

Reviving Folk Narratives: A Qualitative and Digital Study of an Engkanto Myth in Barangay Pagbabangnan, San Julian, Eastern Samar

Kian M. Cajipo, Marjorie C. Galdo, Kyla Jane E. Ocenar

College of Computer Studies, Eastern Samar State University, Borongan City, Eastern Samar, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1309000074>

Received: 16 September 2026; Accepted: 21 September 2026; Published: 06 October 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the Engkanto myth of Brgy. Pagbabangnan San Julian Eastern Samar. Modernization and advancement of technology threatens the transmission of this local folklore. Narratives about Engkanto are deeply rooted in rural Philippine communities, originating from precolonial animistic beliefs. In order to maintain this cultural knowledge. This paper has managed to document and analyze the tales about Engkanto and transform the cultural information into the modern media. Applying a qualitative research methodology with the assistance of the modified ADDIE, Analysis, Design, Development, and Evaluation (ADDE), the researchers collected the information based on the interviews, observation, and narrative beliefs to get to know the community perceptions of Engkanto as a community and cultural documentation. The data was then translated into a developed material and evaluated by reference to the modified DepEd Region III Nueva Ecija Evaluation Rating Sheet on Storybooks and Big Books. Factor 1 and 2 were both rated 4.7, which were considered highly acceptable and met all the necessary standards. This indicates that the storybook is considered acceptable for academic purposes and the basis for methodological studies.

Keywords: Engkanto, folklore, indigenous beliefs, cultural narratives, multimedia storytelling, qualitative research.

INTRODUCTION

Myths are an ancient story that is transmitted across generations and it usually incorporates some kind of supernatural event or creature (Hawes, G., 2022). These stories are passed across human societies through oral traditions, and they convey values, beliefs, knowledge and they assist communities to make sense of the world and their position in it (Aisyah and Rahmat, 2024). The Philippines is rich in diverse cultural heritages, way back before the Spanish colonization Filipinos practised animism in which they believe that all natural elements in the world have spirit. Rural communities believe that there are supernatural beings called Engkanto. Engkanto is a Spanish loanword derived from encanto meaning charm or enchantment (Demetrio, 1969). In Philippine folklore, Engkanto are creatures regarded as nature spirits and guardians of the natural environment. They inhabit forests, mountains and other natural places and they can be friendly to human beings that treat them well but are revengeful when abused. Rios (2022) found that Engkanto may be benevolent towards people who show respect through proper ritual and customs but they can cause illness, misfortune, and other harmful consequences when they're disturbed or their dwelling place is disrupted. In Eastern Samar Engkanto narratives can be found in different provinces and have diverse versions depending on the communities culture. Among the diverse myth narratives, the Engkanto myth of Barangay Pagbabangnan, San Julian, Eastern Samar, this study will analyze. This local myth narrative has been transmitted by word of mouth through generations but with the modernization and advancement of digital media, is at risk of being forgotten. These oral narrations would be lost, and the rich indigenous knowledge that explains the beliefs, values, and attachment of the community to the natural environment would disappear, which would lessen the identity of the local culture (Saad et al., 2024). In order to overcome this obstacle, this study aimed to (1) Document and analyse the story of the local engkanto myth,

(2) To create a storybook based on the gathered information and (3) to analyse the transformed data with the help of the evaluation tool DepEd Region III Nueva Ecija Evaluating Sheet of Story Book and Big Book.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was conducted in qualitative research design with the modified ADDE model to understand the story of the local engkanto myth in Barangay Pagbabangnan, San Julian Eastern Samar. The updated ADDE instructional framework model is focused on the stages of Analysis, Design, Development, and Evaluation. The adjusted ADDE model provides a systematic approach that transforms information into multimedia production outcomes that is not necessary to implement on site.

