regular staff surveys could track this indicator.
4. **Leverage commitment for accreditation and marketing:** The high organizational commitment score (M = 3.83) can serve as an evidence-based figure for NAPPS accreditation, quality assurance documentation, and admissions marketing, providing parents with a verified measure of staff engagement.

Limitations

As a single-institution case study, the findings describe LFS specifically and should be generalised to other private primary schools with caution. The unique characteristics of LFS—including its "Integral Education" model, its location in Uyo, and its specific staffing structure—may limit the applicability of findings to other contexts. Additionally, because Section D's open-ended testimonial item and the self-report survey are subject to social-desirability bias, respondents may have overreported positive attitudes. Future research could address this limitation through observational measures or interviews. Finally, the cross-sectional design of the study means that causal relationships between variables cannot be established; future research using longitudinal designs could examine how changes in compensation or working conditions affect happiness and commitment over time.

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