

STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR EMOTIONAL REGULATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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**مجلة الدراسات التربوية والانسانية. كلية التربية. جامعة دمنهور
المجلد السابع عشر - العدد الرابع (أكتوبر) الجزء الأول ، لسنة 2025م**

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ABSTRACT

Storytelling is an imperative tool for developing emotional regulation in children in early childhood, but its particular effect in children aged 4 to 6 years has been little researched. This study aimed to determine how storytelling can promote emotional regulation in young children by analysing its impact on emotional vocabulary, identification, and coping mechanisms. The survey-based design collected data from one hundred respondents, comprising fifty preschool teachers and fifty parents who consistently use children in interactive story sessions. The findings identified that storytelling has a marked effect on improving children's emotional identification and labelling of feelings, improving emotional vocabulary, and offering tangible coping mechanisms. Teachers and parents highlighted that interactive storytelling, where children actively read an actual story, was more beneficial than passive reading. The study highlights the need for storytelling in early childhood education to promote emotional growth. Future research should explore different formats of storytelling for emotional regulation.

Keywords: Storytelling, Emotional Regulation, Early Childhood, Emotions, Interactive Learning, Emotional Development.

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استخدام سرد القصص كأداة لتنظيم الانفعالات في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة

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الملخص:

يُعد سرد القصص أحد الأدوات بالغة الأهمية في تنمية مهارات تنظيم الانفعالات لدى الأطفال في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة، إلا أن تأثيره المحدد في الفئة العمرية من 4 إلى 6 سنوات لم يحظَ بالكثير من الاهتمام، ومن ثم يهدف هذا البحث إلى الكشف عن كيفية مساهمة سرد القصص في تعزيز تنظيم الانفعالات لدى الأطفال من خلال تحليل تأثيره على المفردات الانفعالية، والقدرة على التعرف على المشاعر، وآليات التكيف، وقد استُخدم المنهج الوصفي المعتمد على الاستبانة لجمع البيانات من عينة مكونة من 100 مشارك، منهم 50 معلمًا في مرحلة رياض الأطفال و50 من أولياء الأمور الذين يشاركون أطفالهم بانتظام في جلسات سرد قصصي تفاعلية، حيث أظهرت النتائج أن لسرد القصص تأثيرًا ملحوظًا في تحسين قدرة الأطفال على التعرف على المشاعر وتسميتها، وتوسيع مفرداتهم الانفعالية، وتزويدهم بآليات ملموسة للتكيف مع المشاعر، كما أشار المعلمون وأولياء الأمور إلى أن السرد القصصي التفاعلي، الذي يشارك فيه الطفل بفعالية في قراءة القصة، كان أكثر فائدة من القراءة السلبية أو الاستماع فقط، وتؤكد الدراسة على أهمية دمج سرد القصص في برامج الطفولة المبكرة لتعزيز النمو الانفعالي لدى الأطفال، مع التوصية بإجراء مزيد من الدراسات المستقبلية لاستكشاف صيغ وأساليب متنوعة لسرد القصص من حيث أثرها في تنظيم الانفعالات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سرد القصص، تنظيم الانفعالات، الطفولة المبكرة، المشاعر، التعليم التفاعلي، النمو الانفعالي.

Introduction

Storytelling effectively promotes emotional regulation in preschool children through a safe and enjoyable means of exploring and understanding emotional states. During the early years of childhood, children are in an age of crucial emotional growth in which they start identifying, expressing, and coping with a diverse array of feelings (Paley & Hajal, 2022). Through storytelling, children get a structured environment to see characters' feelings, cope with emotional states, and learn emotional vocabulary and coping strategies. Through such an introduction, children become attuned to observing emotional states in themselves and acquire vocabulary for expressing emotional states. According to Schoppmann et al. (2023), children who received shared reading of picture books improved in emotional vocabulary and recognizing feelings significantly. The same is additionally supported by Ramamurthy et al. (2023), who listed storytelling among means for developing resilience in children through narrative processing of emotional states. Hence, storytelling is a key intervention for children in preschool education, having an important role in enabling children to recognize, express, and regulate emotional states within a secure and enjoyable environment.

