

Delving on Primary Grade Teachers' Approaches to Storytelling as a Tool for Literacy Development

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Abstract. This qualitative study explored primary grade teachers' approaches to storytelling as a tool for literacy development in the elementary schools of Lupon West District, Division of Davao Oriental. The study aimed to understand how storytelling is employed by teachers to enhance literacy skills in young learners. A purposive sample of ten primary grade teachers participated in the study, with data collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that teachers' experiences in using storytelling approach for literacy development promoted learner-centered instruction, built teachers' confidence and creativity in storytelling and valued the impact of storytelling on emergent literacy skills. To overcome challenges while using storytelling approach, teachers implemented effective storytelling sessions, planned strategic integration of storytelling and integrated observational rubrics and follow-up literacy tasks. This study contributes valuable insights into the integration of storytelling into early literacy education, demonstrating its potential to enhance language and comprehension skills, support socio-emotional learning and learner engagement and create opportunities for multi-sensory and differentiated learning. The results also provide implications for teacher training and educational practices, emphasizing the importance of incorporating storytelling into primary education to support holistic literacy development.

KEY WORDS

1. primary grade teachers 2. approaches 3. storytelling

Date Received: April 05, 2025 — Date Reviewed: May 15, 2025 — Date Published: June 18, 2025

1. Introduction

As a teacher who deeply values meaningful learning experiences, I have always been drawn to the power of storytelling in the classroom. Storytelling is not just a way to entertain. It is a natural, engaging method of communication that captures young learners' attention, sparks their imagination, and strengthens their reading, writing, and listening skills. However, despite its known benefits, I have observed that storytelling is often underutilized or inconsistently applied in primary grade classrooms. This gap between its potential and actual classroom prac-

tice inspired me to pursue this study. There is a clear need to explore how storytelling can be used more effectively to enhance early literacy. By conducting this research, I hope to shed light on how storytelling strategies can be optimized to support the literacy development of young learners. This study aimed to offer practical insights for fellow primary school teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers. Understanding how to apply storytelling in more intentional and impactful ways could make a real difference in how we engage children in

learning and in how we improve their literacy outcomes, especially in the critical early years of education. In countries like United States, Canada, and Australia, there is a challenge of ensuring that storytelling reflects the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. Stories often lack representation of minority cultures, which can limit students' connection to the material and their motivation to engage with literacy activities (Kim Kullman, 2021). In countries with multicultural populations, the need for culturally responsive storytelling is increasingly recognized, but gaps in resources and teacher training persist. Another significant gap is the lack of comprehensive training for teachers in effectively using storytelling to foster literacy. While storytelling is widely acknowledged as a valuable tool, many teachers in UK and South Africa report limited access to professional development that equips them with the necessary skills for integrating storytelling into literacy instruction (Morris Slater, 2022). As a result, some educators may not be able to fully leverage storytelling to support literacy development. In regions such as Europe and Asia, there is growing interest in integrating digital storytelling into literacy curricula. However, there are gaps in how well technology is being utilized. Research from Japan and Finland shows that while digital storytelling tools have potential, their implementation is uneven across schools due to disparities in access to digital resources and varying levels of teacher digital literacy (Yamada Hirata, 2020; Lappalainen, 2022). This limits the effectiveness of digital storytelling in promoting literacy. In the Philippines, the use of storytelling as a tool for literacy development in primary grades faces several gaps and challenges. These issues are often linked to the broader educational context, where disparities in resources, teacher training, and language diversity complicate effective implementation. While storytelling is recognized as a powerful pedagogical tool, many teachers

in the Philippines lack formal training in integrating it effectively into literacy instruction. Studies such as those by Alonzo Perez (2021) indicate that professional development opportunities focused on creative teaching methods, including storytelling, are inadequate. Teachers in remote areas, in particular, are more likely to report a lack of access to workshops or training on innovative literacy strategies, which hampers their ability to use storytelling to its full potential. Many public schools, especially in rural and underprivileged areas, face a shortage of storybooks, visual aids, and other storytelling resources. This issue was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as schools shifted to modular and distance learning, which made interactive and face-to-face storytelling sessions challenging. Without proper materials, teachers are limited in their ability to foster engagement and develop literacy through storytelling (Villaroman et al. ,2022), The potential of digital storytelling remains largely untapped in the Philippine primary education system. While some urban schools have begun exploring the use of technology in storytelling, there remains a significant digital divide between urban and rural areas. Access to digital tools and the internet is uneven, limiting the opportunities for integrating multimedia storytelling into literacy development programs, particularly in marginalized communities (Flores Mabunga ,2023) In Davao Oriental, the use of storytelling as a tool for literacy development in primary education faces distinct challenges that stem from various contextual and systemic factors. These gaps and issues are reflective of broader educational concerns in rural areas across the Philippines but are particularly pronounced in Davao Oriental due to its geographic, socio-economic, and cultural landscape. A significant challenge in implementing storytelling effectively in Davao Oriental is the lack of access to appropriate resources. Many rural schools lack libraries, storybooks, and other essential materials that can

support storytelling. Teachers in remote areas often resort to creating their own stories due to the absence of published storybooks, which can be time-consuming and limits the variety of narratives students are exposed to (Natividad Rico, 2022). Furthermore, considering all the existing issues, the research opted the need for targeted interventions, including the provision of resources, culturally relevant materials, and continuous professional development, to maximize the potential of storytelling as a tool for literacy development.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—The purpose of this study, grounded in phenomenological inquiry, was to explore and deeply understand the lived experiences of primary grade teachers who use storytelling as a teaching tool for literacy development. The phenomenological approach sought to capture the essence of these teachers' experiences by focusing on their perceptions, challenges, and successes in incorporating storytelling into their classroom practices. The study examined how teachers perceive the role of storytelling in fostering literacy skills, such as reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and critical thinking. It explored how they use storytelling to engage young learners and enhance their literacy journey. By engaging with teachers lived experiences, the study uncovers the methods and strategies they employ when using storytelling. It delved into how they select stories, adapt them to meet diverse student needs, and incorporate interactive elements to promote active learning. The findings of the study in terms of lived experiences of primary grade teachers, seeks to contribute valuable insights into the practical and theoretical aspects of storytelling as a pedagogical tool, offering implications for curriculum development, teacher training, and policy-making in literacy education. This research has the potential to benefit teachers, educators, curriculum planners, and policymakers, leading to more effective literacy instruction in primary education.

1.2. Research Questions—In line with the purpose of exploring the lived experiences including the coping mechanisms with the challenges that they encountered, this study specifically sought answers to the following research questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of primary grade teachers on using storytelling approach for literacy development?
- (2) How do teachers cope with the challenges using storytelling approach for literacy development?
- (3) What educational insights can be drawn from the study?

1.3. Definition of Terms—To fully understand the terms used in this study, the following were defined operationally: Storytelling. It can be defined operationally as a dynamic, interactive process that involves the use of spoken, written, or visual narratives to convey information, ideas, or emotions. In educational contexts, it refers specifically to the technique where a teacher or narrator presents a story in a manner that engages listeners actively, often prompting reflection, discussion, and the application of ideas. Literacy Development. It refers to the process through which individuals acquire and develop the necessary skills to read, write, and comprehend written texts, ultimately enhancing their ability to communicate, analyze, and interpret information. In early childhood and primary education, literacy development encompasses a range of foundational abilities, including phonemic awareness, vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and writing skills. As learners progress, literacy development also includes the ability to critically engage with texts, understand complex vocabulary, and apply their skills across various contexts.

1.4. Significant of the Study—Storytelling as a teaching tool can enhance students' engagement and outcomes, and to provide insights for educators and policymakers on effective instructional approaches in literacy development. This study may find significance to the following:

Learners Primary grade learners assume several key roles that actively contribute to their learning. As active listeners, they may focus on understanding the narrative, building their listening comprehension and vocabulary. As responders, students may engage with the story by asking questions, making predictions, and connecting the plot to their own experiences, which fosters critical thinking and deeper understanding. Additionally, learners may take on the role of storytellers, retelling or creating stories, which helps develop their oral language skills, creativity, and narrative abilities. Through these roles, students may actively participate in their literacy development, enhancing both their cognitive and linguistic skills. **Teachers** This is highly valuable for teachers, as it provides evidence-based insights into how narrative techniques can enhance students' reading, listening, speaking, and comprehension skills. By exploring various storytelling strategies, teachers can better understand which methods are most effective in improving language acquisition and critical thinking among learners. Additionally, this study can equip them with practical tools to create inclusive and supportive classroom environments where all students, regardless of learning style or background, can thrive in developing foundational literacy. The findings can guide curriculum enhancement, professional development, and instructional planning, helping teachers foster lifelong communication skills in their learners. **Parents** Parents play a crucial role in supporting storytelling as a teaching tool for literacy development in primary grade students. As active participants, parents may engage in reading stories aloud to their children, fostering a love for reading

and modeling fluent reading skills. They may also serve as encouragers, motivating their children to ask questions, make predictions, and discuss story themes, which strengthens comprehension and critical thinking. Through these supportive roles, parents may contribute significantly to the development of their children's literacy and language abilities. **School administrators** School administrators play a pivotal role in supporting storytelling as a teaching tool for literacy development in primary grades by ensuring that teachers have the necessary resources, training, and professional development opportunities. They may promote a literacy-focused school culture by encouraging the use of storytelling across the curriculum and providing access to diverse books and storytelling materials. Administrators may also have the responsibility to advocate for a supportive learning environment, where teachers feel empowered to incorporate storytelling techniques in their classrooms. **Department of Education** The Department of Education (DepEd) plays a critical role in promoting storytelling as a teaching tool for literacy development in primary grades by creating and implementing policies that support its integration into the curriculum. DepEd may provide guidelines and frameworks that encourage teachers to use storytelling effectively, highlighting its importance in building literacy skills such as vocabulary, comprehension, and creativity. DepEd can also offer training programs and resources to equip teachers with the necessary skills and materials to incorporate storytelling into their instruction. By fostering collaboration among schools and advocating for the inclusion of diverse, culturally relevant stories, the Department ensures that storytelling becomes a widespread and impactful tool for developing literacy across all primary grade classrooms. **Future Researchers** Future researchers have a vital role in advancing the understanding of storytelling as a teaching tool for literacy development in primary grades. Their respon-

sibilities include conducting empirical studies to explore the effectiveness of storytelling on various aspects of literacy, such as comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and critical think-

ing. Researchers may also examine the impact of storytelling across diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts, ensuring that findings are relevant to a wide range of educational settings.

