



**LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CONTRACTUAL ENGLISH TEACHERS
IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES: BASES FOR
INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of contractual English teachers in private universities in Iloilo City to serve as a basis for a proposed intervention program. Using a qualitative design, the researcher conducted in-depth Key Informant Interviews (KII) with six (6) participants. The findings revealed teachers experience fulfillment in teaching and find opportunities for professional growth; however, they face significant uncertainty due to their employment status. Key challenges were categorized into instructional, administrative, and financial concerns. To manage these, teachers employed various instructional strategies, professional and collaborative practices, and financial coping mechanisms. Based on these findings, the study proposed an intervention program aimed at enhancing teacher fulfillment, strengthening professional competencies, and improving working conditions, institutional support, and financial stability. Ultimately, the study underscores the need for responsive programs to promote teacher well-being, improve educational quality, and enhance institutional effectiveness.

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Keywords: *Contractual English Teachers, Experiences, Private Universities, Intervention*

Program

INTRODUCTION

A well supported teaching force is crucial for fostering quality education (UNESCO, 2024). Particularly, English teachers play an important role in universities, as proficiency in the field is often linked to success in academics, employment, and global competence (Santos et. al., 2022). As English language functions as medium of instruction in Philippine higher education, the quality of teaching English has an impactful role in institutional outcomes and educational goals (Sasaninia, 2025). However, despite the important role that teachers have, their employment conditions remain uncertain due to the increasing reliance on contractual or “part-time” employment in higher educational institutions (Saquin, 2025). Contractual employment is a fixed-term appointment which encompasses limited benefits and lack of tenure, contrary to regular employment which typically offers job security and advancement in professional careers (Solomon & Du Plessis, 2023). Contractualization has long been a subject of debate because of its implications on the rights of the workers, their economic stability, and wellbeing (Villena, 2021). Studies show that contractual teachers frequently suffer job insecurity, unstable finances, limited opportunity for professional growth, and feelings of being marginalized in academic institutions (Saquin, 2025; Ferrer & Canape, 2025; Solomon & Du Plessis, 2023). These conditions can potentially impact the motivation, instructional efficiency, and professional identity of English teachers.

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In the Philippines, studies on the employment of teachers have identified contractual teaching as a predominant practice in both private and public higher educational institutions, specifically in the field of language and general education (Ferrer & Canape, 2025). Studies focusing on contractual teachers in the Philippine universities reveal that there are persistent concerns regarding “contract renewal”, imbalance workloads, and exclusion from important decision-making processes, despite doing the same job to those of regular teachers (Saquin, 2025). However, existing literature relies on quantitative analyses, leaving a research gap for the narratives and experiences of teachers themselves. Phenomenological approaches offer a valuable perspective for addressing this gap, as it focuses on the experiences of individuals and the meanings they assign to their work conditions. It seeks to understand how people undergo a phenomenon, such as contractual and regular employment, within their specific and institutional contexts (Cresswell, 2009). Through engaging with teachers in in-depth key informant interviews, qualitative studies can highlight the emotional, psychological, and professional aspects of employment structures that are often overlooked in policy discussions.

In Iloilo City, there remains a scarcity of qualitative research examining how contractual English teachers experience their employment conditions, and how these circumstances shape their professional identities, practices, and perceptions of institutional fairness. Furthermore, there is a limited study that explicitly connects the lived experiences of English teachers to intervention programs.

To address this gap, this study explored the lived experiences of contractual English teachers through a phenomenological inquiry using thematic analysis to determine recurring

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patterns. Importantly, this study translated the findings into meaningful intervention programs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants in the study, sampling design, data-gathering procedures, research instruments, and data analysis used in the study.

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research method using the researcher-made in-depth interview guide to examine contractual teachers' experiences, challenges, and the coping strategies they used in private universities.

According to Alhazmi & Kaufmann (2022), qualitative studies, specifically phenomenological approaches through in-depth key informant interviews, offer a valuable perspective in understanding how people undergo a phenomenon within their specific and institutional contexts.

Thus, having a close interview with each participant of this study is most suitable and effective in addressing the questions that this study seeks to answer regarding the lived experiences of contractual teachers in private universities.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically phenomenology, in exploring the experiences of contractual English teachers in private universities in Iloilo City.

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Phenomenology is appropriate in this study because it allows an in-depth understanding of how individuals perceive, experience, and make meaning of their employment conditions within their institutional contexts (McLeod, 2024).

Data were gathered through in-depth Key Informant Interviews (KII) using semi-structured interview questions. This method enabled the researcher to guide the discussion while allowing participants to freely articulate their personal narratives, perceptions, and reflections regarding their employment status (Kibuacha, 2024).

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were six (6) contractual English teachers in three (3) private universities where each university is represented by two (2) contractual-teacher participants in Iloilo City during School Year 2025-2026.