Research Locale

Pagbabangnan is a Barangay in the municipality of San Julian, in the province of Eastern Samar. The 2020 Census population established that it had 1,469 people. This was 9.93 percent of the entire population of San Julian. (PhilAtlas,2020)

Research Respondents

The respondents are people from Barangay Pagbabangnan since the myth originated there, the authors see Barangay Pagbabangnan San Julian fit to be the locale of the study. The researchers utilized a purposive sampling method in selecting 10 respondents in Barangay Pagbabangnan, San Julian, Eastern Samar. To ensure data authenticity, participants were selected based on specific criteria: they must be aged 40 above, knowledgeable about the local Engkanto myths, and lastly they must be a bona fide community member of Barangay Pagbabangnan, San Julian. This sampling method ensures that participants meet specific criteria, enabling them to provide authentic oral accounts and validate character designs and cultural details across the analysis, design, and development phases of the research.

Respondents' Profile

The 10 selected respondents consist of 5 Elders and 5 Knowledgeable community members from Barangay Pagbabangnan. The selected individuals are familiar with community stories, cultural beliefs, and long-standing myth narratives. These selected individuals possess knowledge of this myth, making them suitable to provide myth accounts and help validate the character designs and cultural elements used in the study. They take part in the analysis, design, and development phases of the research.

Table 1. Research Respondents

Respondent Type	Number	Role in the Study	Phase Involve
Elders	5	Provided Engkanto narratives	Analysis
Knowledgeable community member	5	Validated character designs	Design and Development

Evaluators Profile

The researchers formally ask professionals for help in evaluating their narrative output. The selected evaluators include Elementary school principals and teachers who teach in Barangay Pagbabangnan, San Julian, Eastern Samar.

Table 2. Evaluators Profile

Highest Education Attainment	Profession	Number
College Graduate	Elementary School Principals	3
College Graduate	Elementary School History Teachers	7

Analysis phase

In this phase, The researchers conducted a house to house interview in Pagbabangnan, San Julian Eastern Samar. Primary to the interview, the researchers ask for consent in recording the respondents while providing their narratives and allocate 10 to 15minutes in each informant. The researchers utilized 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 on collecting narratives from the respondents. Interviews were conducted using the local Waray-Waray language to allow the participants to share oral traditions comfortably and accurately. During each session, the researchers wrote notes and recorded audio to document narrative details. After completing the field interviews, the researchers then organized the gathered data for analysis. Audio recordings are transcribed, translated into English, and cross-referenced with the written field notes to verify accuracy. The finalized transcripts were organized according to the thematic categories established in the questionnaire and presented in tables.

Design Phase

During this phase, the gathered data was then translated into culturally appropriate visual and narrative form. The researchers utilized the gathered data in the analysis phase to base the Engkanto appearance ensuring the accuracy of concept illustrations. The researchers then used clip studio paint to draw the character. This procedure guarantees that the researcher's vision and the character and locations that the informants have described do not conflict.

Development Phase

This process will then follow after planning and Designing to produce the output. This stage involves the creation of the storybook on the accepted storyline, character designs, layouts, and scripts done in the design stage. The researchers based on the elders and storytellers narrations about the Engkanto. The illustration software that will be utilized by the researcher is Clip Studio Paint.