1.5. Theoretical Lens—The theoretical framework for this study draws upon several educational and cognitive theories that support the integration of storytelling as a teaching tool to enhance literacy development in primary grade learners. The first key theory is Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural context in cognitive development. According to Vygotsky (1978), language is a central element in the development of higher-order thinking skills, and storytelling allows students to engage socially with both their peers and teachers, thus facilitating cognitive and linguistic growth. Vygotsky's idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is particularly relevant in this context, as storytelling activities can be scaffolded by teachers to provide appropriate challenges that are just beyond the student's current level of understanding but achievable with guidance. This is also supported by Bruner's Constructivist Theory which posits that learners actively construct their own understanding and meaning

through experiences and interaction with others (Bruner, 1996). As cited in the context of storytelling, students are encouraged to construct narratives, interpret stories, and share their own experiences, which enhances their literacy skills by making meaning through these interactions. Storytelling also promotes active engagement and critical thinking, as children are not passive recipients of information but active participants in the construction of stories and understanding. A third theoretical perspective is Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura (1977), which suggests that people learn from observing others, modeling behaviors, and through interactions with their social environment. Storytelling serves as a social activity where students can observe and model language use, narrative strategies, and emotional expressions through characters in stories. In addition, storytelling can provide a medium for peer learning, where students engage with each other's interpretations of stories, discuss themes, and reflect on moral lessons, thus enhancing their social and emotional literacy.

2. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in examining the various approaches to storytelling as a tool for literacy development among primary grade learners. It details the research design, the selection and characteristics of participants, data collection techniques, the role of the researcher, procedures for data analysis, measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, and ethical considerations observed throughout the study. This inquiry seeks to uncover meaningful insights into how storytelling strategies support literacy learning in early education, and the methods described in this chapter were carefully chosen and implemented to align with the study's purpose and objectives.

2.1. Philosophical Assumptions—

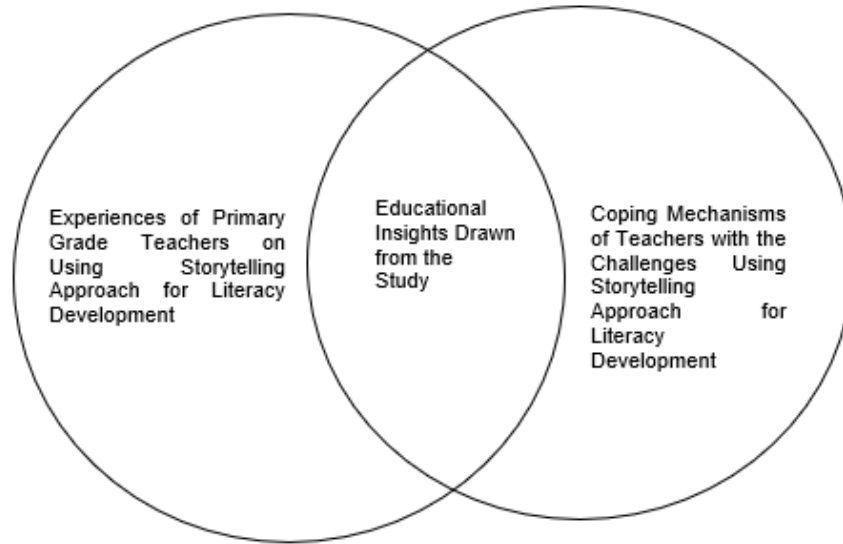


Fig. 1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The philosophical assumptions guiding this research provided the essential lens for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data regarding primary grade teachers' approaches to storytelling as a tool for literacy development. These core beliefs about reality, knowledge, values, and methodology shaped every facet of the research, ensuring alignment with the study's goal of deeply understanding how storytelling strategies contribute to young learners' literacy growth. Rooted firmly in the qualitative research paradigm, the study was shaped by key philosophical perspectives-ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological as outlined by Khalifa and Khalifa (2024). Throughout the process, I was consciously guided by beliefs about the nature of reality as experienced by teachers and learners, how knowledge about storytelling and literacy is constructed through lived experiences, the influence of researcher values on the study, and the appropriateness of qualitative methods for capturing authentic classroom practices. Ontology Ontological stance in this study was constructivist, acknowledging that the reality of primary grade teachers' approaches to storytelling for literacy development isn't a fixed, objective truth.

Instead, it's a dynamic reality, co-constructed through the lived experiences and perspectives of individual teachers. Drawing from Jack Newman's (2019) critique of positivist traditions and his emphasis on interpretive approaches, we embraced the belief that teachers' realities are uniquely shaped by their individual experiences, their interactions within the classroom, and their personal interpretations of how storytelling serves as a literacy tool. Through the rich narratives shared by our participants, we gained insight into how they implement various storytelling strategies and navigate the inherent challenges in fostering literacy. Their collective experiences painted a vivid picture of the subjective and ever-evolving nature of classroom realities, reinforcing our foundational belief that understanding these approaches requires delving into the lived, intersubjective worlds of the educators themselves. Epistemology Adopting an interpretivist epistemological position, this study held that meaningful knowledge about primary grade teachers' approaches to storytelling emerges from close, respectful engagement with the educators and their lived experiences. Influenced by the ideas of Crotty, et al (2023), as well as McNeil's advocacy for critical episte-

mologies, we viewed knowledge not as something objective or detached, but as intimately rooted in the subjective realities of these teachers. Our aim was to co-construct this knowledge alongside the participants. To honor this perspective, we cultivated trusting and collaborative relationships with the teachers, immersing ourselves in their natural teaching environments. By observing their lessons, engaging in genuine dialogue, and listening attentively to their stories, we were able to uncover authentic, nuanced understandings of how they applied storytelling techniques to bolster literacy development and how they navigated associated challenges. These rich, contextual insights were directly derived from the participants' everyday classroom experiences, allowing us to build knowledge that truly reflected their world.

Axiology

Axiology refers to the crucial role of values and ethics within the research process, particularly pertinent in qualitative inquiry where the researcher's positionality and value system inevitably influence the study. As Creswell (2019) highlights, qualitative researchers openly recognize the value-laden nature of their work by transparently disclosing their own beliefs, biases, and ethical stance. In this study, I remained acutely aware of how my own background and perspectives might shape both the interpretation and representation of the primary grade teachers' experiences with storytelling for literacy development. Throughout the research, transparency and ethical integrity were paramount. I treated each participant's narrative with profound care, honoring the dignity and inherent value of every detail they shared regarding their use of storytelling in promoting literacy. Recognizing that their insights were profoundly shaped by unique personal and pro-

fessional contexts, I took deliberate steps to interpret their responses within the framework of their lived realities, rather than imposing external judgments or preconceived notions. This unwavering commitment to ethical responsibility ensured that the study's conclusions were both meaningful and authentically reflective of the participants' true experiences, approaches, and values concerning storytelling.

Rhetorics

Rhetorics, as a philosophical assumption in qualitative research, pertain to the underlying beliefs and perspectives that shape how the study is presented—particularly in terms of language, tone, and narrative style. As noted by Creswell and Poth (2023), rhetorical assumptions influence not only how researchers communicate their findings but also how they engage with participants and construct meaning from their experiences. In this study, a qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to explore the lived experiences of primary grade teachers in using storytelling as a tool for literacy development. Consistent with the rhetorical conventions of qualitative inquiry, I adopted a personal and reflective writing style, using the first person to present interpretations and insights. This allowed for a more intimate and authentic representation of both the participants' voices and my own engagement with their stories. The use of rich, descriptive language and direct narrative accounts enabled a deeper exploration of how teachers perceived and responded to the challenges of implementing storytelling in their classrooms. Through this rhetorical lens, the study aimed to present findings that were not only informative but also empathetic, contextually grounded, and truly reflective of the real-world experiences of primary grade teachers.