Early childhood, which lasts from birth to about five years, is a critical developmental period for children. During these early years, children experience rapid growth in a myriad of development domains and core social and emotional competencies are established (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). One of the most critical competencies is emotional regulation which refers to our ability to monitor the feelings we have, evaluate the feelings, and adjust our emotional response to achieve our goals (Thompson, 1994). Successful emotional regulation is a foundational component to healthy mental health, academic performance, and positive peer relationships (Eisenberg et al., 2010). Conversely, lack of emotional regulation is associated with development of internalizing disorders such as anxiety, and externalizing disorders such as aggression and behaviour problems (Cole et al., 2004) later in life.

Emotional regulation involves our multidimensional ability to manage emotions experienced and expressed. As articulated by Gross and John (2003), emotional regulation as a variable involves several measurable characteristics which include the ability to accurately identify and name our own emotions and the emotions of others; the ability to understand what caused the emotional response, what consequences will occur because of the emotional response; and the ability to use adaptive strategies (e.g., self-regulation, seeking assistance, reappraising the circumstances) to manage the length and intensity of emotion.

Storytelling is thought about not just in the sense of reading a book to a child, but through an interaction or dialogic process. The process involves a selection of stories - whether through picture books, storytelling, or puppetry - that feature

characters to who are facing mood and emotional challenges that a child may relate. The important factor includes the interaction guided by the adult (teacher or parent). The interaction of discussing feelings of characters, motivations, or coping strategies of characters is the important part (Zosh et al., 2017).

This research is conceptualized using three complementary theoretical orientations which together support the proposed relationship between storytelling and emotional regulation. The first perspective is Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), which emphasizes that learning is inherently a social activity. Storytelling offers a prime example of learning within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Drawing on the definitions of the adult as "more knowledgeable" other", the adult assists the child's development of more complex emotional concepts and knowledge through dialogue and guided questioning. The child internalizes and takes ownership of their engagement and shared social interactions by taking knowledge about emotions and coping strategies and transforming the social knowledge into personal knowledge for self-regulation. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) suggests that learning happens through observation, imitation, and modelling. Characters in stories can be very salient models for children. Children observe the character successfully (or unsuccessfully) displaying psychosocial-emotional learning and therefore learn about the results of emotional response without experiencing these conditions. This is an example of vicarious learning, which shows storytelling can be an effective and safe way to learn about pro-social behaviour and healthy emotional regulation strategies.

Bruner's Narrative Theory (1991) reinforces that we take meaning from our experiences (social, emotional, environmental) by organizing them into stories. Stories are a basic design for understanding the otherwise chaotic nature of emotional experience. A story has a beginning (the event that triggers an emotional response), a middle (the emotional experience and response), and an end (resolution and outcome), making it easier for children to organize and make meaning from their emotional experience when the story offers clues towards coherence, predictability, and utility. Joining these perspectives, this study frames interactive storytelling for young children as a socio-cultural, observational, and meaning-making task with the potential for supporting the development of emotional regulation in early childhood.

Emotional regulation refers to the extrinsic and intrinsic processes involved in monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions, and particularly the intensity and temporal features of emotions, to achieve one's goals, as noted by Thompson (1994). It is a narrow set of practices that involves the ability to self and other emotional awareness and labelling, identify the antecedents and consequences of emotions, inhibit impulsive emotional reactions, and use adaptive strategies to cope with high levels of emotional distress (Eisenberg et al., 2010).

The conceptualization of emotional regulation takes a distinct developmental path, beginning with co-regulation where infants and toddlers rely on adult caregivers to organise and soothe their emotional experiences (Calkins & Hill, 2007). As children develop, significantly with development in brain area known as the pre-frontal cortex, and concurrent increases in language and attentional control, they begin to shift towards self-regulation (Blair & Raver, 2015). Obviously, this is not merely a biological pathway. The shift towards self-regulation is shaped by the socio-emotional environment they exist within, and the quality of parent-child interactions and explicit coaching of emotional understanding (Gottman et al., 1996).

The significance of successfully completing this developmental path is too important to overstate. Longitudinal analyses identified childhood self-control as a strong predictor of adult health, wealth, and public safety (Moffitt et al., 2011). In the short-term, there has been evidence that children with higher emotional regulation skills are more ready for school, are more socially competent, and have positive peer relationship patterns (Denham et al., 2012; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2000). On the other hand, serious deficiencies in emotional regulation tend to be a central feature in many developmental psychopathologies and are associated with an increased risk of both internalizing problems (e.g., anxiety) and externalizing problems (e.g., aggression) (Cole et al., 2004; McLaughlin et al., 2011). While these important developmental transitions are universal, the specific "display rules" and preferred regulatory strategies are affected by different cultural norms, thus a culturally informed and congruent approach to intervention is needed (Camras et al., 2007).

