

**HARNESSING EWE STORYTELLING: A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE
ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES IN GHANA'S VOLTA REGION**

BY

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY STUDENT(S) – DISSERTATION

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my/our own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute.

I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Dissertation/Thesis has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Dissertation/Thesis laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication, UniMAC.

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous storytelling has long served as a medium for transmitting cultural values and environmental knowledge in many Ghanaian communities. This study examines how Ewe storytelling functions as a pathway to sustainable environmental practices in the Volta Region, with particular focus on Ho, Adaklu and Abutia. The study responds to concerns that formal environmental education and policy approaches often overlook indigenous knowledge systems that continue to shape everyday environmental behaviour. Guided by indigenous ecological knowledge theory and a culturally grounded conceptual framework, the study adopted a mixed-methods design. Data were collected from three hundred and fifty (350) respondents using structured questionnaires. The analyses focused on participation in storytelling, exposure to ecological narratives, perceived influence on environmental practices, and challenges affecting storytelling transmission. The findings indicate that storytelling remains a widely practised cultural activity, with elders serving as the primary storytellers. Many respondents reported exposure to stories containing ecological themes related to water protection, forest conservation, avoidance of harmful practices and respect for sacred sites. Storytelling was perceived to influence environmental attitudes and behaviour, particularly in relation to culturally significant spaces. Major barriers identified include youth disinterest, media influence and the declining number of elders engaged in storytelling. The study concludes that Ewe storytelling remains a valuable repository of ecological knowledge and a culturally grounded mechanism for environmental stewardship. However, its sustainability depends on deliberate support through community initiatives and educational integration. Future research is recommended to explore youth engagement with storytelling and the potential of digital platforms to support indigenous ecological knowledge transmission.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to God. I also dedicate it to myself and my family for the support, prayers and encouragement in making this project a success. I also dedicate it to my friends who in one way or the other assisted in bringing the work this far.

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I am most grateful to the I am most grateful to the Almighty God for his unfailing grace and sustenance in making all things possible and successful. I am exceptionally grateful to my supervisor, Dr M. Nunoofo for her guidance, criticisms, experience and advice in ensuring the success of this work

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBPR	Community-Based Participatory Research
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the vibrant communities of Ho and its neighbouring areas, such as Adaklu and Abutia, in Ghana's Volta Region, the Ewe people have long shared stories that weave together their past, present, and future (Klugah, 2020). These oral narratives, told by elders under the shade of baobab trees or during lively communal gatherings, are far more than folklore (Cottrell, 2007). They are living archives of wisdom, carrying lessons about living in harmony with the land, whether through careful farming practices that preserve soil fertility or mindful use of local resources. Ewe storytelling, enriched with proverbs, songs, and the rhythmic pulse of traditional dances like the Agbadza, serve as a cornerstone of cultural identity and a guide for sustainable living (Agawu, 1995; Claybrook Jr, 2023). These stories have sustained Ewe communities for generations, offering insights into ecological balance that resonate with today's urgent need for environmental stewardship (Kuwor, 2013).

Yet, this rich tradition faces a growing threat. As modern influences, urban migration, digital media, and Western-style education sweep through Ghana, the practice of storytelling is fading, particularly among the youth (Corwin, 2016). The ecological knowledge embedded in these narratives, once passed down through generations, is at risk of being lost, leaving a gap in the tools available to address environmental challenges like unsustainable farming. In a world increasingly focused on sustainability, the wisdom held in Ewe stories offers a unique opportunity to bridge traditional knowledge with modern conservation efforts (Abdul-Latif, 2021).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The erosion of Ewe storytelling in Ho and its surrounding communities such as Adaklu and Abutia, poses a profound challenge. As younger generations turn to smartphones and formal schooling, the oral traditions that once thrived are dwindling, taking with them a wealth of ecological knowledge. Stories that teach sustainable farming or resource conservation are being forgotten, just as the Volta Region grapples with environmental issues like soil degradation and inefficient land use. While global efforts, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, call for integrating Indigenous knowledge into conservation strategies, there is a significant gap in applying Ewe storytelling to these efforts (Hák et al., 2016). The lack of documentation and the barriers to preserving these narratives, such as urban influences and limited infrastructure, further complicate their integration into modern frameworks (Dei, 2024a). This study seeks to address this problem by capturing Ewe stories and exploring how their ecological wisdom can support sustainable practices in Ho and its neighbouring communities.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