2.2. *Qualitative Assumptions*—In qualitative research, assumptions serve as the founda-

tion for the theoretical orientation and methodological choices of the study. Making these as-

assumptions explicit is essential, as they guide the interpretation of data and ensure alignment with the chosen research design. This study adopted a phenomenological qualitative approach, which is rooted in assumptions about the subjective and constructed nature of reality, the importance of context, and the need to explore participants lived experiences in depth. As Del Castillo, M. (2020) explains, in-depth interviews are a widely used qualitative technique for capturing the nuanced perspectives and lived experiences of individuals within their social environments. Similarly, Isbel, R., et al (2019) highlight the critical role of qualitative interviews in eliciting rich, meaningful data across a range of disciplines. In alignment with these views, this study utilized both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to collect comprehensive data from primary grade teachers about their use of storytelling to promote literacy development. Neubauer, Witkop, and Varpio (2019) underscore that phenomenological research is uniquely positioned to explore the essence of human experience. It demands familiarity with the philosophical underpinnings of how meaning is constructed from everyday life. As such, conducting this study required deep engagement with the philosophical framework of phenomenology—particularly its emphasis on individual perception, lived experience, and the intentional process of “bracketing” preconceptions to better understand participants’ viewpoints. Lester (as cited in Bhandari, 2020) describes phenomenology as an approach grounded in personal knowledge and subjectivity, ideal for uncovering the motivations, interpretations, and meanings that participants ascribe to their experiences. This was particularly important in the present study, which sought to understand how teachers perceive and implement storytelling strategies in the classroom, and how they respond to challenges encountered in doing so. By focusing on teachers’ own voices, this research honored their insights

and captured the essence of their professional realities. In alignment with Bhandari (2020), qualitative research is primarily concerned with language, meaning-making, and experiential depth rather than statistical measurement. It employs inductive, interpretive, and process-oriented methods that enable researchers to describe and derive meaning from real-life contexts. Therefore, phenomenology was chosen to allow a holistic understanding of the participants’ perspectives on using storytelling as a tool for literacy development in early childhood education. The data collection process involved conducting extensive interviews with teachers who had direct experience with the phenomenon under study. These interviews were transcribed and analyzed through a process of horizontalization, where significant statements were identified and grouped into thematic clusters. These clusters were then transformed into comprehensive textual and structural descriptions that explained what was experienced and how it was experienced. The goal was to distill the essence of the phenomenon into a coherent narrative that conveyed both individual and shared meanings. However, this process was not without its challenges. Conducting phenomenological research demanded a solid grounding in its philosophical roots, as well as the discipline to bracket my own assumptions and experiences. Selecting appropriate participants who had firsthand knowledge of the phenomenon and determining when and how to incorporate my interpretations into the analysis required ongoing reflection and critical self-awareness. As Qutoshi (2018) notes, phenomenological inquiry not only provides deeper insight into the phenomenon itself but also promotes personal transformation and critical awareness in the researcher. By engaging closely with the teachers lived experiences, I was able to better understand both the complexity of storytelling as a pedagogical tool and the broader social and educational practices that shape literacy development in the primary

grades. Phenomenology served as a powerful lens for exploring the experiences, interpretations, and coping mechanisms of primary grade teachers who utilize storytelling in their literacy instruction. It provided a pathway for uncov-

ering the meanings embedded in their everyday teaching practices, enabling a richer understanding of how storytelling functions as both a method and a lived educational experience.

2.3. Design and Procedure—This study employed a qualitative research methodology, specifically utilizing a phenomenological design, to deeply understand primary grade teachers' approaches to storytelling as a tool for literacy development. Phenomenological research, as described by Lester, focuses on understanding experiences from the participants' perspective, emphasizing the importance of "bracketing" preconceived assumptions and usual ways of thinking. This approach is grounded in personal knowledge and subjectivity, making it particularly effective for exploring individuals' lived experiences and gaining insights into their motivations and actions. It enabled us to navigate beyond conventional assumptions and better understand the subjective nature of how teachers perceive and implement storytelling in their classrooms. As Qutoshi (2018) notes, phenomenological data collection and analysis are intertwined processes. Data were collected with the intention of shedding light on the specific experiences of teachers and uncovering the phenomena of storytelling as perceived by them. This method encouraged us to broaden our understanding and refine our ways of thinking about how primary grade teachers approach storytelling, enhancing our ability to critically interpret their lived experiences. Given the emphasis on subjectivity and personal perception, phenomenology proved to be a valuable approach for this study, where understanding the depth of human experience in literacy instruction is crucial. For this study, phenomenology was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences with storytelling as a tool for literacy development. In line with phe-

nomenological principles, interviews were the primary method used for data collection. These interviews provided a crucial opportunity to access participants' perspectives in a deep and personal way, ensuring that their voices and experiences were central to the research process. Additionally, structured questionnaires were designed to gather information from participants who were difficult to reach due to their busy schedules. These questionnaires included open-ended questions, allowing for a richer understanding of participants' views while offering flexibility in responses. This blended approach, as supported by Delve Limpaecher (2022), was especially useful for efficiently collecting rich data from a broader group of teachers, given the practical constraints of time and accessibility inherent in studying classroom practices. The essence of this qualitative research was to gain a thorough and nuanced understanding of how primary grade teachers approach storytelling. Rather than focusing on large sample sizes or quantitative measurements, our qualitative approach prioritized depth over breadth. The goal was to explore the "whys" and "hows" of teachers' storytelling practices, ensuring that the data gathered provided meaningful insights into their lived experiences. In qualitative research, it's not only what is said or done that matters, but also how it is said or done. Researchers must pay attention to context, nuance, and other cues that may provide additional layers of meaning, all of which were critical in understanding the full scope of teachers' approaches to storytelling. For this study, I employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the teachers' experiences with storytelling in

literacy education. Given the subjective nature of qualitative research, the data collected is expressed in narrative form rather than through numerical analysis. While this data is not suited for traditional quantitative methods, coding was employed to identify common themes and categories across the interviews and questionnaires. This systematic process allowed for a structured interpretation of the data, facilitating the identification of key patterns in the teachers' experiences and their specific approaches to using

storytelling for literacy. The phenomenological design of this study provided an effective means to explore the complexities of teachers' experiences with storytelling as a literacy tool. By prioritizing depth of understanding and personal perspective, this approach ensured that the research accurately reflected the lived realities of the participants, contributing valuable insights into the effective integration of storytelling in primary grade classrooms.

2.4. Research Participants—In the context of exploring how storytelling serves as a tool for literacy development, ten (10) primary grade teachers from the Lupon West District, Division of Davao Oriental, were purposefully selected to participate in the study. These educators met specific criteria, including holding the position of Teacher I to Teacher III, having at least three years of teaching experience, and consistently achieving a Very Satisfactory performance rating over the past three years. Gender was not a limiting factor in the selection process. All participants also demonstrated a solid foundation and practical experience in utilizing story-

telling strategies to support literacy instruction. To gain deeper insights into their storytelling approaches, the study employed a dual-method data collection strategy. Five teachers participated in in-depth interviews (IDI), allowing for a closer examination of individual experiences and perspectives, while the remaining five were engaged through focus group discussions (FGD), fostering shared reflections and collaborative dialogue. The use of purposive sampling ensured that only those educators with relevant expertise and contextual familiarity were included, thereby enhancing the richness, credibility, and relevance of the data gathered for this qualitative inquiry.

2.5. Ethical Considerations—The ethical considerations of this study are centered on safeguarding the rights, dignity, and well-being of the teacher-respondents involved. As a qualitative study that engages with human participants, it is crucial to adhere to fundamental ethical principles, including confidentiality, informed consent, and the voluntary nature of participation.

Social Value

This study recognizes the profound social value of enhancing literacy development in primary grade classrooms through storytelling. By meticulously examining the lived experiences

of primary grade teachers and the diverse strategies they employ to meet their students' reading needs, this research aims to offer invaluable insights that can refine both teaching practices and broader educational policies. Storytelling, as explored in this context, offers a uniquely effective and engaging approach to nurturing language skills, fostering creativity, and cultivating critical thinking in young learners. The findings of this study have the potential to significantly improve academic performance by directly addressing existing gaps in early literacy education. As teachers share their practical strategies for overcoming the inherent challenges of in-

tegrating storytelling into their daily lessons, this research seeks to identify best practices that are adaptable and implementable across classrooms with varying access to resources. This is particularly crucial for helping to bridge the educational divide, ensuring that all learners—regardless of whether their schools are well-resourced or have limited materials—have equitable opportunities to thrive in their literacy development. Beyond the immediate context of the participating teachers, this research carries substantial broader social implications. By providing evidence-based insights into effective storytelling practices, the study can directly inform educational leaders, policymakers, and curriculum developers. This foundational understanding can lead to evidence-based recommendations for improving literacy education across diverse school settings, including those in Davao City and beyond. Ultimately, the social value of this study lies in its potential to contribute to more equitable and inclusive educational opportunities, fostering the development of literacy skills that are absolutely critical for students' future academic success, personal empowerment, and overall well-being.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was a cornerstone of this study, ensuring that all selected primary grade teachers participated willingly and knowingly. Each teacher received comprehensive information about the study's objectives, methods, potential risks, and benefits, presented in a clear and easily understandable manner. They were given ample time to ask questions and clarify any concerns, guaranteeing that their decision to participate was fully informed. Crucially, teachers were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they retained the right to withdraw at any stage without facing negative repercussions. All consent forms were meticulously documented in compliance with ethical guidelines and institutional policies, and any questions or concerns raised were addressed

promptly and respectfully, reflecting a commitment to open and supportive communication throughout the study. This thorough process upheld the ethical principle of respect for persons, acknowledging the autonomy and rights of the teachers involved and safeguarding the integrity of the research.

Vulnerability of Research Participants

In this study, I recognized primary grade teachers as highly knowledgeable and capable sources of information regarding their direct experiences and implementation of storytelling for literacy development. This perspective framed our approach, ensuring that teachers felt empowered and respected throughout the research. I prioritized easy contact for any follow-up questions or clarifications, fostering clear communication. Furthermore, I was deeply mindful of the emotional and psychological well-being of the participants. Great care was taken to create a safe and supportive environment during data collection, ensuring teachers felt comfortable and understood when discussing their approaches to storytelling and the challenges they encountered. Recognizing their potential vulnerability, I committed to conducting the study with the utmost respect for their dignity, protecting their rights throughout the research process. By prioritizing their well-being, the study aimed to foster a positive and non-intrusive experience for all respondents.