Storytelling takes various forms, from oral storytelling to dialogic reading of picture books, and it is a vital part of human culture and an enormous catalyst for children's development. The potential educational benefits of alluring children with stories (text) are well documented in other areas (Cremin, Flewitt, Mardell, & Swann, 2017). To begin with, interactive or dialogic reading (that is, the adult and child have a conversation about the book) has the potential to improve cognitive and linguistic development quickly. There are many benefits of reading to children. For example, it promotes children's vocabulary development, comprehension of narratives, and their understanding of complex sentences (Wasik & Bond, 2001; Whitehurst et al., 1994). Following a narrative and holding characters and events in mind also promotes the development of important executive functions—such as working memory, attention, and cognitive flexibility (Zosh et al., 2017).

Storytelling, beyond cognition, is the primary means of social and moral development. Stories provide a "flight simulator" for social contexts allowing children to experience complex social situations and perspectives that differ from their own in relative safety (Mar & Oatley, 2008). This exploration of characters' mental states—particularly their thoughts, beliefs, and feelings—has been related directly to development of Theory of Mind (ToM), the ability to understand other

people think and feel about different mental states (Mar et al., 2009). This ability is foundational for empathic and pro-social capabilities.

When adults and educators use ‘emotion coaching’ language in their storytelling, like labelling characters’ feelings (‘He looks disappointed’) and asking the child how they feel about it, or if they understand it, this helps children obtain the vocabulary and concepts to understand their own inner world (Garner et al., 2008; Ornaghi et al., 2014). Narrative problem solving contributes to the child’s growing bank of adaptive strategies that reflect their myriad options in real life (Grolnick & Farkas, 2002).

This research has made a valuable and innovative contribution to the field of early childhood emotional development by examining storytelling, an important aspect in child development for the ages 4-6 years, a neglected age group in this literature, utilizing a naturalistic approach to studying storytelling in the home and preschool in Saudi Arabia. Although previous research studies have emphasized the usefulness of storytelling, particularly in relation to infants and toddlers, this study incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data to consider emotional regulation from the point of view of both parents and educators; the two most prominent stakeholder groups tied to a child's emotional development. Furthermore, this research is one of the few studies that looked at specific storytelling formats and strategies, such as interactive storytelling, which influenced growth in aspects of emotional development such emotional vocabulary, expression, and coping in controls. By combining mixed methods and including local sampling, the research was able to demonstrate the global value of using storytelling and contextualize it within the everyday practices of participants from Riyadh thus provide contextually rich local narratives that are void in the international literature. Consequently, the present study sought to answer the following questions:

Research Questions

- 1.What is the impact of storytelling on emotional regulation in preschool children between 4 and 6 years, as described by their parents and educators?
- 2.What specific emotional vocabulary and coping strategies do children aged 4 to 6 develop through storytelling activities?
- 3.How do different storytelling formats impact the effectiveness of storytelling in promoting emotional regulation among preschool children?

Literature Review

Storytelling is an accepted educational intervention contributing to preschool children’s emotional regulation. Emotional regulation is an important ability gained in infancy and early childhood, enabling children to identify, express, and manage their emotions (Paley & Hajal, 2022). Storytelling presents children with a safe and orderly context where difficult emotions are processed through characters and

situations that are tangible and recognizable to them. An interactive process ensures children are active rather than passive listeners and enhances their emotional awareness. Catala et al. (2023) also maintained that guided storytelling initiated by the teacher or facilitator significantly enhances children's ability to identify and name their emotions. Moreover, Schoppmann et al. (2023) noted that reading a shared picture book improved children's emotional lexicon and allowed them to describe their emotions using more words. Thus, storytelling is an indispensable educational intervention that enhances emotional regulation and presents preschool children with an awareness and vocabulary, allowing them to identify and express their emotions.