1.3.1 Aim

This research aims to explore the role of Ewe storytelling as a cultural and ecological resource for fostering sustainable environmental practices in Ho and its neighbouring communities, bridging traditional wisdom with modern conservation strategies to preserve cultural heritage and support environmental sustainability.

1.3.2 Objectives

The study pursues three primary objectives:

1. Document and analyze ecological knowledge embedded in Ewe storytelling traditions.

2. Examine the extent to which storytelling influences community members' environmental practices in Ho, Adaklu, and Abutia.
3. Integrate findings from storytelling and community practices to propose a culturally grounded model for promoting sustainability.

1.4 Research Questions

This research is guided by the following questions:

1. What ecological knowledge is encoded in Ewe storytelling traditions?
2. To what extent do community members apply storytelling-inspired ecological practices in their daily lives?
3. How can insights from storytelling and observed practices be integrated to develop a model for culturally grounded environmental sustainability?

1.5 Research Hypothesis

Based on the objectives and research questions, the following hypotheses are formulated for the quantitative strand:

1. H_{01} (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between knowledge of Ewe storytelling and the adoption of sustainable environmental practices among community members.
2. H_{11} (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between knowledge of Ewe storytelling and the adoption of sustainable environmental practices among community members.
3. H_{02} (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant difference in the application of storytelling-inspired ecological practices across demographic groups (age, gender, education level).

4. H₁₂ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant difference in the application of storytelling-inspired ecological practices across demographic groups (age, gender, education level).

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both academic scholarship and practical environmental sustainability within indigenous communities. Previous works have highlighted the role of indigenous storytelling and knowledge in shaping cultural identity and ecological behavior. For example, Abubakari (2025) demonstrated how folktales can serve as vehicles for ecological wisdom, while Atiku (2022) and Claybrook Jr (2023) highlighted the role of oral traditions in preserving cultural heritage. Similarly, Asante (2024) and Osei and Asantewa (2025) have shown that traditional practices, such as the protection of sacred groves and the role of indigenous leadership, contribute to conservation.

Globally, scholars such as Berkes (2017), Turner et al. (2022), and Albuquerque et al. (2021) argue for the integration of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into contemporary sustainability frameworks. Yet, despite these valuable insights, much of the literature either remains largely descriptive, documenting cultural richness without systematically connecting it to measurable sustainability outcomes, or focuses on ecological indicators without attention to cultural dimensions (Hák et al., 2016; Magni, 2017; Nepal, 2025).

Specifically in Ghana, there is a noticeable gap: while research acknowledges the importance of indigenous knowledge in environmental conservation (Baaweh et al., 2023), few studies examine Ewe storytelling as a direct mechanism for promoting sustainability. This oversight leaves unexplored how ecological wisdom embedded in narratives influences actual community practices

in farming, land use, and conservation. Moreover, existing policies often fail to institutionalize storytelling as a tool for environmental education (Ens et al., 2022).

This study addresses these gaps by:

1. Documenting and analysing ecological knowledge encoded in Ewe storytelling.
2. Examining how these stories influence real-world environmental practices in Ho, Adaklu, and Abutia.
3. Proposing a model for integrating storytelling into sustainability education and policy.