Risks, Benefits, and Safety

In exploring the experiences of primary grade teachers using storytelling as a tool for literacy development, ethical considerations regarding potential risks, benefits, and safety were of paramount importance. A primary risk involved the potential for emotional discomfort if teachers discussed personal or educational challenges, particularly sensitive topics or systemic barriers. To mitigate this, all interview questions were framed with sensitivity, respect, and cultural appropriateness, aiming to minimize any distress. Crucially, strict confidential-

ity was maintained throughout the study, with all personal data anonymized to protect the identities and privacy of the respondents. The benefits of the study are considerable. By examining teachers' lived experiences and their coping strategies, the research offers valuable insights that can directly inform improvements in educational practices related to storytelling for literacy development. The findings may help educators and policymakers identify necessary changes or innovations to enhance teaching methods and address classroom challenges. For the teachers themselves, participation provided a unique opportunity for reflection on their own teaching practices, potentially increasing their understanding and engagement with their roles, thereby positively impacting their professional growth and their students' learning experiences. Ensuring the safety and well-being of the participants was a key ethical priority. All interactions were carried out in a safe and supportive environment, whether in-person or online, to ensure comfort. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, providing comprehensive details about the study's purpose, their involvement, and their unconditional right to withdraw at any point. Furthermore, the study was overseen by an academic ethics committee, ensuring adherence to high ethical standards and safeguarding both the integrity of the research and the welfare of the participants.

Privacy and Confidentiality

In this study on the use of storytelling as a tool for literacy development in primary grade classrooms, ensuring privacy and confidentiality was a top priority in line with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Strict confidentiality protocols were followed throughout the research process to protect the personal information of the teacher respondents. All data collected was securely stored and could only be accessed by authorized personnel. Any personal identifiers were removed or coded to ensure anonymity in any reports or publications resulting from

the study. The information provided by the respondents was solely used for research purposes and was not shared with third parties without explicit consent from the participants. Throughout the process, I ensured that the teachers understood how their data would be handled, offering full transparency regarding the privacy measures in place. These precautions not only adhered to ethical privacy standards but also helped build trust between the researcher and the participants, ensuring a respectful and secure environment for their involvement.

Justice The principle of justice emphasizes fairness in distributing the benefits and burdens of research across all groups in society. In this study on primary grade teachers' use of storytelling for literacy development, special care was taken to ensure that the selection of participants was fair and equitable, with no teacher group being disproportionately affected by the research requirements. The study was designed to benefit all participants by offering valuable insights into effective teaching practices, which could be applied in similar educational contexts. Furthermore, the study upheld the principle of justice by ensuring that all respondents had equal access to any potential benefits, such as insights into professional development and strategies for overcoming literacy challenges. To maximize the reach of the research findings, these insights will be widely shared within the educational community, allowing not only the respondents but also other stakeholders to benefit from an enhanced understanding of best practices in teaching literacy through storytelling.

Transparency In this study, transparency was maintained through clear and open communication with all participants and stakeholders. The researcher provided comprehensive details about the study's objectives, methodologies, potential risks, and benefits, both verbally and in writing, ensuring participants had a thorough understanding of their involvement and how their data would be used. Consent forms and

informational materials were crafted in straightforward, accessible language to ensure that primary grade teachers fully understood their participation. The findings of the research were shared with the participants and the broader educational community. This approach not only reinforced the transparency of the study but also maximized its educational impact, allowing insights into the use of storytelling as a literacy development tool to benefit a wider audience.

Qualification of the Researcher For this study on primary grade approaches to storytelling as a tool for literacy development, I ensured my qualifications were in line with the demands of the research. I completed all academic requirements, passed my comprehensive examination, and am fully prepared to conduct this study in a well-rounded manner. My qualifications include a strong background in educational research and methodology, alongside specific training in ethical research practices. This preparation has equipped me to approach this study with the necessary skills to design and carry out research that not only respects the rights and welfare of the teachers involved but also ensures that the findings will be grounded in solid educational theory and practice. My experience in interdisciplinary teaching and curriculum development also provides me with the insight to interpret the findings accurately and to draw meaningful conclusions that can inform and improve literacy development strategies in the classroom. Furthermore, my advisor-advisee partnership has been integral to ensuring the success of the study.

Conflict of Interest

To maintain the integrity of the study on primary grade approaches to storytelling as a tool for literacy development, I took steps to actively manage any potential conflicts of interest. I ensured that all funding sources for the research were disclosed to respondents and stakeholders, with clear assurances that these sources had no influence over the study's agenda, findings, or

future publications. I had no vested interest in any specific outcomes, ensuring that the analysis and results were strictly driven by the data and relevant educational theories. To further safeguard the impartiality and objectivity of the research, I incorporated regular audits and peer reviews throughout the research process. This helped ensure that any unforeseen conflicts of interest were identified and addressed promptly, maintaining transparency and credibility in all aspects of the study.

Adequacy of Facilities

In the study on primary grade approaches to storytelling as a tool for literacy development, I ensured that the research was conducted within the specified time frame and equipped with all necessary resources. The technical committee provided valuable insights, helping enhance the paper with constructive suggestions and recommendations. Additionally, I ensured that the study had sufficient funding to support its progress and completion. The adequacy of facilities was carefully considered to ensure that all locations where the study took place were physically accessible to the respondents, including those with disabilities, and culturally appropriate in line with community values. This approach fostered an inclusive and respectful environment where participants felt safe and valued. In case of unforeseen situations, emergency protocols were in place to ensure the safety and well-being of both respondents and research staff. Regular checks and maintenance of facilities ensured they remained conducive to the smooth and high-quality conduct of the research throughout its duration.

Community Involvement

Community involvement played an essential role throughout the conduct of this completed study on primary grade approaches to storytelling as a tool for literacy development in the Elementary Schools of Lupon West District, Division of Davao Oriental. The study was carefully designed to align with the educational

needs and priorities of the local school communities, ensuring its relevance and practical value. Throughout the research process, the respondents' local traditions, cultural practices, and perspectives were respected and honored. Every effort was made to maintain transparency and honesty at all stages, especially during participant recruitment and data collection. No form of

deception was employed, and ethical standards were upheld rigorously. I also extend my sincere gratitude to all the teacher-respondents for their genuine and active participation, which was instrumental in the successful completion of this research and in contributing to its meaningful outcomes for the broader educational community.

2.6. Role of the Researcher—Throughout the study, I fulfilled multiple responsibilities aimed at authentically capturing the experiences of primary grade teachers. As a facilitator and promoter of unbiased research, I conducted interviews with sensitivity and impartiality, ensuring that participants' responses were interpreted through the lens of existing literature rather than personal biases. This objectivity helped preserve the authenticity of the teachers' narratives and experiences. In my role as an expert in qualitative methods, I applied established qualitative research procedures with fidelity. I actively consulted with my research adviser and other professionals to validate the appropriateness of my approach. This included accurately executing interviews, conducting relevant field observations, and applying techniques such as Environmental Triangulation and Thematic Content Analysis to systematically analyze the data. As a data collector and keeper, I employed secure

and ethical methods of gathering information—audio recordings, handwritten notes, and field documentation, all of which were transcribed verbatim. These materials were handled with strict confidentiality to safeguard sensitive information. As the data analyst, I thoroughly examined the participants' perspectives by coding and theming the transcribed data. This process involved identifying patterns, interpreting meanings, and ensuring that the findings truthfully reflected the lived experiences of the teacher participants. Finally, I organized and presented the results by aligning them with the research questions, using emergent themes to demonstrate how the teachers' approaches to storytelling contributed to literacy development. I also offered implications and recommendations for educational policy and practice, with the goal of enhancing literacy instruction and promoting evidence-based storytelling strategies in the primary grades.

2.7. Data Collection—The data collection process for this study followed a systematic and ethically grounded approach, ensuring accuracy, transparency, and respect for all involved. Securing endorsement In the fourth week of February 2025, the researcher obtained an ethics compliance certificate from the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges. This document affirmed the ethical soundness of the study and allowed the researcher to proceed with data gathering. Permission from the Schools Divi-

sion Superintendent During the first week of March 2025, the researcher formally requested permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Davao Oriental to conduct the research in selected elementary schools. A letter, along with Chapters 1 and 2 of the study and a copy of the research instrument, was submitted detailing the study's purpose and the profile of the intended participants. The researcher awaited and received official approval before continuing with the research process.

Permission from the school heads Upon receiving approval from the Schools Division Superintendent, the researcher then coordinated with the principals of the selected schools during the third week of March 2025. Each school head was informed about the study's objectives, procedures, and expected outcomes. Participant consent In the fourth week of March 2025, the selected participants primary grade teachers with relevant experience in storytelling were oriented about the nature of the study. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring they fully understood their role, rights, and the voluntary nature of their participation.

Conducting the interviews One-on-one in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted across the first and second weeks of April 2025. Participants' demographic profiles were documented, and data were collected through audio recordings, written notes, and active listening. The interviews allowed teachers to share their lived experiences with

storytelling strategies used to support literacy development.

Transcribing responses By the third week of April 2025, the researcher transcribed the recorded interviews verbatim. This process ensured that the participants' voices and perspectives were preserved with accuracy and clarity. Data coding and thematizing During the fourth week of April and the first two weeks of May 2025, the researcher systematically coded the transcribed data. Patterns and trends were identified by comparing and contrasting responses. Themes were then developed to capture the shared experiences and challenges of the participants, providing valuable insights into how storytelling contributes to literacy development among primary grade learners. This structured approach ensured that the data collection process upheld ethical standards and generated meaningful findings grounded in the authentic voices of the teacher participants.