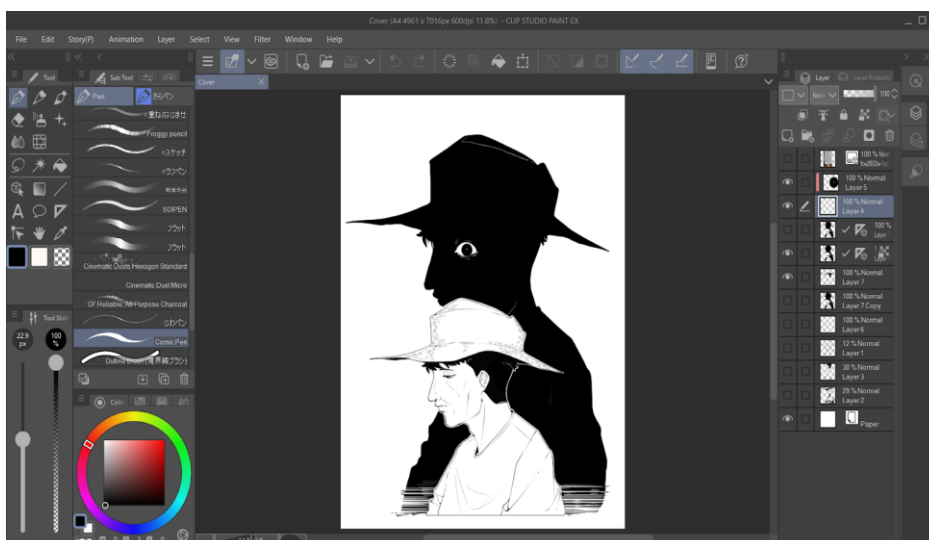


Figure 1: Illustration cover using Clip Studio Paint.

