

El Barco Fantasma: A Narrative Study of the Phantom Ship in Maydolong Eastern Samar

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the local folklore of the Black Ship in Maydolong, Eastern Samar. The research aimed to document the origin of the myth, examine how the narrative reflects the beliefs of the community, and transform the collected stories into a multimedia narrative for cultural preservation. A qualitative research design was used in gathering data from twenty-six (26) elderly respondents aged 75-79 who were believed to have knowledge and experiences related to the folklore. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect narratives about the phantom ship, including its physical characteristics, supernatural abilities, cultural meaning, and role within the community. The study followed modified ADDIE framework consisting of Analysis, Design, Development and Evaluation phases to guide the creation of a narrative based multimedia output. Findings revealed that the Black Ship is widely believed to be an enchanted phantom vessels that appears during stormy weather and at night, often associated with danger, plague, or the disappearance of people near the seacoast. The myth also functions as a cultural warning that encourages community members, especially children, to remain cautious near seacoast near coastal areas during unfavorable weather conditions. Based on the narratives, the researchers developed a digital illustrated storybook using multimedia tools such as Clip Studio Paint and Ibis Paint. The final output was evaluated by the teachers using the Department of Education Nueva Ecija Evaluation Rating Sheet for Storybooks and Big Books. The results in Factor 1 was rated 4.1 and factor 2 with 4.1, which were interpreted as Acceptable with minimal Revision; both met the Acceptable standards with minimal revision. With this, there is a basis that using storytelling can preserve local cultural heritage while making traditional narratives more accessible to younger generation.

Keywords: folklore, multimedia storytelling, cultural preservation, qualitative research, and Black Ship Myth

INTRODUCTION

Maydolong is a province of Eastern Samar, it come from the phrase used by a fishermen to give command “Matnog it dolong” which means the bow must point to Matnog. Over time this repeated command was shortened to “Maydolong” and eventually replaced the original name of the settlement, becoming the official name of the village. While the resident they believed that the early settlers of the town were Families who fled Spanish rule to escape taxes known *mga luuc* which means an individual who hid. As years passed villagers start to settle in Maydolong their main livelihood is fishing and farming and even before the colonization happen in the Philippines, Filipino had already rich on cultures and belief such as spiritual practices. Back in the pre-colonial era Filipino’s is animistic or polytheistic, they worship so many gods and spirits, these gods came to be associated with rivers, trees, and mountains. They believed those unseen creature is existed. They pay respect to them and summoned according to their belief (Rosales, 2025) In multimedia studies E-Folklore refers to the collection, preservation, and dissemination of folklore through digital platform and technologies. It helps to preserve the folklore in accessible way in today’s digital age, where information is rapidly shared across online platform. E-folklore plays crucial role in cultural preservation many traditional folk expressions which are once limited to specific communities or regions are now widely available through websites, podcast, and social media. This digital transformation allows folklore to reach younger generations who many not have direct exposure to traditional storytelling or Folk performance, e-folklore helps researchers, educators, and cultural enthusiast analyze and study folklore in ways that were not possible before, using the digital tools for transcription,

translation and interaction learning Folklore (Gobinath, 2025) Preserving folklore embodied the traditional, beliefs and practices where it also recognize once community as their identity on how rich their culture is, multimedia animation contributed an important role on illustrating through picturing out the possible way of their imagination, animators give life the story through animation. The local myth of the black ship in Maydolong Eastern Samar is about a phantom ship that seen in the past, this story become a topic of every families and residents that made them curios about the origin and story, as many years have passed this story become less known as elders passed away and the new generation less give importance of the folklore due to the influence of technology. It has been noted that in the modern era, young children show a growing fascination with advanced digital media and technology. The rise of affordable and user-friendly devices has made PlayStations, video games, and violent movies more accessible and popular among them (Rahman, 2022). While according to (ChampStory, n.d.)Folklore is a vital element of cultural heritage that must be recognized and preserved in the 21st century, as it connects future generations to their roots and fosters appreciation for cultural diversity. By safeguarding traditions, stories, and practices, communities uphold the values and beliefs that define them while transmitting knowledge, wisdom, and creativity. Serving as a living repository of shared history and a catalyst for social change, folklore ensures that cultural heritage remains vibrant, relevant, and enduring across time.