2.8. Data Analysis—This study employed thematic analysis to examine the qualitative data collected from primary grade teachers regarding their use of storytelling to support literacy development. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to identify, analyze, and report recurring patterns or themes within the data. The process followed Creswell's (2012, as cited by Chali, et al, 2022) model of identifying themes, which emphasizes clustering similar codes into meaningful categories that convey key ideas found in the participants' narratives. Familiarization with the data was the first step. I immersed in the interview transcripts by repeatedly reading the data to gain a thorough understanding of the content. Initial observations were noted to begin shaping the analytical lens through which the participants' perspectives were viewed. Coding was then conducted manually. Each transcript was examined

closely, and significant excerpts were labeled with succinct codes that captured both the semantic meaning and conceptual essence of the responses. These codes represented elements directly related to the overarching research questions about how storytelling is applied in literacy instruction among primary grade learners. After coding, the researcher proceeded to search for themes by grouping related codes to form coherent and meaningful patterns. These themes reflected the shared strategies, beliefs, and experiences of the participants in implementing storytelling techniques in their classrooms. During the reviewing stage, the researcher critically examined whether the emerging themes accurately represented the data and contributed to a compelling narrative about the use of storytelling in primary education. The relationships between themes were also analyzed to ensure a logical and cohesive structure. Defining and naming

themes followed, where each theme was clearly articulated and given a concise, descriptive label that encapsulated its core idea. This helped in organizing the final analysis and enhancing clarity for readers. Finally, the writing-up phase involved crafting a comprehensive narrative that wove together the identified themes with direct quotes from participants. The findings were contextualized within the broader body of literature on literacy development and storytelling in

early education. This stage ensured the presentation of a rich, evidence-based interpretation of how storytelling practices influence literacy learning in the primary grades. This thematic analysis approach provided a structured yet flexible method for uncovering deep insights from the qualitative data and gave voice to the teachers' lived experiences in an authentic and meaningful way.

2.9. Framework of Analysis—This study utilized framework analysis, a method particularly well-suited for applied qualitative research, as it provides a systematic approach to managing and interpreting data aligned with practical educational goals. Since the study focused on storytelling approaches in primary grades and their impact on literacy development, framework analysis enabled the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions grounded in real-world classroom experiences. Following the qualitative data collection, the information gathered from teacher-participants was rigorously analyzed through a structured process based on the principles outlined by Fuchs (2023) and Goldsmith (2021). The analysis was conducted in several stages:

Organizing the Data.

All data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were compiled and arranged systematically. The transcripts were reviewed multiple times to ensure that information could be easily accessed and categorized, enabling the researcher to begin identifying patterns relevant to storytelling in early literacy instruction.

Identifying and Organizing Ideas and Concepts.

Recurring phrases, expressions, and instructional strategies related to storytelling emerged during the coding process. These elements were categorized into initial codes, which were then refined into broader conceptual groupings. This

step ensured that the data reflected the specific experiences and pedagogical beliefs of the participants.

Building Overarching Themes.

From the developed categories, overarching themes were constructed to capture deeper insights into how storytelling serves as a pedagogical tool for literacy development. These themes unified related codes and highlighted the central ideas that were consistent across different teachers' narratives.

Ensuring Reliability and Validity.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, triangulation was employed by comparing data across multiple sources—including interview transcripts, field notes, and participant reflections. The researcher also validated themes through peer debriefing and member-checking, thereby reinforcing both the reliability and validity of the conclusions.

Final Stages: Writing and Presentation.

The themes were synthesized into a cohesive narrative, supported by participant quotes and related literature. A thematic presentation of findings was prepared, using clear visuals and organized frameworks to illustrate the connections between storytelling practices and literacy outcomes in primary classrooms. Although framework analysis provides a structured approach, it is not without its challenges. As noted by Ritchie and Spencer (1994, as cited by Goldsmith, 2021), successful application requires re-

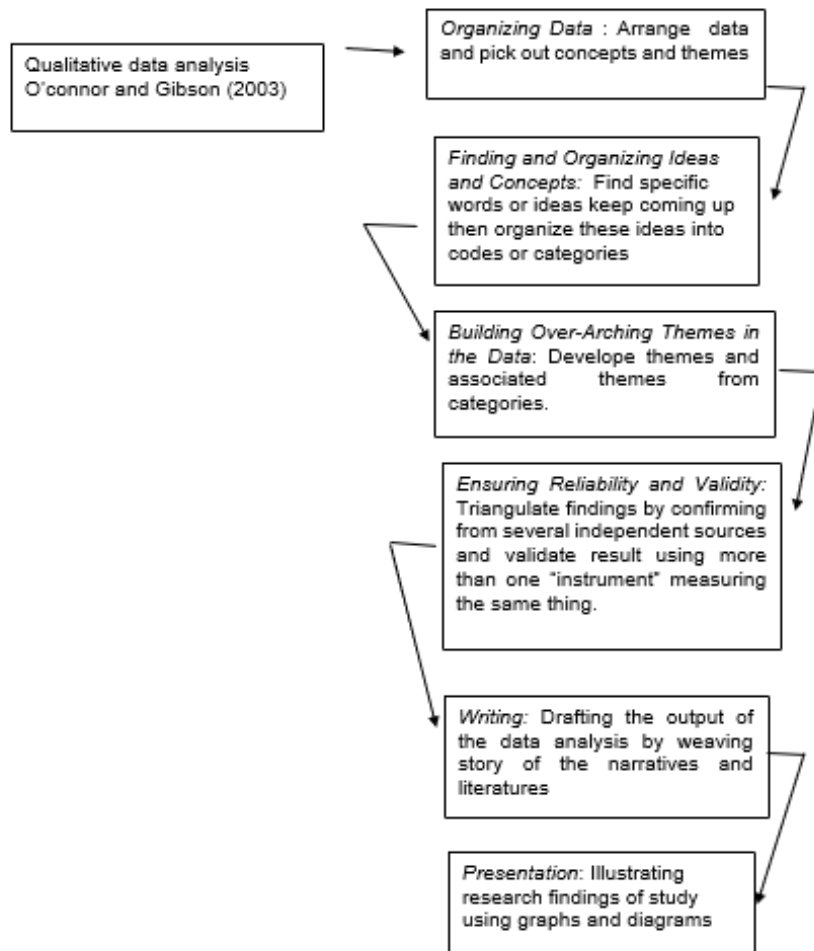


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study)

searchers to engage in dynamic, reflective analysis and maintain systematic rigor throughout. This study met those demands, resulting in findings that are both insightful and practically relevant to educators working to enhance literacy development through storytelling.

2.10. Trustworthiness of the Study—In qualitative research, the traditional notions of validity and reliability are reframed through the lens of trustworthiness. In this completed study on storytelling as a tool for literacy development among primary grade teachers, trustworthiness was ensured through four key components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Establishing trustworthiness was essential not only for academic rigor but also for supporting evidence-based educational policy and classroom practices. This trustworthiness strengthens the relevance of the study's findings, offering significant insights into how storytelling strategies can effectively promote literacy among early learners. As Hendren et al. (2023) and Ahmed (2024) emphasize, trustworthy qualitative research contributes meaningfully to policy development by reflecting authentic experiences and contextual factors. The conclusions of this study are thus valuable for informing culturally responsive and equitable literacy practices in diverse learning environments. Credibility was achieved by ensuring

ing alignment between the participants' perspectives and the researcher's interpretations. Techniques such as prolonged engagement, member checking, and triangulation of interview data with field notes were employed to affirm the authenticity of the findings. The researcher followed the credibility framework proposed by Lincoln and Guba, ensuring that the voices of the teacher-participants were accurately represented. Transferability To facilitate the potential application of findings in other educational contexts, the researcher provided thick, rich descriptions of the participants' storytelling practices, classroom environments, and the cultural setting. This allows future researchers and educators to determine the applicability of the results to their own settings, particularly in primary literacy education. Dependability Dependability was supported by a clear and detailed documentation of the research process, from participant selection and data collection to analysis and theme development. This transparency enables other researchers to replicate the study

under similar conditions and arrive at comparable conclusions, reinforcing the study's consistency. Confirmability To maintain objectivity, the researcher ensured that interpretations and conclusions were grounded in the data rather than personal biases. Audit trails, reflective journaling, and peer debriefing were used to validate the neutrality of the analysis. Independent checks confirmed that the findings truly reflected the participants lived experiences with storytelling as a literacy strategy. While qualitative data analysis offers rich insights, it is not without challenges. As Dye (2021) notes, each analytic method presents specific hurdles that require thoughtful navigation. In this study, the thematic and framework analyses were carefully applied to manage these challenges and ensure a rigorous, trustworthy outcome. Through this approach, the research offers credible and actionable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance early literacy through storytelling.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results and discussions of the study, focusing on the research questions related to primary grade teachers' approaches to storytelling as a tool for literacy development. The study sought to explore and understand the experiences, perceptions, and strategies of teachers in using storytelling to enhance literacy skills among young learners. The findings are based on the responses of the teacher-participants and are analyzed to uncover patterns, themes, and insights that contribute to the understanding of storytelling as an effective tool for literacy development in primary education.

3.1. Experiences of Primary Grade Teachers on Using Storytelling Approach for Literacy Development—The use of storytelling in primary education is widely recognized as a powerful tool to promote literacy development, particularly in early grades. Storytelling nurtures oral language skills, enhances reading comprehension, and fosters imagination, while also helping teachers connect learning to students' real-life experiences. This was supported

by Chen and Musa (2021) who argue that storytelling enhances cultural identity and understanding, especially when teachers incorporate indigenous and local stories into their instruction. In Malaysian schools, teachers who included traditional folktales observed stronger connections between students and content, enhancing both comprehension and empathy. Despite its benefits, some teachers face challenges such as limited training, lack of time, and in-

sufficient resources. Johnson and Mehta (2020) found that in U.S. classrooms, while teachers valued storytelling, many lacked confidences in their storytelling abilities and struggled to fit it within rigid literacy frameworks.