Storytelling is also essential in the development of resilience in children. Coping and recovery from emotional challenges are skills that can develop resilience in children during early childhood (Ramamurthy et al., 2023). Storytelling allows children to learn from characters who face and overcome challenges, giving them relatable coping models for real-life emotional experiences. This storytelling process teaches children coping skills through learning how the characters in the stories face issues, make choices, and deal with their emotions. Schoppmann et al. (2023) emphasized how children who engaged in storytelling exercises enhanced emotional resilience by being more confident in expressing themselves emotionally and using coping skills. Additionally, storytelling platforms on the web present children with an active way of learning through choosing story pathways, enabling them to learn to cope interactively (Ramamurthy et al., 2023). Thus, storytelling is an emotional expression tool and an essential resilience-developing tool through learning coping skills in a safe and emotionally nurturing environment.

Storytelling enhances children's emotional vocabulary and cultural competence by providing them with language for expressing their emotions and understanding varied cultural expressions of emotions. Emotional vocabulary also implies all the terms children use to express emotions. Effective regulation of emotions requires an adequate vocabulary of emotions (Schoppmann et al., 2023). Storytelling where the teacher or parent narrates about the characters' emotions has been found to broaden the understanding of emotional terms among children and their usage of such terms (Catala et al., 2023). Storytelling also acquaints children with varied cultural stories through which they understand and appreciate that just as all people experience the same emotions. However, in varied cultures, people control their emotions differently. Ramamurthy et al. (2023) pointed out that culturally rich narratives assist children in gaining empathy and being culturally aware that people feel and express differently depending on cultures. Thus, storytelling for emotional vocabulary and culture helps the child develop not just the literacy of emotions but also an improved understanding of the world.

The literature available tackled the issues of storytelling and emotional regulation among children in an interesting way. For instance, Ghosh (2024) wanted

to explore how storytelling can contribute to children's emotional and cognitive development from ages 3–6 using a mixed methods design that included observational sessions and standardized cognitive tests; the instruments that were used consist of structured observation protocols and language development assessments, with many participants reporting statistically significant changes in levels of empathy, conflict resolution skills, creativity, and vocabulary development. Buckmayer, Nicolau & Pires (2024) aimed to increase emotion regulation in kindergarten children by designing and developing a Snoezelen inspired smart soft toy (ALMA); using a work-in-progress exploratory approach, the researchers developed an ALMA prototype as the instrument and plan to pilot ALMA with 4–6 year-old children - the initial feedback indicated high levels of interest and potential for the multisensory emotion labelling needed to further develop its utility for preschool children.

Khayati (2024) described how storytelling is beneficial to speaking development among early childhood learners in an empirical literature review; while no new data collection instruments or participants were used, this literature review merged existing theoretical and empirical literature and concluded that narrative activities consistently have a positive impact on oral fluency, listening comprehension, vocabulary and sociocultural understanding. Amin, Ahmad, & Hashim (2024) looked into how interactive Big Book storytelling promotes socio emotional learning in 4–6 year olds through qualitative interviews and teacher evaluations: the classroom storytelling sessions were the instrument, and thematic analysis identified improvements in self-awareness, empathy, problem solving, active engagement, and happiness while participating during story time.

Roca & Vicol (2022) looked into storytelling's influence on psycho emotional development in 3–7 year-olds through an observational qualitative approach using Franz Kett's pedagogy; while there were no formal instruments mentioned they assessed classroom narratives and child behaviours, and concluded imaginative story time sessions promote the symbolic integration of feelings and foster agency during the "golden age." Wallbaum et al. (2017) designed and pilot tested a tangible modular storytelling kit collaboratively with parents and children (ages 3–8), with a focus on support for emotional literacy; the storytelling kit was the main instrument, and through the prototype pilot sessions and feedback interviews they observed high levels of engagement demonstrated by children while acting out emotional story narratives, identified challenges encountered with emotional expression, and learned that parents scaffolded emotional expression through shared story experience where possible.

Methodology

Research Design

The study used a survey descriptive research design to explore how narrative affects emotional regulation in preschool children between 4 and 6 years of age. The survey descriptive method was chosen because it provides a systematic way to measure current storytelling exposure and emotional regulation behaviours in an authentic preschool setting with no interference. Using teacher parent measures will allow for a small and wide snapshot of how naturally occurring storytelling practices align with self-soothing, feeling labelling, and coping across a mixed cohort of children ages 4-6. This approach is ethically sound as it does not restrict possible or potentially beneficial narrative experiences and is feasible within preschool scheduling limits.