preserving the folklore of the black ships will help the next generation not to forget about the local folklore, even elders passed away they can still tell the story to their future children and grandchildren, preserving the folklore will help the local myth not be endangered and preserved. The researchers aims to, assess the origin of the ship, to explore how the black ship story reflects community beliefs and to relate the black ship narrative within broader ghost ship myths in the Philippines and beyond.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employed a qualitative research design, to understand and gather the data about the local story of the black ship. The researchers selected individuals to be part of the study, who were believed to have an experience and knowledge about the story .The data that the researcher gathered from the respondents served as the basis of the study. The study followed the modified ADDIE framework, The ADDIE model is a widely utilized framework for instructional design, prominently used by educators and content developers to create effective training programs and educational materials, which includes the Analysis, Design, Development, and Evaluation phases. In Analysis the researchers compared the respondents' statements and reviewed and analyzed the possible appearance of the black ship and it's origin. This helped the researcher to deepen their understanding about the folklore of the black ship. The Implementation Phase was omitted by the researchers, as it was deemed unnecessary for the purposes of this research study, the study did not need for implementation such as publishing the story book, it will be evaluate by the ten (10) teachers to test it effectiveness.

The results from the Analysis phase served as a guide in the Design and development phases, where the story was formed into Story Book. In the Evaluation Phase, the final output was checked by the Evaluators to assure that the researcher Story Book was accurate and also the data, through comparison of the respondents stories this will help the Researchers to identify the narratives and statement based on their experiences and knowledge about the black ship of Minasnge Beach in Maydolong Eastern Samar.

Research Locale

This study conducted in Maydolong Eastern Samar, Maydolong is a coastal municipality in the province of Eastern Samar.The municipality has a land area of 399.63 square kilometers or 154.30 square miles which constitutes 8.66% of Eastern Samar's total area. Its population as determined by the 2020 Census was 15,314. This represented 3.21% of the total population of Eastern Samar province, or 0.34% of the overall population of the Eastern Visayas region. Based on these figures, the population density is computed at 38 inhabitants per square kilometer or 99 inhabitants per square mile (Retrieved from: <https://www.philatlas.com/>,January.15, 2026)

Research Respondents

The researchers used a purposive sampling technique to select the respondents of the study. A Purposive sampling was a non-probability sampling technique where researchers intentionally selected participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objective. In this study, the researchers selected elderly people in Maydolong as the respondents. To determine the total number of respondents, the researchers based the count on statistical records from the Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) office to identify the total population of elders in Maydolong. Only those aged 75-79 were chosen as respondents. The researchers used a purposive sampling in order to limit the respondents according to their age. As age served as the qualification of the study. The researchers chose individuals aged 75-79 as qualified participants because their lived experiences, oral histories, and memories of traditional practices served as a bridge between the past and the present. This age group was considered more reliable for folklore transmission, not because senior citizens aged 60-74 lacked knowledge, but because older elders had greater life experience, cultural authority, and connection to traditions. Their role as custodians of heritage made their storytelling more trusted and enduring. (Retrieved from: <https://link.springer.com/chapter/10,...January.20,2026>)

Table 1. Participants Profile

Respondents type	Age	Number	Role in the Study	Phase Involved
Elders	75-79	26	Provided myth narratives and cultural context	Analysis

Table 2. Evaluators Profile

Highest Educational Attainment	Profession	Number
College Graduate with master's Degree	Teachers	10

Analysis Phase

In this phase the researchers focused on analysing the data, the researcher identified the information that was gathered from the respondents. Through comparison from different statements this helped the researcher obtain the information needed about the Black ship. A qualitative interview was used to gathered all the data which was interpreted using the Department of Education Nueva Ecija Evaluation tool for story book and big books, this helped the researchers analyze the data that was gathered after the interviews were conducted. The researchers selected the 26 Respondents to limit the respondents who participated in order to organize the interviews and avoid any misleading information, this ensured that the respondents were guided during the interview process. The researchers provided a questionnaire that served as a guide for the respondents, it helped them stay on the topic and clearly state their experiences or knowledge about the story of the Black Ships.