3.1.1. Promoting Learner-Centered Instruction for Literacy Growth—This support system encompasses for elementary teachers to increased student engagement and improved listening comprehension through regular storytelling sessions. The foregoing results of the study were consistent with the findings made by Ahmed and Felix (2022) emphasize that storytelling provides a natural context for introducing vocabulary, narrative structure, and reading fluency in early learners. Their study involving teachers in rural Kenyan schools found that children exposed to daily storytelling showed stronger phonemic awareness and listening comprehension than those taught through conventional methods. Likewise, the study's findings are also supported by the study of Berry (2023) emphasized that storytelling promotes learner-centered instruction and improves listening comprehension and empathy. Her narrative inquiry among U.S. primary school teachers highlighted the importance of culturally relevant storytelling in maintaining learner engagement. Teachers in her study reported that stories connected to learners lived experiences encouraged participation and improved verbal articulation. In the African context, Obasi (2021) found that storytelling in local languages not only improved literacy skills but also reinforced identity and confidence among learners. Teachers in Nigeria reported that students became more active participants when stories were rooted in their cultural traditions. Moreover, the integration of chants and gestures in storytelling sessions supported multi-sensory learning. Hence, storytelling promotes a learner-centered environment where students actively construct meaning, engage deeply with the narrative, and participate in interactive language experiences. This ap-

proach aligns with principles of personalized and participatory learning, essential for literacy growth (Isbell et al., 2019).

3.1.2. Building Teachers' Confidence and Creativity in Storytelling—Collaboration among teachers, students, and even the broader school community is essential to successful classroom management. Collaborative practices foster a supportive environment where students are engaged, motivated, and cooperative. Elementary teachers emphasize that effective classroom management is not a solo endeavor but a shared responsibility, built on teamwork, communication, and mutual respect. The findings of the study agree with the findings of Ndhlovu (2021) who examined teacher creativity in Zimbabwean classrooms, where limited resources prompted educators to create stories based on local experiences. This creative adaptation-built teacher ownership of content and boosted confidence in delivering culturally resonant narratives, which in turn improved students' listening and retelling skills. Meanwhile, Lopez and Nkomo (2022) found that storytelling significantly boosted oral fluency and confidence among young learners. In their comparative study across South African and Latin American primary schools, teachers reported that learners who participated in storytelling activities were more articulate, used a broader range of descriptive words, and engaged more in classroom discussions. This teacher discovers that deviating from the original text by adding personal touches, humor, and connections to the students' immediate world significantly enhances their engagement with the story. This personalization makes the narrative more relatable, fostering a more interactive learning environment where children are more inclined to ask questions and share their own related experiences. Research by Martinez and Zhao (2023) conducted a study in bilingual classrooms in Spain and China, highlighting that creative storytelling strategies—such as character role-play

and the use of props—enhanced both teacher confidence and student literacy performance. Teachers who regularly innovated their storytelling approaches noted greater excitement in class, as well as improved reading comprehension scores. In a study by Johnson (2022) emphasized the significance of professional development in building storytelling confidence among early-grade teachers in the U.S. Her qualitative research found that storytelling workshops led to more expressive delivery, greater use of narrative voice, and increased willingness to integrate original stories into literacy lessons.

3.1.3. Valuing the Impact of Storytelling on Emergent Literacy Skills—Elementary teachers recognize that promoting positive behavior requires strategic, consistent, and proactive techniques. Managing student behavior not only ensures academic engagement but also fosters a safe and respectful learning community. Insights from classroom reflections highlight how experienced teachers apply a combination of preventive, supportive, and corrective strategies to address behavioral challenges. The said findings were also supported by Mendez and Collins (2023) explored the effects of storytelling on phonological and print awareness in pre-K to Grade 2 learners in bilingual U.S. classrooms. Their findings showed that children became more aware of sound patterns, rhyme, and initial sounds when stories were told with rhyming elements and repeated phrases. Teachers reported stronger interest in books and im-

proved letter recognition. Certainly, the findings of the study were affirmed by the study of Kim and Ocampo (2022) who conducted a longitudinal study in South Korean and Filipino schools, finding that storytelling enhanced emergent writing and sequencing abilities. Young learners began to use key story elements (character, setting, beginning-middle-end) in their early writing. Teachers found that learners could retell stories both verbally and in drawings, indicating deep story comprehension. As mentioned earlier, this statement highlights that storytelling naturally enriches children’s vocabulary by providing context for new words, which they then integrate into their daily conversations and actively seek to understand, making vocabulary acquisition organic and effortless. According to research by Fernandez and Wu (2022) studied bilingual learners in Singapore and found that storytelling enhanced cross-linguistic transfer, particularly in vocabulary and syntax. Teachers used stories in both English and the learners’ mother tongues to reinforce linguistic structures and improve comprehension. A study by Brown and Reyes (2023) examined how storytelling impacted oral language development and comprehension in urban kindergarten classrooms in the U.S. Teachers noted that students who participated in daily storytelling routines became more confident in using complete sentences, making predictions, and retelling narratives with structure and detail.

3.2. Mechanisms Coping with the Challenges Using Storytelling Approach for Literacy Development—The use of storytelling as a pedagogical tool for literacy development has gained renewed attention in the context of increasing educational challenges, particularly in early and primary education. Teachers often resort to storytelling not only as a literacy strategy but also as a coping mechanism to address classroom

engagement and comprehension issues among diverse learners.

3.2.1. Implementing Effective Storytelling Sessions—One of the most powerful tools teachers use to strengthen their classroom management strategies is accessing peer collaboration and support systems. Peer networks provide emotional support, practical advice, and professional learning opportunities that significantly

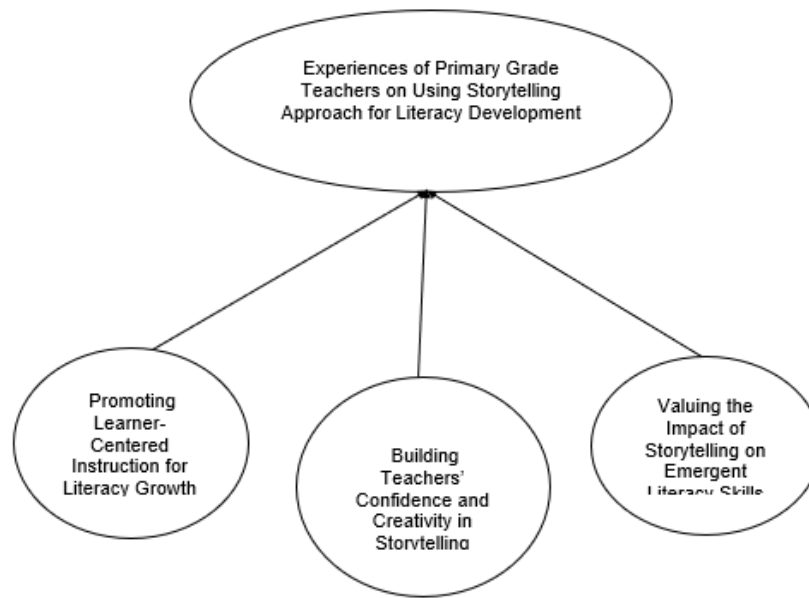


Fig. 3. Emerging Themes on the Experiences of Primary Grade Teachers on Using Storytelling Approach for Literacy Development

impact classroom dynamics. This paper explores the role of peer collaboration in enhancing classroom management, based on both current literature and reflections from elementary teachers. Storytelling helps teachers navigate the complexities of literacy instruction, especially in resource-constrained and multicultural classrooms. According to Miller and Brown (2021), storytelling sessions create emotionally engaging contexts that support both the cognitive and affective aspects of reading. Teachers reported that narrative structures helped them simplify complex ideas and reduce learner anxiety during reading activities. Lopez and Tan (2022) found that storytelling was used as an emotional outlet by both teachers and students, easing the behavioral challenges associated with literacy frustration. Their qualitative research revealed that storytelling helped foster a sense of classroom belonging, especially when learners could relate to characters or cultural references in stories. The first statement highlights the importance of differentiating instruction in storytelling by incorporating visual aids, varied auditory elements, and kinesthetic activities

to cater to diverse learning styles and enhance engagement. The third statement emphasizes the effectiveness of using pauses and cliffhangers during storytelling to build anticipation and sustain children's attention and focus on the narrative. Implementing effective storytelling sessions requires specific strategies, such as voice modulation, use of visual aids, and interactive questioning. Ahmad and Reyes (2023) emphasized that training in oral storytelling techniques improved student attention spans and participation, particularly in low-literacy environments. Teachers who integrated puppetry and multimedia during storytelling reported increased learner motivation. The shift to digital learning during the pandemic introduced new challenges but also opportunities. Santos and Villanueva (2021) explored how digital storytelling platforms like Book Creator and Storybird became coping tools for teachers to continue literacy engagement during remote teaching. Their findings show that integrating digital storytelling enhanced vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension among early graders.