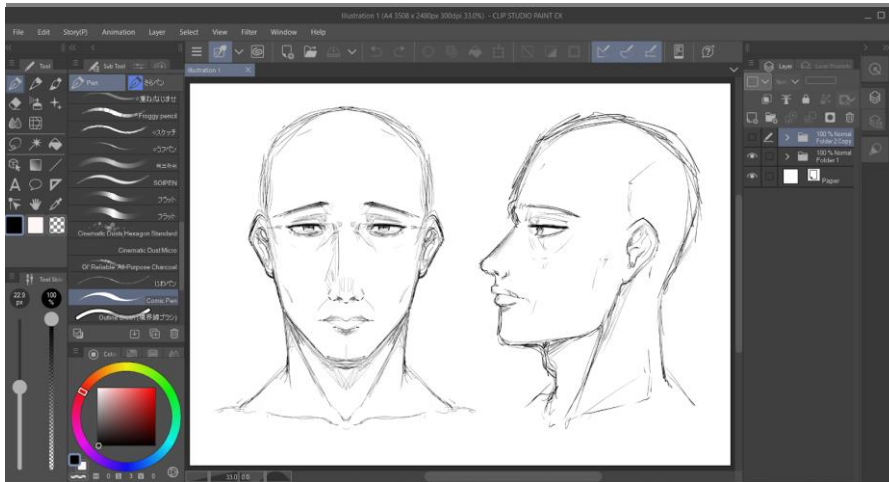


Figure 2: Sketches of the Engkanto using Clip Studio Paint

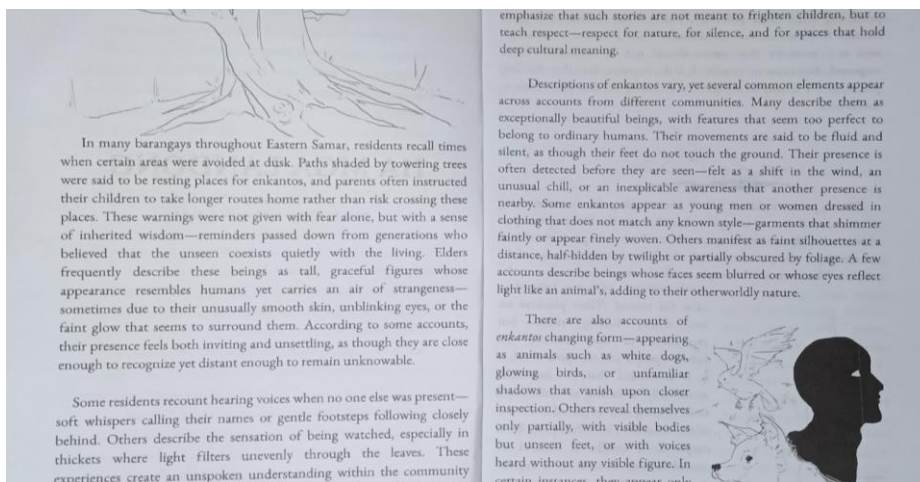


Figure3: The Structure of the Book

In writing the story the researchers used Google Docs. The story was written following a clear structure consisting of a beginning, middle and ending. The beginning introduces the setting of the story, describing the places often avoided at dusk and the stories shared by the elders. The middle presents the manifestation and encounter of the local residents' experience, such as hearing whispers, sensing someone's gaze or having seen unusual presence. The ending emphasizes how these beliefs remain part of cultural memory and continue to shape practices and respect for the unseen. In creating character design, the researchers based on the data they have gathered from the participants, describing the creature as having tall, graceful figures, smooth skin, unblinking eyes, or the faint glow that seems to surround them.

Evaluation Phase

The evaluation stage will measure the effectiveness, quality and acceptability of the developed output by applying the Evaluation Rating Sheet of Story Books and Big Books of the Department of Education-Nueva Ecija. This evaluation tool guarantees that the developed material strictly follows the educational standard for story books. To ensure the reliability and credibility of the results, evaluators were selected with this criteria: they must be a teacher in San Julian and a bona fide resident of the Municipality. The researchers visited 3 elementary schools across San Julian. Prior to the evaluation, the researchers obtained approval from the 3 school principals where they conducted the evaluation of the developed storybook. The output was then rated by evaluators who were experts as per the established criteria using the formula below:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where:

$\bar{X}$ = Mean score

$\sum X$ = Sum of all numerical ratings given by the evaluators

N = Total number of evaluators

The computed mean for each criterion represents the overall evaluation score of the animated film for that specific dimension.

Data Analysis

This phase involves data analysis work by the researcher which focuses on data analysis of the information that the researchers have collected with the use of the DepEd-Nueva Ecija Story Book and Big Book Evaluation Rating Sheet. Referencing to the rating scale, this helps the researchers to tell whether the study met all the required standards or needed major revisions.

Table 3. Rating Scale Based on the DepEd Region III Nueva Ecija Evaluation Rating Sheet for Story Books and Big Books

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.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents findings of the results of data obtained using Eastern Samar Myths Research Questionnaire structure into 6 thematic questionnaire: Origin and Historical Background, Physical and Supernatural Description, Strengths, Powers, and Abilities, Weaknesses and Limitations, Behavior, Morality, and Intent, Rituals, Beliefs, and Taboos. The findings revealed patterns about the Engkantos origin associated with an ancient dwelling house near the former Zowa coconut farm which is a community road in Pagbabangnan as the respondents stated “dida hit na dati na Zuwa Farm may-ada hat balay han gin mimilaka turoy han mga tawo nawara nala tigda” or where the previous Zuwa coconut farm there was a house when the residents decided to check the house it suddenly disappeared, from then on the residents recognise it to be the home of the Engkanto. This means that the narrative about place is anchored by the society and linked to the history of the forebears. The Engkanto, according to the respondents, “tawo hiya na subra nala hit kagwapo na paro hin diri ungod” means a man who possesses unearthly beauty and is able to alter reality in a manner that he can coexist with people without being detected. As limitations are concerned, the respondents did not provide any disadvantages that can be used to subdue the Engkanto. Instead, they emphasized seeking help from an albularyo and to do “luon” in which the respondents described it as a ritual warding off or undoing the curse the Engkanto has inflicted, they also added “pagtatabi-tabi kun ano man im himuon tuwing gabi ha magsirum na lugar, o kun aat ka ha kagugub-an” means always say ‘tabi-tabi po’ when doing things at the dark or when you're at the forest. As to the Engkanto's morality, the respondents stated “di man iton hira nag lalabot kun dire niyo uunahan” means they don't attack if not provoked. These creatures can be neutral as it has its own law, balance and punishes human benevolent or malevolent attitudes. This is a pointer that the common knowledge is based on the belief that not every Engkanto is evil but on the contrary they are responsive to the treatment of human beings. This justifies the primary purpose of the myth as a part of warnings and fear, since individuals always have to be mindful of their activities and be respectful of the nature people live with. The elders explained that there are sacred places, which have been desecrated, “iton na pangutod hin puno, urog na ta mga dagko na Puno? Ay-sus damo nait an nadali an iba ngani wra na kabuhi” theres alot of people who got cursed by cutting trees especially huge trees and some of the cursed people didn't survive. Cutting huge trees is considered taboo as Pilipino believes these trees are dwelled by Engkantos. Even though young people are familiar with the myth, most of them are likely to disregard it, which renders the necessity to achieve cultural continuation by narrating it nowadays. Overall, the results confirm that the myth is a culturally related narrative which directly impacted the design of the story and the design of the creatures in this project. The researchers used the assistance of the Research Questionnaire of the Eastern Samar Myths: A Research-Based Digital Stories Telling Project designed to measure the data that was collected by the researchers. The instrument aims at documenting the original identity, nature, cultural implication, and narrative functions of the local myths prior to adapting the story.