The researchers also provided a review of related literature to further the understanding of the study. This helped broaden the scope of the research and allowed the researchers to gather information from various reliable published sources. Such literature served as a reference for the researchers and guided in analysing previous studies that were similar to the black ship of Minasge Beach in Maydolong Eastern Samar.

Design Phase

In this phase, the researchers compiled all the gathered data which served as a guide in creating the concept illustrations. Researchers illustrated the creature based on the qualitative data gathered from the interviews, translating the local respondents' narratives into visual representations. This ensured that the illustrations accurately captured the cultural elements and details of the creature as described by the local Respondents. The researchers followed a design process in which created multiple illustrations and incorporated feedback from the local respondents to validate the accuracy of the concept illustration. By prioritizing cultural sensitivity and community engagement, the researchers used the software Ibis Paint, which served as the main platform for

creating visual illustration in Multimedia. The researchers created illustrations that are not only visually compelling but also culturally relevant and respectful.

Development Phase

During this phase researchers created a storyline and script based on Respondents narratives, finalizing the initial concept into a Story book. The researchers utilized software such as Clip Studio Paint and Ibis Paint, to bring the creature and it's environment to life. The illustration process began with the development of a story based on the compiled data, which served as the foundation for the character design and themes. Draft illustrations were created to visualize the creature's design, providing a visual guide for the supernatural events in the story.

The researchers refined the concept illustration, adding intricate details, Effect, and background elements to produce a polished digital product. This iterative process involved multiple stages, from initial concept development to final production, ensuring that the creature and its surroundings were accurately represented according to the collected narratives and descriptions of the respondents.

Evaluation Phase

In the Evaluation phase, the researcher assessed the effectiveness, quality, and acceptability of the Story Book using the Evaluation Rating Sheet for Story Books and Big Books from the Department of Education–Nueva Ecija. Evaluators rated the final output based on the standardized criteria, which helped the researcher to analyzed the final output of the study and measured it effectiveness.

Descriptive statistics, particularly the weighted mean, were used to analyze the results, while qualitative feedback supported the refinement and validation of the final outcome. The results served as the basis for determining how effective the study was, and it allowed the expert to analyze whether the study met the standard based on the evaluation rating sheet, this helped the researchers identified the deficiency of the study.

Data Analysis

In this Phase the researchers worked on the Data Analysis, which focused on analyzing the data that had been gathered from the study. The researchers used the evaluation rating sheet for Story Books and Big Books from the Department of Education-Nueva Ecija. This helped the researchers identify whether the study was successful and accurate based on the rating scale.

Table 3. Rating Scale based on DepEd Nueva Ecija Evaluation Rating Sheet for Story Books and Big Book

Scale	Mean Range	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
4	3.41 – 4.20	Very Satisfactory	Acceptable with minimal revisions
3	2.61 – 3.40	Satisfactory	Acceptable with moderate revisions
2	1.81 – 2.60	Fair	Needs major revisions
1	1.00 – 1.80	Poor	Not acceptable

Ethical Considerations

This multimedia research project adhered to established ethical standards throughout the processes of data gathering, content validation, and expert evaluation. Informed consent was obtained from all validators prior to participation, ensuring that they were fully informed of the study's objectives, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences .Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed. Any references to institutional records or contextual information used to guide content development were examined

only in summarized form, with no personally identifiable information included. Evaluators' comments and ratings were treated with confidentiality and were reported solely in aggregated form to prevent individual attribution.