3.2.2. Planning Strategic Integration of Storytelling.—The emotional environment created by teachers directly affects how students behave and learn. As such, fostering emotional regulation and managing stress are essential skills for sustaining a positive, productive classroom climate. This paper explores how elementary teachers develop and implement emotional regulation and stress management techniques based on recent studies and classroom experiences. The study's findings agree with Chen and Lagrada (2021) concluded that continuous professional development in narrative techniques and lesson planning is necessary for storytelling to become an embedded coping strategy. Teachers who received such training demonstrated better lesson outcomes and expressed fewer frustrations in managing literacy gaps. On the other hand, the findings of the study were affirmed by the study of Manlapig and Torres (2024) found that digital storytelling platforms such as StoryJumper and Adobe Spark allowed for more structured planning, enabling teachers to pre-select vocabulary, scaffold comprehension, and track student responses. The strategic use of multimedia also enhanced learner interaction and reduced cognitive overload in struggling readers.

3.2.3. Integrating Observational Rubrics and Follow-up Literacy Tasks.—A positive teacher-student relationship is the cornerstone of effective classroom management. Strong relationships foster trust, respect, and cooperation, reducing behavioral issues and increasing student engagement. This paper explores how elementary teachers build and sustain positive relationships with their students, drawing from

recent studies and classroom practices. The foregoing results of the study were consistent with the findings of the study made by according to Delgado and Rivera (2021), the use of observational rubrics in storytelling activities helps teachers identify specific literacy skills such as vocabulary usage, comprehension, sequencing, and oral fluency. They emphasized that a well-crafted rubric aligned with literacy standards is a critical component in measuring progress and refining teaching strategies. Mendoza (2023) argued that storytelling not only addresses literacy gaps but also serves as a pedagogical coping mechanism when supported by continuous assessment tools. Their research highlighted that teacher in under-resourced schools used rubrics to track engagement and participation, which helped in adjusting future storytelling sessions. This cyclical process became a form of instructional resilience, allowing teachers to cope with literacy challenges systematically. This finding is congruent to the notion of a comprehensive study by Sarmiento and Liang (2024) explored how teachers used platforms like Seesaw and ClassDojo to document student responses to storytelling. These tools helped in planning follow-up literacy interventions based on real-time observations and teacher reflections, thus strengthening coping mechanisms in dynamic classrooms. Comprehensive research by Castro and Villanueva (2021) stressed that using observational rubrics not only aids student learning but also supports teacher coping by bringing clarity and focus to instructional goals. Teachers reported reduced stress and increased confidence when they could monitor and scaffold learning outcomes systematically.

3.3. Educational Management Insights Drawn from the Findings of the Study — Through the reflections and experiences of elementary teachers, valuable educational management insights emerge that can inform school

leadership, teacher development programs, and overall instructional strategies. This paper discusses the key management insights drawn from the study on classroom management techniques. The participants shared their educational man-

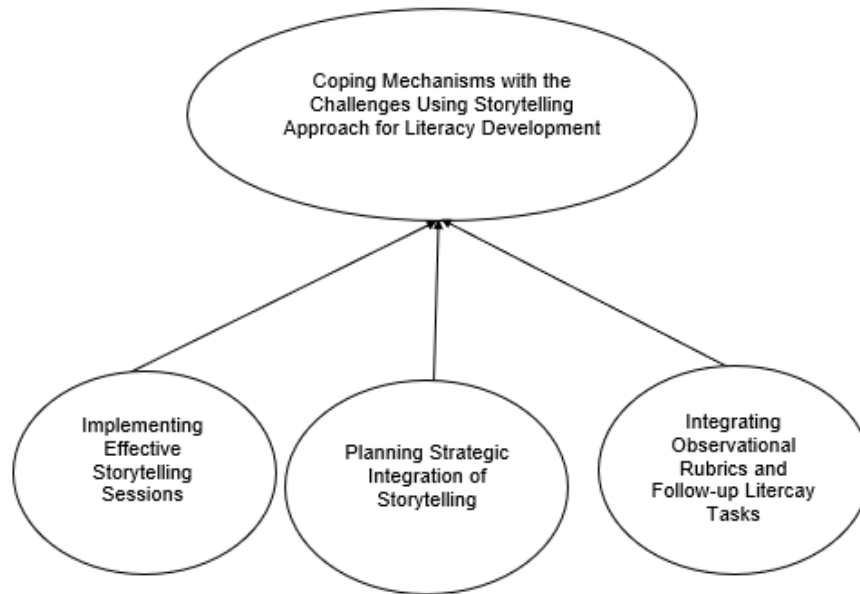


Fig. 4. Emerging Themes on the Coping Mechanisms with the Challenges Using Storytelling Approach for Literacy Development

agement insights and it was narrowed down into one to generate the themes. These themes were carefully analyzed and formulated based on what came from informants' accounts and reflections. The subthemes are shown below:

3.3.1. Enhancing Language and Comprehension Skills—Primary grade teachers play a critical role in shaping the foundational literacy skills of young learners. Among the strategies employed, storytelling emerges as a powerful tool for enhancing both language and comprehension skills. When used intentionally, it fosters oral language development, vocabulary acquisition, listening skills, and higher-order thinking. From an educational management perspective, this also signals a need for sustained teacher support, curriculum planning, and assessment integration. Storytelling, particularly in early grades, promotes spoken language fluency and vocabulary growth. According to Reyes and Caballero (2021), primary teachers observed that learners exposed to regular storytelling sessions displayed improved sentence construction and contextual word usage. These gains were most significant when stories

were interactive, encouraging students to repeat phrases, predict outcomes, and use expressive language. Martinez and Lopez (2023) found that storytelling activates background knowledge and reinforces comprehension strategies such as sequencing, identifying the main idea, and drawing inferences. Their study revealed that students performed better on comprehension tasks after participating in guided storytelling sessions using familiar themes and visual supports. Administrators should support teachers by providing rubric-based storytelling checklists to track vocabulary usage, comprehension responses, and engagement levels (Alvarez Lee, 2021). This is also supported by a study of Martinez and Lim (2020) argued that the use of native language stories improved engagement and helped students better infer meaning from context, especially in multilingual classrooms.

3.3.2. Supporting Socio-Emotional Learning and Learner Engagement—The study likely emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a vital skill for elementary teachers. Teachers with high emotional intelligence can better regulate their emotions,

build positive relationships with students, and create a supportive classroom environment. Reflections from the experiences of elementary teachers emphasize how EI impacts not only discipline and engagement but also the overall emotional climate of the classroom. The study's findings agree with Jennings et al. (2021), emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others. In teaching, EI supports better decision-making, effective communication, and the establishment of trust with students. Brown, J., Green, A. (2022) emphasized that teachers with high EI are more effective in managing classroom behavior. They tend to use proactive strategies, prevent conflicts, and foster an atmosphere of respect and collaboration. The ninth participant's impression highlights the effectiveness of storytelling, particularly narratives containing moral lessons, in teaching important values and fostering character development, which significantly contributes to children's socio-emotional growth and positively influences their learning attitudes. The tenth participant's impression emphasizes the inherent engagement and excitement that storytelling brings to the classroom, leading to increased listening activity, more questions, and higher overall participation, ultimately boosting children's motivation and interest in language learning and other academic concepts. Research by Oberle et al. (2020) suggested that when teachers model emotional regulation, students are more likely to develop their own social-emotional skills, leading to improved academic performance and reduced behavioral issues. Taylor et al. (2023) advocate for emotional intelligence training in teacher professional development programs. Such initiatives have been shown to reduce teacher stress, enhance classroom management skills, and promote overall teacher well-being.

3.3.3. Creating Opportunities for Multisensory and Differentiated Learning—In pri-

mary education, literacy development is most effective when instruction is tailored to the diverse needs of learners. Storytelling, when applied strategically, serves as a multisensory and differentiated instructional approach that supports learners with varying cognitive, linguistic, and emotional profiles. The practices of primary grade teachers highlight how storytelling naturally aligns with educational management goals especially those that prioritize inclusive education, learner engagement, and innovative pedagogy. According to Garcia and Tan (2021) reported that students demonstrated increased vocabulary retention and comprehension when stories were told using picture books, role-play, and puppetry. Lee and Ramos (2023) found that students, particularly those with learning difficulties, were more engaged and responsive during storytelling sessions that included music, movement, and sound effects. The study could shed light on the storytelling's capacity to act as a springboard for diverse post-storytelling activities, such as drawing, writing, role-playing, or puppet shows, recognizing this as a valuable approach for differentiated assessment that caters to varied preferences in expressing understanding. Though beneficial, teachers adapt storytelling strategies based on the learners' readiness levels, learning profiles, and interests. Struggling readers benefit from repetitive language and predictable text patterns, as emphasized by Santos Villarin (2022). Moreover, advanced learners are challenged through story creation or retelling exercises, which build higher-order thinking and creativity. English language learners (ELLs) gain confidence through bilingual storytelling or code-switching techniques (Lopez Nakamura, 2024). These approaches demonstrate how storytelling serves as a natural method for differentiation without compromising class unity. Based on the figure, the three emergent themes were enhancing language and comprehension skills, supporting socio-emotional