Participants

The study comprised one hundred participants, fifty parents, and fifty preschool teachers. Participants were preschool teachers and parents in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. The inclusion criteria were that the participants should have interacted routinely with 4-6-year-olds and employed storytelling in teaching or parenting. To guarantee a representative sample, a convenience sampling strategy was used as we partnered with three preschools in Riyadh, each of which was purposefully selected to represent different socioeconomic catchments. Storytelling sessions were operationally defined as any intentional narrative act lasting a minimum of ten minutes, while emotional regulation was defined using our measures, developing definitions for observable self-soothing, affect labelling, and use of coping behaviours.

Data Collection

Data was collected through an online survey distributed to the participants via email. A structured questionnaire consisting of closed and open-ended items was used to develop the study. The closed-ended items employed a Likert scale in measuring the frequency of storytelling, the nature of the story employed, and the perceived effect of storytelling on children's emotional regulation. The open-ended items enabled participants to expound on experiences for qualitative data about children's emotional awareness and coping capabilities through storytelling. An informed- consent screen was placed at the beginning of the survey.

To enhance content and face validity, three early-childhood education experts reviewed the questionnaire items. The experts confirmed that the closed-ended items adequately measured three constructs: storytelling frequency, storytelling format, and impact on emotional-regulation, and that the open-ended prompts could evoke rich, relevant descriptions. The survey was then pilot tested with ten parents and ten teachers to assess clarity and interpretation of items; the feedback indicated that only

minor wording changes were needed. Internal consistency reliability was very strong for the Likert scales (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$ for storytelling frequency; $\alpha = 0.91$ for impact on perceived emotional regulation). For the qualitative data, open-ended responses were thematically coded by two independent researchers and both researchers had an inter-rater Cohen's κ of 0.82 suggesting good agreement in theme identification.

Data Analysis

Analysis employed a mixed-methods design. The quantitative data from the closed-ended items were examined using descriptive statistics, and qualitative data from the open items were analysed through theme analysis. Meticulously, Quantitative data were analysed with SPSS; descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) were first calculated to summarize the storytelling frequency, formats, and emotional regulation scores. Pearson's correlation coefficients examined ways of looking at the relation of storytelling exposure (frequency and format) and each emotional regulation subscale (self-soothing, affect labelling, coping behaviours). To consider differences among the storytelling formats (oral, picture book, puppet), a series of one-way ANOVAs were used along with post-hoc Tukey's tests to determine specific group differences when applicable. All tests were considered significant at $p < .05$.

Qualitative responses from the open-ended items were processes and thematic analysis was conducted. Two researchers independently identified initial codes through open coding, followed by axial coding or linking of codes to categories, and the development of themes to reflect broader patterns in children's emotional awareness and coping as related by participants. Coding discrepancies were discussed, and consensus was reached on codes.

Lastly, to synthesize the findings, a convergent mixed-methods approach was used: quantitative and qualitative results were compared side by side, to explore where statistical trends partially or fully corroborated the participant narratives, providing a more intricate, multi-dimensional picture of how the different storytelling practices relate to emotional regulation in preschoolers.

Results

RQ 1: Impact of Storytelling on Emotional Regulation

For answering the first research question underscoring "*What is the impact of storytelling on emotional regulation in preschool children between 4 and 6 years, as described by their parents and educators?*", participants completed a number of Likert-scale items, within the closed-ended part of the online survey, that examined their observations of children's emotional regulation after storytelling sessions. The items examined children's particular abilities to identify, express, and regulate their emotions. The online survey was sent to one hundred participants (50 preschool

teachers, fifty parents) by email as part of the data collection. They were directed to think about children they see regularly during or after storytelling sessions.

The results show a strong perceived relationship between storytelling and emotional development. In total, 92% of all responses agreed that storytelling was a beneficial supporter of children's emotional regulation. Specifically, 78% of parents and 84% of teachers agreed that storytelling assisted children in identifying and labelling their emotions. Moreover, 70% of teachers and 68% of parents noticed the children in their settings with the storytelling engagement had improved coping skills. The results strongly indicate that storytelling plays an important role in young children's emotional regulation, as all teachers and parents perceived it. The use of storytelling in the classroom appeared to provide an enjoyable way to support children's learning about and control of their emotions.