All digital and printed materials generated during the validation process including scripts, storyboards, and multimedia outputs were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all materials were archived or disposed of responsibly in accordance with institutional guidelines. The study upheld the principle of beneficence by ensuring that all research activities minimized risk and supported positive educational and cultural outcomes. The primary purpose of the project was to produce multimedia materials that promote cultural awareness, ethical representation, and educational value. Prior coordination and written permission from appropriate academic authorities were secured to ensure compliance with institutional and ethical research standards before the conduct of validation activities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the analyzed data through a thematic analysis. The data were gathered through a semi structured interview from 26 informants from Maydolong, Eastern Samar who believe to have the knowledge of myth and folklore about the black ship. The questionnaire was designed to document the authentic origin, Physical characteristics, cultural meaning and narrative functions of the local myths. The findings shows that the myth is strongly believe to be a ship of enchanted people who serve as to give a sign of epidemic or to take people from the different Barangays in Maydolong, specially those located at the seacoast. Informants described the ship as painted in all black, modern and has a bright light. Which has become the most dominant visual description of different account. Respondents also emphasized that the creature possess supernatural control over the nature and usually appears when the weather is bad, likely when it is stormy. In terms of limitation, the creature believe to disappear when someone know the *Orasyon* or prayer to be safe from the black ship, it serve as the weakness of the creature. This finding introduces a natural conflict mechanism within the narrative and supports the development of a resolution that remains faithful to cultural belief. With regard to morality, the creature viewed as morally unfair, by taking innocent people mostly children without any warning. This reinforces the myth's primary function as moral warning rather than a source of fear alone.

Culturally, the myth serve as a reminder to be aware and be careful any time. Several respondents explained that once a person have been taken by the black ship there is no chance to get back, effectively to avoid that situation to happen they tell their children to be careful and not play nearby in seacoast, specially when the weather is not good and dark outside. Overall, the results confirm that the myth is a culturally grounded narrative that directly guided both the story structure and creature design in this study.

The data were gathered using the Research Questionnaire for Eastern Samar Myths: A Research-Based Digital Storytelling Project developed by the researchers and adapted from established qualitative and cultural documentation frameworks. The instrument is designed to document the authentic origin, characteristics, cultural meaning, and narrative functions of local myths prior to story adaptation.

Table 4. Thematic Sections

Section	Focus
A	Origin and Historical Background
B	Physical and Supernatural Description
C	Strengths, Powers, and Abilities
D	Weaknesses and Limitations
E	Cultural Function and Symbolism

F	Cultural Function and Symbolism
J	Guidance for story Adaptation

These questions are adapted from Spradley's Ethnographic Interviewing, UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Documentation, Propp's Morphology of the Folktale, Campbell's Myth Functions, and NCCA Folklore Guides

Table 5. Thematic Summary of Interview Results on the Black Ship Myth

Thematic Category	Dominant Findings	Design Implication
Origin & History	Myth linked of the enchanted people	Setting anchored in seacoast
Physical Description	Huge, has a bright light, modern style of ship	Black color, luminous effect and has a thick black shadows
Power	Appears during bad weather	Night scenes
Weaknesses	Spell or prayer	Conflict device in plot
Morality	Unfair, and cruel	Anti-environment destruction theme
Cultural Function	Teaches to be aware, and careful	Central moral message
Variation	Same statement in every Barangay	Similar story
Thematic Category	Dominant Findings	Design Implication
Modern Relevance	Elders believe, youth less engage	Modern storytelling approach
Adaptation	Core traits must remain	Cultural design limits

The instrument's multi-dimensional structure allowed the researchers to capture not only the physical traits of the mythical creature, but also its symbolic meaning, moral role, and relevance in the present community. As shown in table, the myth is deeply rooted in uper natural beliefs, particularly in its role as a warning figure that believe to spread a plague and death. The dark color of the ship, the brightest light that has been seen, and its unnatural appearance informed the visual design of the creature, while the moral themes shaped the story conflict and resolution. Furthermore, the adaptation guidelines in Section J of the questionnaire ensured that essential cultural elements were preserved, preventing misrepresentation. Overall, the use of this culturally grounded research instrument strengthened the authenticity of the creative output and ensured that all design decisions were evidence-based, community-informed, and culturally respectful.

The initial sketch of the creature reflect the dominant descriptions, and moral roles identified in the study. By translating community narratives into visual form, the design phase demonstrates how research findings were transformed into authentic character representations while preserving the integrity of Eastern Samar folklore.