The study's significance is twofold. Academically, it enriches interdisciplinary literature by bridging the gap between cultural studies and environmental science, demonstrating how storytelling can be operationalized in sustainability research. Practically, it provides communities, policymakers, and educators with a culturally grounded framework that leverages oral traditions for promoting sustainable practices. In doing so, the research not only fills a gap in scholarship but also empowers Ewe communities to preserve their cultural heritage while addressing contemporary environmental challenges.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on Ewe storytelling in Ho and its neighbouring communities, such as Adaklu and Abutia, in Ghana's Volta Region, conducted over three months. However, the study faces limitations. The three-month timeline restricts the depth and scale of data collection, limiting the number of interviews and the breadth of archival analysis. The focus on Ho and nearby areas excludes other Ewe communities in the Volta Region, potentially missing diverse perspectives. Additionally, challenges like scheduling interviews or accessing archival materials may arise,

though these will be mitigated through local partnerships. Despite these constraints, the study remains a meaningful step toward preserving Ewe storytelling and supporting sustainability in Ho.

1.8 Organization of study

This thesis is organized into five chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of the research.

1. Chapter One: Introduction – This chapter provides the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance, scope, limitations, and definitions of key terms. It also establishes the overall context and rationale for the research.
2. Chapter Two: Literature Review – This chapter reviews existing literature related to indigenous storytelling, ecological knowledge, and sustainability. It discusses the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the study, examines relevant empirical works, highlights barriers to integrating indigenous knowledge, and identifies research gaps. A conceptual framework is also presented.
3. Chapter Three: Methodology – This chapter outlines the research design, study area, population, sampling strategy, and sample size determination. It also details data collection methods, data analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and limitations of the methodology.
4. Chapter Four: Presentation and Analysis of Findings – This chapter presents and analyses the data collected from both qualitative and quantitative sources. It documents ecological themes from Ewe storytelling, examines community practices, and integrates the findings to show connections between narratives and sustainability.
5. Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations – The final chapter summarizes the major findings of the study, draws conclusions, and offers

recommendations for policy, practice, and further research. It also discusses the contribution of the study to knowledge and community development.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Storytelling has long been a cornerstone of knowledge transmission in indigenous communities worldwide (Harris, 2022). It serves not only as entertainment but also as a medium for teaching values, preserving history, and guiding community practices. Through narratives, proverbs, songs, and myths, elders convey lessons about social conduct, environmental stewardship, and survival strategies (Chan, 2021). In many societies, stories carry embedded moral and ecological codes that reinforce communal living and balance with nature. Unlike written texts, oral narratives are dynamic and participatory, often adapted to suit changing contexts while retaining their core wisdom (Cochrane, 2023). Thus, storytelling functions as a living pedagogy, bridging past traditions with contemporary realities (Hofman-Bergholm, 2023).

A critical examination of Ewe storytelling, indigenous knowledge, and sustainable environmental practices is needed to situate the study within broader academic conversations, identifies conceptual and theoretical foundations, and highlights empirical evidence from both African and global contexts.

2.1 Conceptual Review

This section reviews the key concepts that frame the study (Wang & Lo, 2021). It begins by exploring the meaning and role of storytelling in indigenous societies, with a particular focus on the Ewe tradition. It then examines how storytelling embodies ecological wisdom, connects to indigenous knowledge systems, and functions as an informal educational tool for sustainability.

Through this conceptual exploration, the review establishes storytelling as not merely a cultural or artistic practice but as a vital medium of environmental communication and knowledge transmission.

2.1.1 Storytelling in Indigenous Societies

Storytelling has long been a defining feature of indigenous societies across the world (Chan, 2021). It serves as a repository of collective memory, cultural values, and traditional wisdom (Carlson & Frazer, 2021). In many African communities, stories are the primary medium through which moral instruction, historical narratives, and ecological ethics are conveyed. They are not merely entertainment; they are deeply pedagogical, shaping social identity and guiding behaviour (Vasudevan et al., 2023).

Indigenous storytelling, as observed among communities such as the Yoruba, Akan, Maasai, and Ewe, transmits coded messages about respect for the earth, interdependence between humans and nature, and the spiritual significance of ecological balance (Nanson, 2021). Scholars like Claybrook Jr (2023) and Chan (2021) emphasize that these oral traditions serve as systems of knowledge that sustain identity and collective wellbeing. Within this framework, storytelling functions as a living archive, one that renews itself with each retelling, adapting to changing times while maintaining cultural continuity.