RQ 2: Emotional Vocabulary and Coping Strategies Developed Through Storytelling

For answering the second research question declaring, "*What specific emotional vocabulary and coping strategies do children aged 4 to 6 develop through storytelling activities?*", it was considered using a combination of closed-ended Likert items and open-ended prompts allowing participants to expand upon changes they had observed in children's emotional vocabulary and coping strategies. The closed items focused on children's ability to express feeling and imitate or internalise behaviour seen in the story. During the data collection phase, participants were prompted to provide examples of emotional words and coping behaviours children initiated. Their responses underwent thematic analysis by two independent coders to ensure a strong level of inter-rater reliability (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.82$). We found that 82% of participants agreed that storytelling increased children's emotional vocabulary (or words to express their feelings) such as happy, angry, scared, and calm, and 68% of educators reported they specifically used stories to expose children to coping strategies (such as deep breathing or seeking help). Parents referenced that their children imitate the characters from stories, for example, using comforting self-talk for themselves or asking an adult for support when upset. This supports the argument that storytelling not only endorses emotional expression but encourages the internalisation of healthy coping strategies. The participants appear to agree that children learn vocabulary and behavioural responses through repeated exposure to narratives.

RQ 3: Effectiveness of Different Storytelling Formats

For answering the third research question highlighting "*How do different storytelling formats impact the effectiveness of storytelling in promoting emotional regulation among preschool children?*", this question was examined using specific Likert items

asking participants to indicate which storytelling formats they most frequently used and how effective they perceived each to be in enhancing emotional regulation. Story formats included picture books, oral stories, and digital/electronic narratives. Participants reported that picture books were the most employed format (88%), followed by oral storytelling (64%), and digital stories (40%). Importantly, when asked about perceived effectiveness, a majority (76%) of participants rated interactive storytelling, such as asking children questions during reading or engaging them in role-play, as the most effective in eliciting emotional growth. Digital storytelling, while less frequently used, received moderate endorsement for emotional benefits. The type of storytelling format matters. Interactive and traditional picture-based formats were found to be the most effective in promoting emotional regulation, likely due to their capacity to engage children deeply and facilitate emotional discussion.

Discussion

This study's findings established that storytelling serves as an advantageous method for emotional regulation among preschool-age children, providing benefits in emotional vocabulary acquisition, emotional expression, and coping strategies. The high rate of respondents reporting improved outcomes confirms previous studies highlighting narrative as a key tool in emotional education (Schoppmann et al., 2023). Findings indicate that storytelling enables children to recognize and name feelings and express and overcome emotional difficulties. Teachers employed storytelling as an organized teaching device, while parents used it primarily for comfort and bonding, illustrating its applicability in diverse contexts. Interactive storytelling in which children participate in emotional discourse yielded superior results, substantiating the need for active participation. These findings align with previous studies demonstrating the need for guided emotional discussions during early childhood (Ramamurthy et al., 2023). Future studies must examine how different storytelling methods, including digital storytelling and traditional tales, can best enhance emotional regulation.

Additionally, the results of the study highlight the significance of intentionality in storytelling. Although storytelling was evident in both home and educational contexts, the strongest outcomes were derived from those examples where adults purposefully selected stories with emotional components and facilitated some sort of reflection during or after the story. This is indicative of the view that storytelling ought not to be thought of as just entertainment or habitual practice, but instead is intentional, pedagogical practice that demands a conscious approach. The fact that children were able to replicate coping strategies used by story characters emphasizes the strength of narrative as a marker for social-emotional learning. Overall, these findings were consistent with Vygotsky's premise of mediated learning which suggests that children internalize socio-emotional competencies through experiences with others, whether adult or fictional.

The study also highlights the role of format and engagement: Picture books were used most often, but interactive storytelling was deemed the most useful form for promoting emotional insight. Although stories can be delivered in various formats, it appears to be how children engage emotionally and cognitively that is more important than format.