Table 4. The questionnaire is structured into six (6) thematic sections:

Section	Focus
A	Origin and Historical Background
B	Physical and Supernatural Description
C	Strengths, Powers, and Abilities
D	Weaknesses and Limitations
E	Behavior, Morality, and Intent
F	Rituals, Beliefs, and Taboos

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 (Based on the Research Questionnaire for Eastern Samar Myths)

Thematic Category	Dominant Findings	Design Implication
Origin and History of Engkanto	rooted in the former Zowa coconut farm in Pagbabangnan, San Julian Eastern Samar.	reflects a connection to nature and the spirit world
Physical Description	Human-like and unusually flawless appearance.	Slightly unreal, polished look
Powers	Distorts reality	Uses shifting or illusion-like environment
Weaknesses	No weaknesses were mentioned by the informants.	Creates smooth flow in narrative
Morality	Seen as generally good if respected.	Portrayed as good and benevolent
Rituals & Taboos	Saying tabi-tabi po and seeking help from an albularyo.	Show respectful gestures

The tool allowed the researchers to discover the symbolic meaning, moral purpose, and suitability of the mythical creature to the existing community along with the physical appearance of the mythical creature.

Origin and History

The Filipinos adhered to animism in pre colonial times to worship their spirits since they believed that animals and other objects in nature such as trees, rivers and mountains possessed spirits and they revered the diwatas and anitos as great spiritual beings or gods in respect of their daily lives. The beliefs have shaped their practices, customs and views of the visible and non visible world.

Morality

They are perceived as disengaged figures, which will only respond upon being disturbed because they are neither good nor evil but are instead responsive to how human beings treat them, respect or offend them. Their acts are thought to be a mere human behavior particularly when the demarcation of the visible and the invisible world is intersected.

Physical Description

They defined it as a man with a perfect appearance and with an alternate aura than an average human, many times appearing to be abnormally flawless and refined and may appear slightly unnatural, which distinguishes them out of ordinary people.

Rituals & Taboos

You should not be too loud because once you accidentally start their disturbances, you must tell them tabi tabi po which means that you are showing respect. Should you happen to have large gums or happen to fall ill after visiting an area where an engkanto may be living, enlist the assistance of an albularyo to help ease the punishment or spiritual malady that you thought had been brought upon by them.

Powers

According to the respondents account, it has the ability to invert reality to survive in human society, therefore it is able to masquerade itself and merge in the human society without being easily recognized.



Figure 4 Final Creature Design Concept

In figure 4, the final chosen creature design is presented, which incorporates the most stable visual elements, which were revealed during the analysis. The creature has the ideal human looks and has abilities to bend reality in a manner that it coexists with other humans. The grave and rough sketching style help in achieving the motive of the project, not to look like a kid but to represent a mature and culturally respectful image.