All six participants were required to have at least one (1) year of teaching experience in their respective universities to guarantee that they have sufficient familiarity with institutional policies, academic responsibilities, and professional conditions to provide meaningful insights into their employment experiences. The selection criteria focus specifically on English teachers, as they play an important role in higher education and serve as key indicators of instructional quality and institutional outcomes.

Participation is voluntary, and all participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their participation, and their right to withdraw anytime. This is to ensure ethical compliance and encourages openness and honesty in sharing their

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narratives during the interview. To ensure confidentiality, the participants of the study were referred to as Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling was used to deliberately select the participants of the study who could provide contextually relevant information into the phenomenon of interest, ensuring that they can provide insights that align with the research objectives, a prevalent practice in qualitative research. Furthermore, purposive sampling is a foundational strategy in selecting participants based on their ability to contribute meaningful insights to the research questions (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024).

Research Instrument

The primary instrument for this study was an in-depth interview guide designed to facilitate the Key Informant Interview (KII) with the selected English teachers. This instrument allows the researcher to pose pre-determined, open-ended questions while providing flexibility to probe further into participants' narratives, enabling the capture of rich, detailed narratives about their lived experiences as contractual English teachers.

The interview questions are designed to explore multiple dimensions of employment, including job security, workload, professional recognition, institutional participation, career development, and personal perceptions of stability and precarity. The questions are structured to encourage participants to reflect on their experiences, provide examples, and discuss the meanings they assign to their professional conditions, which aligns with the phenomenological approach of understanding lived experiences (Cresswell, 2009 & McLeod, 2024).

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Validity of the Research Instrument

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the in-depth interview guide was reviewed and validated by experts in the field of English language teaching and educational research. This validation process assessed the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of each question to ensure that it elicits meaningful responses from the participants (Elangovan & Sundaravel, 2021)

Responses of the participants were gathered, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using thematic analysis, which identified patterns, themes, and insights across the narratives of the teachers. The resulting themes subsequently provided a structured basis in developing an evidence-based intervention program that addresses employment conditions and support mechanisms for English teachers.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data gathering procedure started with the preparation of the instruments and necessary documents. The in-depth interview guide was carefully drafted to explore participants' experiences regarding employment stability, workload, professional recognition, career development, and institutional engagement. The instrument was validated by experts in English teaching and research methodology to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. Additionally, necessary documents including consent forms and information sheets, were prepared to inform participants about the purpose, procedure, voluntary nature, and confidentiality protocols of the study.

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The second step was the selection of participants. Six (6) contractual English teachers from 3 universities in Iloilo City were purposely selected, with 2 participants from each university.

The final step was the conduct of interviews. Participants were contacted individually to schedule interviews at a convenient time and had the option for face-to-face or online interviews, each lasting approximately 30-60 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent to ensure accuracy. During the interviews, participants were encouraged to share detailed narratives and reflections on their experiences as contractual English teachers. The researcher probed for clarifications or elaborations to capture an in-depth account of the participants' experiences.

Data Analyses

The data gathered from in-depth Key Informant Interviews were analyzed using Braun & Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis, which involves identifying, examining, and interpreting recurring patterns, concepts, and themes within participants' narratives. The audio-recorded interviews were first transcribed verbatim to ensure that the participants' exact words and expressions were noted. The researcher carefully reviewed the transcripts multiple times to ensure a deep understanding of the lived experiences of contractual English teachers, highlighting the nuances of their perceptions regarding employment stability, professional recognition, workload, and career development.

Through coding and categorization, significant statements and phrases were organized into emergent themes that captured the essence of participants' lived experiences. These themes

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were synthesized to identify commonalities and contrasts in the experiences of participants.

Finally, the analyzed themes mapped how the observed experiences and challenges of contractual English teachers informed an evidence-based intervention program aimed at improving employment conditions, institutional support, and overall instructional quality in higher education institutions. This approach ensured that the qualitative findings were systematically translated into actionable strategies that address both teacher welfare and organizational improvement in their conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to explore the lived experiences of contractual English teachers in selected private universities in Iloilo City.

The participants in the study were six (6) contractual English teachers, with two (2) participants from each selected private university in Iloilo City. They were chosen through purposive sampling and had at least one (1) year of teaching experience in their respective institutions.

The study used a researcher-made in-depth Interview guide under the qualitative research method, specifically phenomenology. A researcher-made in-depth interview question was used to obtain necessary and relevant information. The instrument was subjected to content and face validation by experts and was found to be valid and appropriate for use. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze and interpret the responses of the participants.

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The following were the findings of the study:

The lived experiences and challenges encountered by contractual English teachers were the following: (1) Fulfillment in teaching, (2) Professional growth, (3) Presence of uncertainty, (4) Pedagogical demands, (5) Administrative tasks' compliance, and (6) Financial Constraints.