Conclusion

This research proves that storytelling successfully impacts emotional regulation in preschool children by offering them an interesting yet secure means to discover, comprehend, and manage their feelings. The study findings indicate that children's emotional vocabulary, expression, and coping mechanisms are improved by storytelling, and both teachers and parents report consistently positive results. Interactive narrative, which invites active conversations on children's emotional issues, proved effective. Teachers applied storytelling as an academic device for educating about emotional issues, while parents used it as a bonding and soothing tool. These findings indicate that incorporating storytelling in home and educational environments can play a crucial role in emotional growth in early childhood. Future research should address the effect of varying story formats, including electronic and cultural tales, on emotional regulation for young children.

These findings provide concrete implications for early childhood educators and caregivers; they can choose emotionally rich narratives, take time to pause for conversations, and use questions, reflection, and role playing to promote learning and emotional development during sharing stories. Incorporating these ideas into common routines will foster children's emotional development and knowledge and help Mold children's capacity to become more empathetic, self-aware learners. Future studies may consider longitudinal designs to measure the long-term impact of storytelling on emotional regulation.

Recommendations and Suggestions

Based on our results, teachers and parents are encouraged to consider storytelling as a purposeful agent of social-emotional learning, instead of simply a passive activity. Early childhood educators should include storytelling activities with an emotion-related text, plus allow for guided conversations about how characters feel, what decisions they made, and how they coped with their feelings. The educators can add meaning to children's understanding by using reflective questioning, pausing to talk about vocabulary, and dramatizing parts of the stories. Parents can purposefully select stories for bedtime reading, or leisure time reading, that contain stories of emotional problems, bonding with the child, while growing the child's emotional awareness. If training workshops were provided for teachers, and parent workshops in nursery and community venues, then storytelling could be strategically used as a vehicle for social-emotional learning in daily life.

Future studies should build upon this study and investigate longitudinal impacts or how persistent experience with storytelling affects the development of emotional regulation skills over time. Studies might also consider how traditional oral narratives share emotional outcomes with newer formats such as digital and/or streaming options. Cross-cultural studies may provide complementary data which look for whether emotional impact is similar in different educational or family contexts and help establish global best practices. Finally, experimental studies could test interventions that utilize standard emotional storytelling programs before determining buckets of impact that provide more in-depth cause-and-effect investigation while supporting curriculum designers with a formal way to incorporate storytelling in emotional development.

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Survey on Storytelling and Emotional Regulation in Early Childhood

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. What is your role?
 - Parent
 - Preschool Teacher
2. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
3. What is your age?
 - Under twenty-five
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - Forty-five and above
4. If you are a teacher, how many years of experience do you have working with preschool children?
 - Less than 2 years
 - 2-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - More than 10 years

Section 2: Storytelling Practices

5. How often do you engage in storytelling with children aged 4 to 6?
 - Daily
 - Several times a week
 - Once a week
 - Rarely
 - Never
6. What types of storytelling do you use? (Check all that apply.)
 - Picture books
 - Oral storytelling (narrating stories without books)
 - Digital storytelling (videos, apps, audio stories)Other (please specify): _____
7. What kind of stories do you usually use for storytelling? (Check all that apply.)
 - Stories with emotional themes
 - Stories where characters overcome challenges.

- Educational stories
 - Cultural or traditional stories
8. Do you actively engage children in discussions about the emotions in stories?
- Yes, always.
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never

Section 3: Perceived Impact of Storytelling on Emotional Regulation

9. In your experience, how effective is storytelling in helping children recognize and label their emotions?
- Very effective
 - Effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - Not effective
10. Have you noticed improvements in children's emotional vocabulary after engaging in storytelling?
- Yes
 - No
11. Have you observed children using coping strategies learned from storytelling to manage their emotions?
- Frequently
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
12. What are the most common emotions children learn to identify through storytelling? (Check all that apply.)
- Happiness
 - Sadness
 - Anger
 - Fear
 - Surprise
- Other (please specify): _____
13. What coping strategies do children learn from storytelling? (Check all that apply.)
- Deep breathing or calming down.

- Seeking help from adults
- Positive self-talk
- Expressing emotions through words

Other (please specify): _____

Section 4: Storytelling Formats and Preferences

14. Which format is most effective for teaching emotional regulation?

- Picture books
- Oral storytelling
- Digital storytelling

Other (please specify): _____

15. If you use digital storytelling, what digital platforms do you use?

- YouTube or video apps
- Storytelling apps
- Educational websites

Other (please specify): _____