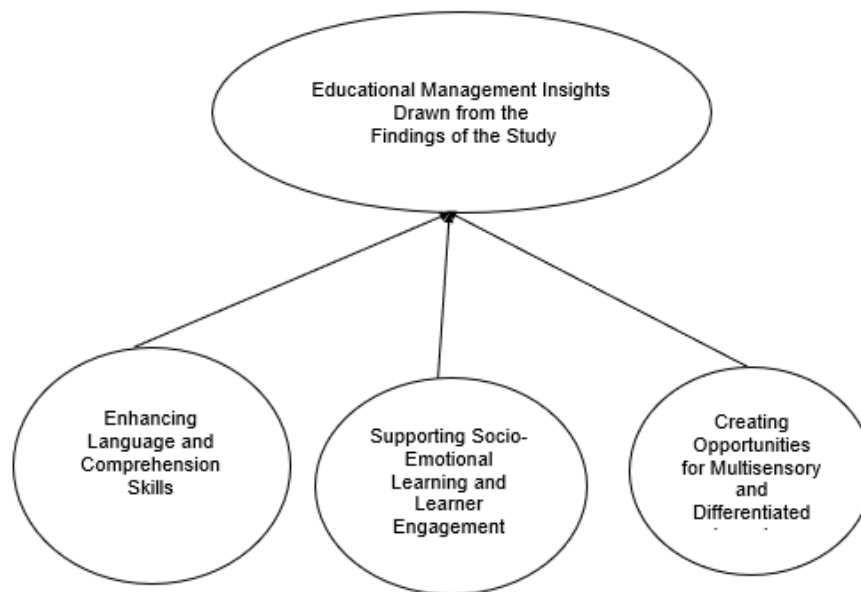


Fig. 5. Emerging Themes on the Educational Management Insights Drawn from the Findings of the Study

learning and learner engagement, and creating opportunities for multisensory and differentiated learning. The first theme, emphasizing enhanced language and comprehension skills, directly aligns with research highlighting storytelling's crucial role in language development. As Moran Aerila (2019) suggest, stories introduce learners to new vocabulary and complex sentence structures within meaningful contexts, thereby enhancing both comprehension and expressive abilities. This immersive experience, which moves beyond rote memorization,

allows children to naturally encounter and retain new words, strengthening their oral language skills through active listening, clear articulation, and the ability to retell narratives. The third theme, concerning multisensory and differentiated learning, is implicitly supported by the very nature of storytelling, which can easily integrate visual aids, vocal variations, and interactive elements, allowing teachers to adapt content to diverse learning styles and needs, ultimately creating a more inclusive and effective learning environment for all students.

4. Implications and Future Directions

This chapter serves as a critical component of the study, providing insights into the practical, policy, and research implications of the findings, offering guidance for future action and inquiry related to optimizing the integration of storytelling in primary education to enhance literacy development, support socio-emotional learning, promote inclusive teaching practices, and inform evidence-based educational policies and further research in this area within the specific context of primary grade education.

4.1. Findings—The findings of the study on the use of storytelling for literacy development among primary grade teachers reveal significant implications that inform both pedagogical practice and educational management, grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Vy-

gotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Bruner's Constructivist Theory, and Bandura's Social Learning Theory. The theme of promoting learner-centered instruction for literacy growth signifies a critical pedagogical shift observed in teachers' experiences. Moving away from traditional rote memorization methods, teachers embraced storytelling as a dynamic and participatory approach that captured children's attention and created meaningful learning contexts. This aligns with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which underscores the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. Storytelling fostered collaborative dialogue, peer learning, and scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where students could internalize new language skills through guided interaction. Furthermore, Bruner's Constructivist Theory is clearly reflected in how storytelling enabled learners to actively construct understanding through contextualized vocabulary and narrative structures. Rather than learning language in isolation, children encountered new words in meaningful story contexts, thus enhancing comprehension and retention. The second theme, building teachers' confidence and creativity in storytelling, highlights a vital professional transformation. Initially hesitant, many teachers grew in confidence as they witnessed the positive effects of storytelling on student engagement. This evolution mirrors Bandura's Social Learning Theory, particularly the role of self-efficacy and observational learning. Teachers who observed the success of storytelling strategies among their peers adapted and internalized these techniques, improving their practice. The creative enhancements they introduced such as voice modulation, props, and humor demonstrate Bruner's principle that education should foster imaginative thought and cultural connection. Teachers became more than deliverers of content; they became co-constructors of knowledge with their learners, shaping narratives that resonated with students' lived experiences. This

growing creativity also emphasized the need for school leaders to provide sustained professional development and collaborative spaces where teachers can share and refine storytelling techniques. The third theme, valuing the impact of storytelling on emergent literacy skills, directly illustrates storytelling's effectiveness in developing foundational literacy. Teachers observed that stories, especially those rich in rhythm and repetition, enhanced phonological awareness and vocabulary acquisition. Even reluctant readers were drawn in by live storytelling, developing a newfound appreciation for books. This organic process of vocabulary development exemplifies Bruner's view that learning is most effective when it is active and contextual. Moreover, as children internalized language patterns and narrative structures, they were not merely passive recipients but active participants in the construction of literacy. The observable behavioral modeling through characters in stories also ties in with Bandura's theory, wherein children learned values, empathy, and social behaviors through vicarious experiences demonstrating how literacy learning through storytelling encompasses cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. In terms of coping mechanisms, teachers demonstrated innovative strategies to address the challenges of implementing storytelling. The theme of implementing effective storytelling sessions reveals how teachers strategically used multisensory approaches—visuals, auditory cues, and kinesthetic activities—to accommodate varied learning styles and sustain engagement. These strategies emphasize differentiated instruction rooted in Bruner's view of scaffolding, where the teacher carefully guides learners by adjusting input to meet diverse needs. The use of dramatic pauses and cliffhangers reflects their intuitive understanding of narrative psychology and cognitive engagement. Likewise, planning strategic integration of storytelling showed how teachers aligned stories with existing curriculum goals rather

than treating storytelling as an add-on activity. This integration reflects constructivist planning, where teachers connect new information with learners' prior knowledge through relevant and compelling contexts. The themes of integrating observational rubrics and follow-up literacy tasks underscore the importance of assessment and reinforcement. By using structured rubrics to monitor participation and vocabulary usage, teachers gained valuable insights into learners' progress, enabling more targeted support, an approach consistent with Vygotsky's emphasis on the teacher's role in facilitating individualized learning within the ZPD. Follow-up tasks, such as drawing and story mapping, allowed students to engage with narratives beyond listening, reinforcing learning through multimodal expression and reflection. These practices not only extended literacy learning but also cultivated critical thinking and comprehension in line with Bruner's constructivist principles.

4.2. Implications—The study yielded important educational management insights. The theme of enhancing language and comprehension skills reaffirms that storytelling is not only an instructional method but also a strategic tool for literacy development. Teachers observed tangible improvements in students' listening, speaking, and reading comprehension skills when stories were regularly incorporated into instruction. Administrators should therefore prioritize storytelling in literacy frameworks by offering professional development and access to diverse story materials. The theme of supporting socio-emotional learning and learner engagement reveals how storytelling contributes to emotional literacy, empathy, and a positive classroom climate. Stories became mirrors and windows for students, mirrors in which they saw themselves and windows through which they viewed others' experiences. This emotional connection heightened student engagement and created a more inclusive learning environment, aligning with the holistic goals of edu-

cation. Lastly, creating opportunities for multi-sensory and differentiated learning emphasizes storytelling's adaptability to various learning profiles. By engaging multiple senses and modifying story elements to match learners' needs, storytelling emerged as a flexible and inclusive pedagogy. Educational leaders should recognize this potential and support teachers with resources and training on differentiated instruction through storytelling. The themes emerging from teachers' experiences, coping strategies, and educational insights present compelling evidence for the continued and expanded use of storytelling in primary education. When viewed through the lenses of Vygotsky, Bruner, and Bandura, storytelling is not merely a literacy tool but a holistic educational strategy that supports cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development.

4.3. Future Directions—The findings of this study have illuminated the significant role of storytelling as a learner-centered approach that enhances literacy development among primary grade learners. Teachers' experiences revealed that storytelling not only fosters students' oral language skills and comprehension but also cultivates creativity, critical thinking, and engagement in the classroom. These insights highlight the need for a collaborative and sustained effort among all educational stakeholders to fully realize the potential of storytelling in literacy instruction. As such, this section outlines future directions for learners, teachers, school administrators, the Department of Education (DepEd), parents, and future researchers. These recommendations aim to strengthen the integration of storytelling in early literacy practices and ensure its continued impact on educational outcomes. For learners, they should foster active participation in storytelling activities such as retelling, dramatizing, and composing their own stories which can significantly enhance their literacy skills. Incorporating multi-modal expressions can cater to diverse learning styles and

promote deeper engagement. Exposing them to culturally relevant stories can strengthen their sense of identity and make literacy learning more meaningful. For teachers, continuous professional development is essential. Training programs should focus on equipping educators with creative storytelling techniques, the use of digital storytelling tools, and culturally responsive strategies that align with learners' backgrounds. Teachers are also encouraged to engage in collaborative efforts through communities of practice, where they can share effective methods and reflect on their storytelling experiences to enhance teaching practices. School administrators play a vital role in sustaining the use of storytelling in literacy instruction. They should implement supportive policies that allow time and space for storytelling sessions, as well as allocate resources such as age-appropriate storybooks, puppets, digital tools, and local literature. Establishing reading corners and designating storytelling periods within the school day can further institutionalize storytelling as an effective literacy strategy. The Department of Education (DepEd) is encouraged to integrate storytelling into the national literacy framework and teacher training programs. DepEd can support schools by providing modules, funding, and monitoring systems to ensure quality implementation of storytelling practices. Partnerships with local authors and cultural institutions can also help promote Filipino literature and indigenous narratives in the classroom. Parents, as primary literacy partners at home, should be empowered to use storytelling as a bonding and educational tool. Parent education programs can teach them how to use everyday experiences to tell meaningful stories, thereby reinforcing literacy skills developed at school. Future researchers are encouraged to explore the long-term impact of storytelling on learners' reading comprehension, writing skills, and socio-emotional development. Comparative studies across different grade levels, languages, and regions would also help deepen the understanding of how storytelling can be tailored to specific learner needs. Furthermore, action research by teachers can contribute rich, context-based insights into effective storytelling strategies for literacy growth.

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