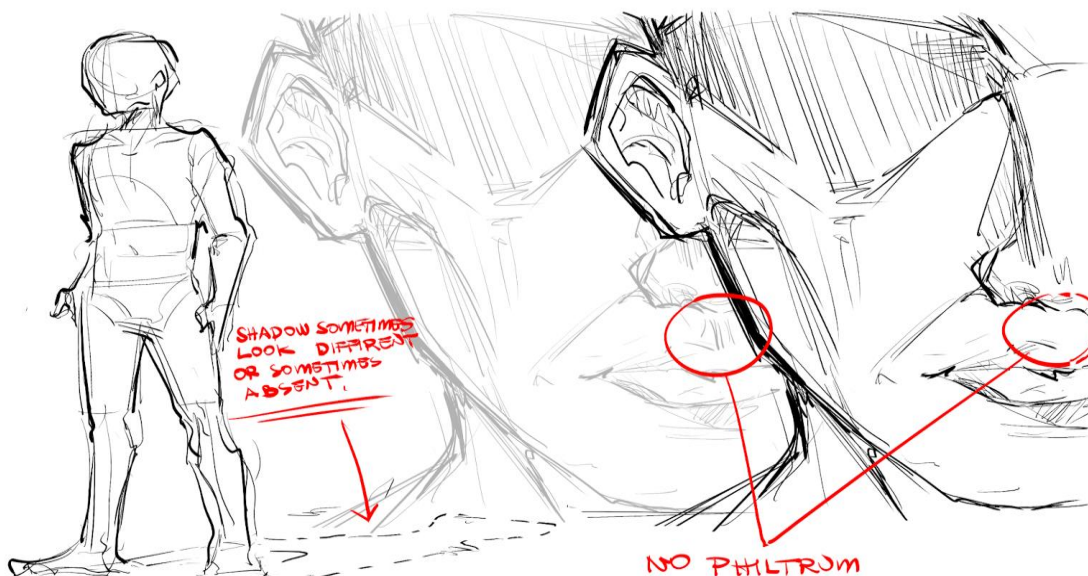


Figure 5 Refined Design Variations

Figure 5 displays a sophisticated collection of Engkanto design based on the thematic outcome of the interviews, especially the ones concerning physical description, behavior, and supernatural features. The character also has a perfect human appearance and is portrayed as an impartial being. Having no or deformed shadow and philtrum makes them easier to distinguish. These forms have been made to show the descriptions of the respondents concerning the Engkanto. This phase was devoted to the adaptation of the appearance of the creature to the moral role of a neutral being.



Figure 6 Exploratory Concept Sketches

Figure 6 is the sketch of the possible physical appearance of the Engkanto according to the accounts given by the community respondents. usually human-like and abnormally perfect in its looks. They purportedly possess pitch black eyes, smooth skin, which is clear and untouched, graceful features, and a winning presence, though somehow unnatural, almost too perfect to be human. Engkanto may be of either sex, and is normally well-dressed and carrying a sense of serenity and enigma. The sketches provided formed the basis of finalizing the Engkanto design based on the prevailing features as detected during the analysis stage.

Table 6. Factor 1 evaluation results using the modified DepEd Region III Nueva Ecija Evaluation Rating Sheet for Story Books and Big Books.

Parameter	Grand Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
1. Story	4.8	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
2. Socio-cultural sensitivity	4.8	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
3. Developmental aspect	4.7	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
4. Plot / Story Line	4.7	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
5. Characters	4.7	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
6. Visual	4.7	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required

			standards
7. Language	4.8	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
8. Grammar	4.8	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards

Table 6 presents the results of the evaluation for Factor 1, which focuses on the overall quality of the developed graphic narrative in terms of story, cultural sensitivity, development aspects, plot, characters, visual presentation, language, and grammar. Based on the evaluation results, the material received positive ratings in all parameters, with grand mean scores ranging from 4.7 to 4.8 has a descriptive rating as excellent and interpreted highly acceptable. The evaluation results indicate that the developed material achieved a high level of acceptability across all assessed criteria. This finding demonstrates that the integration of folklore narratives with visual storytelling techniques was effective in producing a culturally relevant and high-quality graphic narrative output.