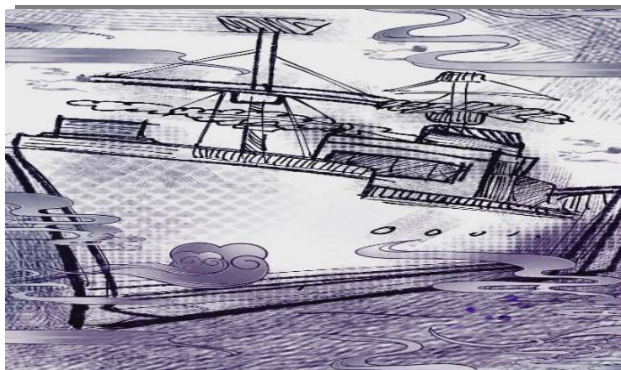


Figure 1: Design Concept

Figure one illustrates the possible creature design, which integrates the consistent visual elements identified in the data analysis. The creature had been describe as huge, painted in all black, and no crew on board. It has unease presence, it gives chill to anyone who see it. Once the ship was full, it will sail again and disappear there is no specific time that it will appear.



Figure 2 Far from the seacoast

Figure 2 show the illustration when the ship is far from the coast, as it all black it made the shadow even darker. When the people saw it from a far, they will immediately be inside on their houses, and gather all the children to keep them safe.

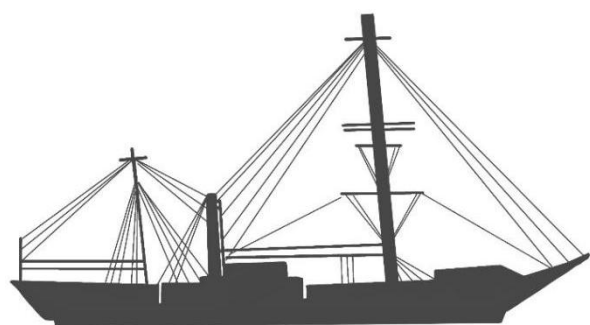


Figure 3 the possible measure of the ship

In figure 3 it shows the possible measure of the ship, on how huge it is, as the respondents can't describe on what exactly the measure of the ship, they describe it as huge, that it can make the waves apart from where it sail, the sound of the roaring waves when it was sailing was the basis that it is huge. Any miscalculation of the measure of the ship, is not intended as the basis of the illustration below is on the respondents statement.

During the development phase the researchers finalized the storyline, script, and visual concepts that represents the Black Ship myth of Maydolong, Eastern Samar. The narrative was carefully structured to remain faithful to

the accounts shared by the respondents while presenting the story in a clear and engaging form. Digital Illustration tools such as Clip Studio Paint and Ibis Paint, were used to produce the final visual illustration. The development process included creating character and environment illustrations, designing the appearance of the Black Ship, and constructing scenes that reflect the supernatural atmosphere described in the narrative. Giving attention to the details such as lighting, shadows, weather conditions, and the dark appearance of the ship in order to accurately portray the community's description of the myth.

Throughout this phase, the researchers refined the illustrations and narrative elements through several revisions. Feedback and data from the respondents served as a guide to ensure that the final output remained culturally respectful and consistent with the respondents' testimonies. By combining research findings with digital art and storytelling techniques, the Development Phase resulted in a finalized multimedia narrative that visually represents the folklore of the Black Ship while preserving its cultural significance.



Figure 4. The final Illustration of the Ship

The figure four shows the final Illustration of the ship where it similarly looks on the people description about the black ship, as it shows at night people hardly recognize the detailed look of the ship, and when it appears there is a thick shadows that covered the ship. But the people confirms that the ship is painted in all black and huge.