Moreover, indigenous storytelling is characterized by communal participation (Mussi, 2023). Stories are often told in the evenings, around the hearth or under moonlight, with elders narrating and younger members listening, questioning, and interpreting (Juma, 2022). This participatory process reinforces intergenerational bonds and ensures that knowledge about the environment, customs, and spirituality is internalized and practiced rather than merely learned (Yaconelli, 2022).

2.1.2 Ewe Storytelling Tradition and Ecological Wisdom

Among the Ewe people of Ghana, storytelling (known as *gbeto* or *xɔseawo*) occupies a central position in cultural and moral education (Dei, 2024b; Opoku-Agyemang & Opoku-Agyemang, 2022). Ewe stories often feature animals, deities, and ancestral figures who model virtues and warn against destructive behaviours (Mensah & Ofori, 2023). Through symbolic narratives, these stories convey deep ecological principles, respect for sacred groves, water bodies, farmlands, and the interconnectedness of living things.

Agawu (1995) and Cottrell (2007) describe Ewe storytelling as highly rhythmic, performative, and interwoven with song, dance, and proverbs. Each story carries layered meanings, many of which reflect ecological wisdom. For instance, tales warning against greed and overexploitation of nature encourage moderation and stewardship. Sacred places, such as rivers and forests, are often portrayed as the dwelling places of spirits, teaching respect for biodiversity and conservation.

This oral system of environmental communication reflects what Berkes (2017) and Turner et al. (2022) call traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), knowledge accumulated over generations through direct contact with the environment. In Ewe cosmology, the human, natural, and spiritual worlds are inseparable (Sakitey & Van Eck, 2023). This worldview aligns with the biocultural conservation perspective, which emphasizes the unity of cultural and biological diversity. Through storytelling, the Ewe have sustained ecological awareness and practical environmental ethics long before formal sustainability discourses emerged.

2.1.3 Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Practices

Indigenous knowledge encompasses the skills, philosophies, and practices developed by local communities through centuries of interaction with their surroundings (Odora Hoppers, 2021;

Turner et al., 2022). It represents a holistic understanding of ecology, combining scientific observation with cultural, spiritual, and social dimensions. Dei (2024b) and Albuquerque et al. (2021) argue that this knowledge offers valuable lessons for modern sustainability efforts because it is grounded in lived experience and local context.

Within African settings, indigenous ecological knowledge manifests in practices such as crop rotation, seasonal farming, protection of sacred forests, and communal land management (Melash et al., 2023). These practices are often governed by taboos, myths, and rituals embedded in storytelling. As observed by Asante (2024) and Baaweh et al. (2023), such cultural mechanisms promote biodiversity conservation and resource sustainability without external enforcement mechanisms.

For the Ewe, ecological knowledge is not separate from moral instruction or spirituality (Agboada, 2024). The stories that guide behaviour are inseparable from the rituals that honour the earth and the customs that regulate land and water use. This integration of belief, behaviour, and ecology underscores that sustainability is not a new concept but an indigenous way of life (Sakitey & Van Eck, 2023). Modern sustainability discourses can therefore benefit from engaging indigenous frameworks that already embody balance, restraint, and respect for nature.

2.1.4 Oral Narratives as Environmental Education Tools

Storytelling functions as a powerful educational tool, transmitting values and behaviours essential for community survival (Nair & Yunus, 2021). In contexts where literacy may be limited, oral narratives serve as living textbooks, providing ecological literacy through parables, proverbs, and myths. Ardoin and Heimlich (2021) describe such informal learning as “environmental education in everyday life,” where learning occurs through interaction, observation, and participation.