Table 7. Factor 2 evaluation results using the modified DepEd Region III Nueva Ecija Evaluation Rating Sheet for Story Books and Big Books.

Content	Mean	Descriptive rating	Interpretation
1. Prints	4.7	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
2. Design and layout	4.7	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
3. Book binding	4.7	Excellent	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards

Table 7 presents the outcomes of Factor 2 evaluation that is concerned with the physical quality and overall design of the material. The parameters of the print, design and layout and the book binding has a grand mean of 4.7 which shows that the respondents are extremely happy with the printing of the product, the way in which the material was arranged and was presented and the way the material is durable and well bound. On the whole, the findings show that the material did extremely well with regards to its physical characteristics. The good ratings in all parameters depict that the prints, design and layout and paper and binding are all highly acceptable and in accordance to the standards required.

Table 8. The total Grand Mean of Factor 1 and Factor 2

Factor	Grand Mean	Interpretation
Factor 1	4.7	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards
Factor 2	4.7	Highly acceptable; meets all required standards

Table 8 indicates the grand means of Factor 1 and Factor 2. Factor 1 was rated 4.7 that is, the material was found to be very satisfactory regarding Story, Socio-cultural Sensitivity, Developmental Aspect, Plot/Storyline, Characters, Visuals, Language, and Grammar. This demonstrates that the respondents were interested in what was being taught, it was culturally, age-wise, well-organized, and easily understood.

Factor 2 also had a 4.7 high score on satisfying the print quality, layout, design and bindings of the material. This implied that the material is not only content rich but also presented and long-lasting by the respondents. Over all, the material is interpreted as highly acceptable and meets all the required standards.

CONCLUSION

In this phase, the researchers were able to document and analyze the Engkanto myth in Pagbabangnan San Julian, Eastern Samar. The study shows that the Engkanto is a neutral being having a flawless human-like appearance that oversees the forest.

Through the use of Google Docs and Clip Studio Paint the researchers successfully created a material based on the data gathered.

The quality of the material developed and its acceptability was confirmed through the evaluation results as Factor 1 (Content Quality) and Factor 2 (Physical Quality) both obtained grand means of 4.7. These ratings suggest that the content is Highly Acceptable, and is suitable to the requirements of an educational resource, and it manages to raise cultural awareness and maintain the local folklore of Pagbabangnan.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this qualitative research study, the following are the recommendations proposed:

For future researchers it is suggested to increase the number of respondents. The material received a rating of 4.7 in both factors 1 and 2 indicating that it is highly acceptable and meets all the required standards. Furthermore, this study may be used as a reference for future research.

REFERENCES

1. Aisyah, S. N., & Rahmat, D. (2024). The role of folklore in preserving indigenous cultural identity: A case study of oral traditions in Asia. *Proceeding of the International Conference on Language, Literature, and Culture Studies*, 1(2), 48–54. <https://doi.org/10.61132/icollics.v1i2.20>
2. Demetrio, F. R. (1969). The engkanto belief: An essay in interpretation. *Philippine Studies*, 17(3), 417–425. <https://doi.org/10.13185/2244-1638.2220>
3. Hawes, G. (2022). Greek myth. In J. Barton (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.110>
4. Philatlas(2020) Barangay Pagbabangnan, San Julian <https://www.philatlas.com>
5. Rios, I. D. B. (2022). Between people and place: Folklore pertaining to the natural environment in a farming community in Argao Cebu. *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*, 17, 151–166. <https://doi.org/10.35638/ijih.2022.17..010>
6. Saad, S., Wediyantoro, P. L., & Zolkifli, A. N. F. (2024). Cultural preservation in the digital age: The future of indigenous folktales and legends. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8(9), 2835–2847. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRIS.2024.8090237>