# **Methodology**

This exploratory qualitative study adopted a transcendental phenomenological design (see Moustakas, 1994) to investigate factors contributing to university level English language teacher commitment to the ELT profession as well as their commitment to their place of employment. In line with Creswell and Poth (2017) and Moustakas (1994), a transcendental phenomenological approach was specifically taken to gain a fresh perspective of factors positively and negatively contributing to occupational and organizational commitment by setting aside the researchers’ experiences and drawing from the lived experiences of the participants in this study.

## **Participants**

In order to access ‘knowledgeable people’ (Cohen et al., 2018), this study used purposive convenience sampling to recruit a total of 10 English language teachers with a minimum of 5 years of experience in the field of ELT and a minimum of 2 years of experience teaching English at a Saudi Arabian university. The rationale for setting this criterion was to ensure participants possessed adequate experience which they could draw from to discuss factors relating to their occupational and organizational commitment. The three female and seven male participants were contacted through email and provided voluntary consent prior to data collection. To avoid potential misunderstanding or communicative breakdowns in the interview process, participants that were identified by the researchers as having a CEFR speaking and listening level of B2 or higher (Council of Europe, 2022) were asked to participate in this study. Further participant details are presented in the following table.

Table 1

*Participant Information*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Participant Number** | **Years in the Field** | **Positions Held to Date** | **University Position Held** | **Nationality** | **Gender** |
| 1 | 5 | * English Instructor * Coordinator | * English Instructor * Coordinator | Saudi | Male |
| 4 | 5 | * English Instructor | * English Instructor | Saudi | Male |
| 5 | 7 | * English Instructor | * English Instructor | Syrian | Female |
| 6 | 10 | * English Instructor | * English Instructor | Saudi | Female |
| 2 | 18 | * English Instructor | * English Instructor | Pakistani | Female |
| 3 | 18 | * ELT instructor * Coordinator | * English Instructor | Pakistani | Male |
| 7 | 20 | * English Instructor * Lecturer | * English Instructor | Sudanese | Male |
| 8 | 21 | * English Instructor | * English Instructor | Sudanese | Male |
| 9 | 27 | * English Instructor * Lecturer | * English Instructor | Sudanese | Male |
| 10 | 30 | * English Instructor * Lecturer | * English Instructor | Sudanese | Male |

## **Data Collection**

Data for this study were collected through one-on-one qualitative semi-structured life-world interviews which focus eliciting participants’ perspectives on an issue drawn from their lived experiences (see Kvale, 2008). In accordance with Lune and Berg (2016), semi-structured interviews were strategically chosen as the collection strategy to allow the researcher to flexibly explore the lived experiences of the participants and probe beyond prepared questions to elicit rich data (Geertz, 1973) in line with the study’s research questions. Following the collection of participants’ signed informed consent forms, interviews were arranged through email and conducted online through Zoom. In respecting participants’ privacy and culture (see Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2022), they were free to choose whether to keep their camera off or turn their camera on for the interview. The interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes and were audio recorded on the primary researcher’s computer using input-output audio recording software. As the primary researcher and the participants did not share the same L1, English was used as the medium of communication for the interviews.

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis began with data immersion in which the researchers listened to the interviews multiple times to become familiar with the dataset. Interviews were then transcribed verbatim in a high-level of detail (see Tracy, 2019) by one of the study’s co-researchers and double-checked for accuracy and completion by the primary researcher to ensure reliability (see Kvale, 1996). Transcripts were then entered into NVIVO 12 qualitative data analysis software for coding. In the first cycle of coding (Tracy, 2019), inductive descriptive coding procedures were employed (Saldaña, 2021) in which the descriptions emerged from the data and no pre-existing framework was used. This involved one of the co-researchers examining the transcripts, reducing the data by identifying and labelling the information relevant to this study’s research questions, and combining responses with similarities into general descriptive categories. Data coded under the main categories of *Occupational Commitment*, and *Organizational Commitment* with each main category containing the following subheadings *Positive Contributing Factors, Negative Contributing Factors*. To ensure reliability in the initial descriptive codes and coded interview excerpts were cross-examined by the primary researcher to establish intercoder reliability (see Miles & Huberman, 1994; O’Connor et al., 2020) . This involved the primary researcher analysing the initial coding set and flagging any codes that they were in disagreement with (10%< disagreement on 100% of the codes). A meeting was then held between the initial coder and primary researcher to discuss minor discrepancies in the coding and to come to a final consensus on the descriptive labelling that resulted in full agreement. All changes were then made by the primary researcher prior to the commencement of secondary cycle coding. First cycle coding resulted in a total of 61 codes under factors positively affecting occupational commitment, 32 codes under factors negatively affecting occupational commitment, 74 codes under factors positively affecting organizational commitment, and 46 codes under factors negatively affecting organizational commitment.

In secondary-cycle coding, initial descriptive codes were synthesized (Tracy, 2019) to generate ‘focused’ codes (Saldaña, 2021) that thematically represent the positive and negative factors affecting the participants’ occupational and organizational commitment. This entailed the primary researcher cross-analysing the codes and excerpts from the first cycle coding set and identifying commonalities and trends. Codes with similar characteristics were reorganized into categories and relabelled to reflect the overarching theme of the coded data. The final themes to emerge under each of the subthemes of factors affecting occupational and organizational commitment were *Personal Factors*, *Environmental Factors*, and *Student-related Factors*. The following sections present the findings of this study under the emergent thematic headings and subheadings.