Ewe storytelling achieves precisely this. When elders recount tales about forests, rivers, or animals, they are simultaneously educating the community about the natural world and their moral responsibilities within it (Sakitey & Van Eck, 2023). Stories about divine punishment for polluting a river, or blessings associated with tree planting, shape environmental consciousness and guide decision-making.

Furthermore, as Hofman-Bergholm (2023) explains, storytelling appeals to both emotion and intellect, two dimensions necessary for behavioural change. By embedding environmental messages within familiar cultural forms, stories make sustainability personal, memorable, and socially acceptable.

In the modern era, revitalizing storytelling as an educational tool can complement formal environmental education programs. Integrating indigenous narratives into school curricula, local conservation projects, and policy frameworks can bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and contemporary ecological challenges.

2.1.5 African Indigenous Storytelling and Conservation

Across Africa, storytelling has long been a vehicle for transmitting ecological wisdom and reinforcing community responsibility for natural resources (Atiku, 2022; Ogar, 2023). Among the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania, for instance, stories highlight the value of livestock management and pasture rotation, teaching younger generations to respect ecological limits (Kereto et al., 2022). In West Africa, folktales often emphasize the interconnectedness of humans, animals, and the land, presenting moral lessons that align with conservation principles (Paschal-Mbakwe & Okoronkwo, 2024).

These examples demonstrate that storytelling is not merely entertainment but a pedagogical tool for shaping environmental behavior. However, most empirical studies remain descriptive, documenting the cultural richness of oral traditions without systematically connecting them to measurable environmental outcomes (Thompson et al., 2024). This limitation highlights the need for integrated research, such as the present study, which explicitly seeks to link storytelling traditions with sustainability practices in everyday life.

2.1.6 Case Studies in Ghana and Beyond

In Ghana, several studies like studies done by Tsikata (2021), Boatbil et al. (2025) and Abdulai et al. (2023) have highlighted the role of indigenous knowledge in resource management, though few focus specifically on storytelling. For example, research on sacred groves in Ashanti and Northern Ghana shows how cultural beliefs tied to myths and taboos protect biodiversity by restricting access to certain forests (Asante, 2024). Similarly, studies in fishing communities along the coast reveal that narratives about sea deities shape rules governing when and how people may fish, contributing to marine conservation.

Beyond Ghana, successful case studies include the use of oral traditions in Nigeria, where Yoruba myths surrounding sacred rivers contribute to water management practices (Raheem, 2024), and in southern Africa, where San stories preserve knowledge about medicinal plants and desert survival (Fajinmi et al., 2023). These examples show the potential of oral traditions to influence environmental practices.

2.1.7 Integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into Modern Sustainability Practices

Globally, there has been growing recognition of the value of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in sustainability discourse (Albuquerque et al., 2021). International frameworks such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call for the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into environmental strategies (Nepal, 2025). In practice, however, the integration of TEK remains uneven. Many conservation initiatives adopt a top-down approach that privileges scientific knowledge while marginalizing local traditions.

In Ghana, while indigenous knowledge is often acknowledged in environmental policy, storytelling as a specific form of knowledge transmission is rarely highlighted (Osei & Asantewa, 2025). Most programs focus instead on practices such as traditional farming methods or local conservation rituals. This reveals a gap: although storytelling encodes ecological wisdom, its role as a sustainability tool has not been adequately explored or institutionalized.

2.1.8 Cultural Erosion and Modernization

One of the most significant challenges to preserving indigenous knowledge systems, including storytelling (Hofman-Bergholm, 2023), is the erosion of traditional cultural practices under the pressure of modernization (Sokk, 2024). Formal education systems, heavily influenced by Western models, often undervalue oral traditions, leading younger generations to see storytelling as outdated (Nurdauletova et al., 2023). Urbanization and migration further weaken the communal settings in which stories are traditionally shared, such as village gatherings, festivals, and family evenings. As a result, the continuity of storytelling as a vehicle for ecological wisdom is disrupted, leaving gaps in intergenerational transmission.