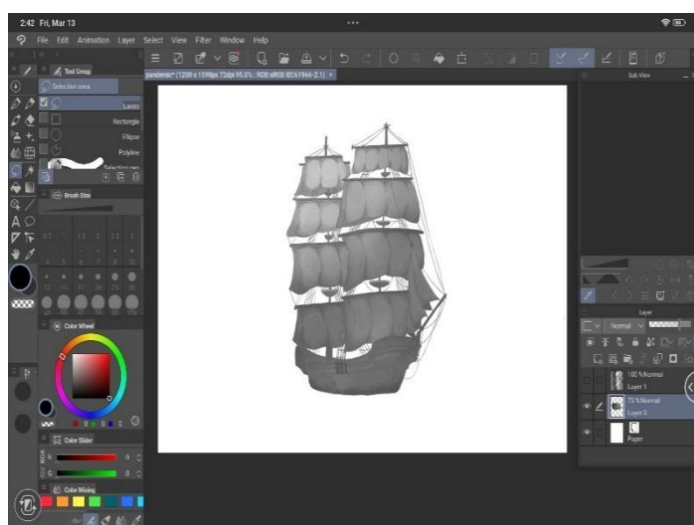


Figure 5. Character line art

The researcher used the Clip Studio Paint to illustrate the visual image of the Black Ship. The illustration is based on the respondents' description of the physical appearance of the ship, it is similarly like the ships during Spanish period.

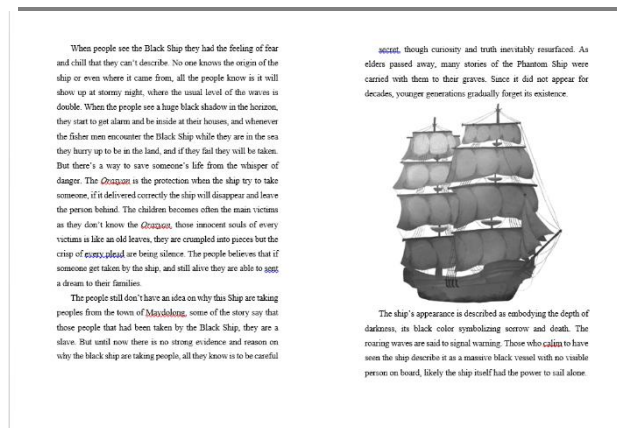


Figure 6. The Storybook

Figure six shows the body of the storybook, where the researchers create the illustration that possibly fit from the story. And translated the local folklore into a narrative which can be read by anyone. The researchers undergo from evaluation, and criticizing the paper to insure that everything in the book is accurate.

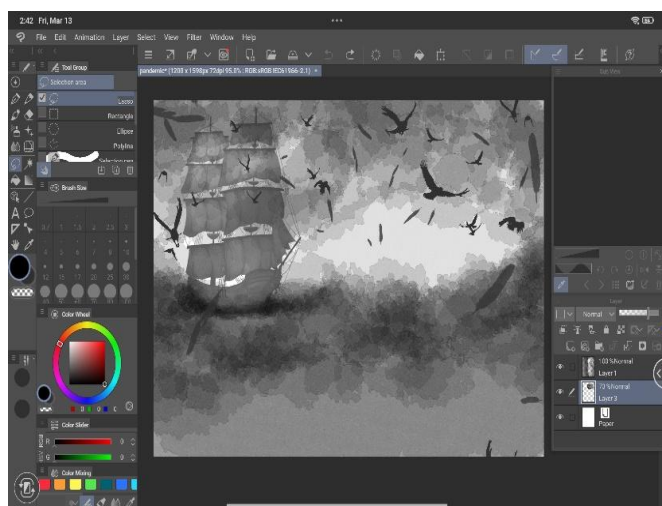


Figure 7. The cover page

Figure seven shows the cover page of the storybook, the cover page was inspired by the story of the black ship. In the cover page, readers may have an idea on what's the story all about.