The coping strategies used by contractual English teachers were the following: (1) Varied instructional strategies, (2) Professional and collaborative practices, and (3) Financial coping mechanisms.

Based on the results of the study, an intervention program entitled "Enhancing Fulfillment, Professional Growth, and Stability for Contractual English Teachers" was developed. This program aims to support contractual English teachers in addressing the challenges they encounter while strengthening their teaching practices, professional development, and financial coping strategies. It focuses on providing structured support through professional development activities, mentorship, collaborative practices, and financial guidance to enhance teacher motivation, resilience, and overall teaching effectiveness.

Conclusions

Contractual English teachers are encouraged to participate in the proposed intervention program, "Empowering Contractual English Teachers: Enhancing Fulfillment, Professional Growth, and Stability". By applying strategies such as creative lesson planning, differentiated instruction, and reflective teaching, teachers can enhance student engagement

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and learning outcomes. Additionally, teachers may strengthen professional and collaborative practices through mentorship, peer-sharing, and consultation with subject-matter experts, while employing financial coping strategies to manage income gaps during unpaid periods.

Universities and private higher education institutions should provide structured support for contractual English teachers, including access to professional development programs, instructional resources, mentorship opportunities, and collaborative learning communities. Fair compensation, equitable workload distribution, and policies minimizing unpaid work periods are essential to sustain motivation, improve instructional quality, and promote professional growth among non-permanent faculty.

Department heads and program coordinators should facilitate the implementation of the intervention program by encouraging teacher participation, providing access to resources, and promoting collaborative learning and reflective teaching practices. Supportive guidance from leadership can empower teachers to overcome instructional and professional challenges while maintaining high teaching standards.

Department of Labor and Employment officials are recommended to monitor and support fair labor practices for contractual faculty in private universities. Ensuring timely compensation, protection of employment rights, and collaboration with higher education institutions can help reduce economic vulnerability, improve wellbeing, and promote the retention of qualified teachers.

The proposed intervention program shall be implemented by the institution and actively participated by contractual English teachers. The adoption of this program is essential

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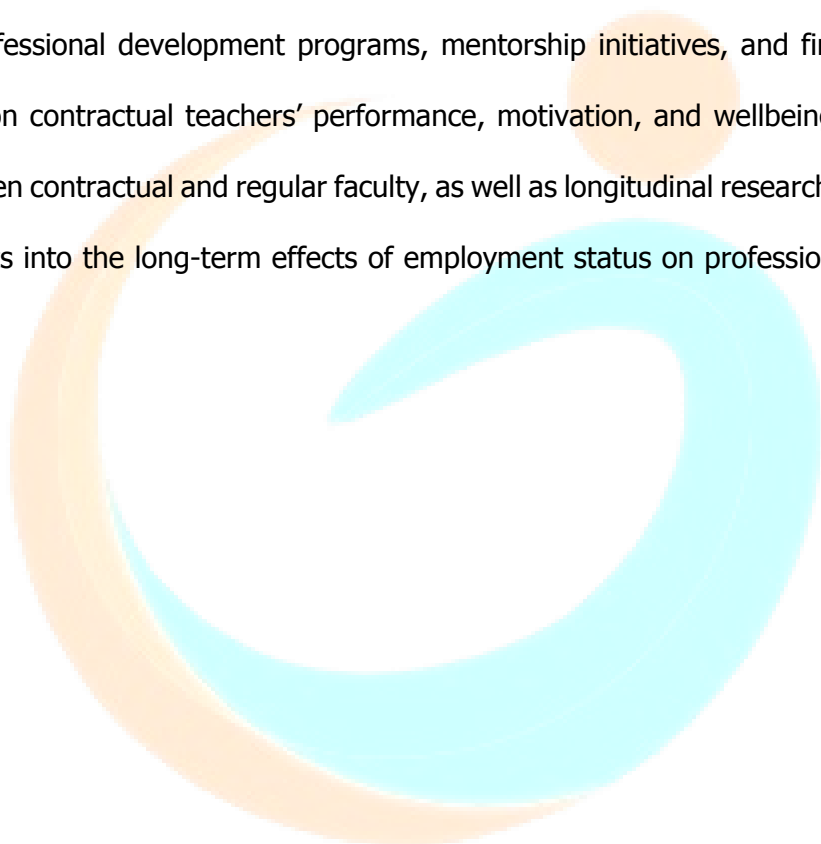
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to address the identified challenges, enhance professional growth, and promote overall teacher well-being. Active participation will ensure that teachers fully benefit from the support mechanisms provided, thereby improving their instructional effectiveness, job satisfaction, and capacity to cope with the demands of contractual employment.

Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to expand on this study by examining the impact of professional development programs, mentorship initiatives, and financial support mechanisms on contractual teachers' performance, motivation, and wellbeing. Comparative studies between contractual and regular faculty, as well as longitudinal research, could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of employment status on professional growth and retention.



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