Table 6. Summary of Evaluation of Factor 1

Parameter	Grand Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
story	4.2	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
Socio Cultural Sensitivity	4.5	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
Development Aspects	4.3	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
Plot/Storyline	4	Very Satisfactory	Acceptable with minimal Revision
Characters	4.2	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
Visuals	4.1	Very Satisfactory	Acceptable with minimal Revision

Language	4.2	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
Grammar	4.2	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards

Table 6 presents the evaluation results of the story content and cultural elements of the developed multimedia storybook based on several parameters. The results show that most of the evaluated aspects received high ratings from the evaluators. The parameter Socio-Cultural Sensitivity obtained the highest grand mean of 4.5, interpreted as Excellent, indicating that the story effectively respects and presents the Cultural beliefs and traditions of the community. Similarly, Development Aspects received a grand mean of 4.3, while Story and Characters both obtained a mean of 4.2, all interpreted as Excellent. These results suggest that the narrative structure, character presentation, and cultural integration were highly acceptable and met the required standards. While, Plot/Storyline obtained a grand mean of 4.0, while Visuals received 4.1, both interpreted as Very Satisfactory, indicating that these aspects were acceptable but may require minimal revisions for further improvement. In terms of language components, Language received a mean score of 4.2, and Grammar obtained 4.2, which were also interpreted as Excellent.

Table 7. Summary of Evaluation of Factor 2

Parameter	Grand Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
Prints	4.1	Very Satisfactory	Acceptable with minimal Revision
Book Design and Layout	4.1	Very Satisfactory	Acceptable with minimal Revision
Paper and Binding	4.1	Very Satisfactory	Acceptable with minimal Revision

Table 7 presents the evaluation results for Factor 2, which focuses on the technical aspects of the storybook. The parameters Prints, Book Design and Layout, and Paper and Binding all obtained grand mean of 4.1, interpreted as Very Satisfactory. This indicates that the digital material is acceptable in terms of format and technical quality, with only minimal revisions needed.

Table 8. The total Grand Mean per Factors 1 and 2

Factors	Grand Mean	Interpretation
1	4.1	Acceptable with minimal Revision
2	4.1	Acceptable with minimal Revision

Table 8 presents the evaluation results of the factors used in the study. Factor 1 and Factor 2 both obtained a grand mean of 4.1. Based on the interpretation of the rating scale, both factors are described as Acceptable with Minimal Revision. This indicates that the storybook require minor improvements to further enhance its quality.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the local folklore of the Black Ship (El Barco Fantasma) in Maydolong, Eastern Samar using a qualitative narrative approach supported by multimedia illustration. Data were gathered from elderly respondents aged 75-79, who shared their experiences and knowledge about the myth. The collected narratives revealed that the Ship is widely believed to be an enchanted phantom ship that appears during bad weather, especially at night, and is associated with danger, plague, or the disappearance of people near the seacoast. The qualitative findings were translated into a multimedia narrative and illustrated storybook using the modified ADDIE framework. The design and development of the visual materials were guided by the dominant themes identified in the data analysis, including the ship's physical appearance, huge, black, and with bright lights,

supernatural abilities, weaknesses through prayer or *Orasyon*, and its cultural role as a warning symbol for the community.

The final multimedia output was evaluated using the DepEd Nueva Ecija Evaluation Rating Sheet for Storybooks and Big Books by 10 senior high school teachers. The results showed that Factor 1 Story Content and Cultural Representation received high ratings, with Socio-Cultural Sensitivity 4.5, Development Aspects 4.3, Story 4.2, and Characters 4.2 interpreted as Excellent, while Plot/Storyline 4.0, Visuals 4.1, Language 4.2, and Grammar 4.2 were rated Excellent. For Factor 2 Technical Aspects, the categories Prints 4.1, Book Design and Layout 4.1, and Paper and Binding 4.1 were all interpreted as Very Satisfactory. These results indicate that the developed storybook is highly acceptable and effective as a multimedia material for cultural storytelling and folklore preservation. The findings demonstrate that qualitative research combined with multimedia storytelling can effectively document and preserve traditional folklore.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the Narrative findings and evaluation outcomes the plot/storyline 4.0 and visuals 4.1 receiving very satisfactory ratings, further refinement of the storytelling flow, visuals details, and scene presentation is suggested to augment the narrative's engagement and appeal to its readership. Future research endeavors could also broaden the study's scope by incorporating respondents from diverse age groups or communities, thereby facilitating the collection of a broader spectrum of perspectives on local folklore and fortifying cultural documentation efforts.

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