2.1.9 Digital Media Influence

The rise of digital media has also transformed how knowledge is transmitted, particularly among young people (Zhang & Chen, 2024). While digital platforms offer opportunities to record and disseminate stories, they also compete with traditional oral practices. Television, social media, and mobile technology often overshadow storytelling sessions that once served as central forms of communal learning. This shift reduces opportunities for participatory engagement, where ecological lessons are not only told but performed, discussed, and reinforced collectively (Vohidova, 2024). Moreover, digital representations of culture sometimes simplify or distort traditional narratives, detaching them from their ecological and cultural contexts.

2.1.10 Institutional and Policy Gaps

Another major barrier is the limited institutional recognition of indigenous knowledge in policy and conservation frameworks (Ens et al., 2022). Although Ghana's environmental strategies acknowledge the importance of community participation, they rarely formalize storytelling as a method of ecological education or conservation (Nkansah-Dwamena, 2023). Policies often prioritize scientific data and external expertise over community-based traditions, reinforcing hierarchical structures that marginalize indigenous voices. In addition, limited documentation of oral traditions poses a challenge for integration, as policymakers and educators often require tangible records before considering indigenous knowledge as legitimate. Without deliberate efforts to create supportive policies, storytelling risks being overlooked as a viable tool for promoting sustainability (Dessart & Standaert, 2023).

2.1.11 Conceptual Synthesis

From the discussion above, storytelling emerges as a multidimensional construct, simultaneously cultural, educational, and ecological. In the Ewe context, it functions as a moral compass, a repository of ecological knowledge, and a vehicle for community cohesion. Indigenous knowledge systems provide the intellectual foundation for sustainability practices, while oral narratives serve as their communicative pathway.

This conceptual synthesis shows that sustainability cannot be fully achieved through scientific or technological interventions alone. It requires cultural engagement, respect for indigenous epistemologies, and recognition of storytelling as a living system of knowledge. By examining Ewe storytelling through this lens, the present study bridges cultural heritage and environmental science, contributing to both academic discourse and community-based sustainability action.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the key theories guiding the study, Biocultural Conservation Theory and Decolonizing Methodologies, and explains how they jointly shape the understanding and analysis of Ewe storytelling as a vehicle for environmental sustainability. These theories provide the intellectual foundation for linking cultural heritage with ecological responsibility and for situating indigenous ways of knowing within a respectful, context-specific research paradigm.

2.2.1 Biocultural Conservation Theory

Biocultural Conservation Theory emphasizes the intrinsic connection between biological diversity and cultural diversity. It argues that sustainable environmental management cannot be achieved

by focusing on ecological systems alone but must also consider the cultural beliefs, languages, rituals, and traditions that shape how people interact with nature Lukawiecki et al. (2022).

In this view, cultural practices, including art, festivals, rituals, and especially storytelling, are part of the ecosystem of conservation. They hold encoded knowledge that supports biodiversity and ecological stewardship. Berkes (2017) highlights that traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is not simply about resource management; it is a worldview that binds moral values, spirituality, and practical environmental wisdom.

In the Ewe context, storytelling is a biocultural act. Stories about sacred forests, deities inhabiting rivers, and moral lessons drawn from animals serve as both cultural expression and ecological instruction (Abdul-Latif, 2021). Such narratives reinforce collective responsibility toward the environment and ensure continuity of ecological values across generations. Through this lens, the Ewe storytelling tradition becomes a form of environmental governance, informal but effective.

By applying Biocultural Conservation Theory, this study interprets storytelling not as folklore alone but as a living system of conservation ethics. It provides a framework for analysing how stories embody ecological knowledge and how that knowledge influences sustainable practices within communities.

2.2.2 Decolonizing Methodologies

Decolonizing Methodologies, rooted in Indigenous and critical research paradigms, challenge the dominance of Western epistemologies in knowledge production. As argued by Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) and Lenette (2022), this approach seeks to recognize and validate local voices, cultural narratives, and ways of knowing that have historically been marginalized in academic discourse.

In practical terms, decolonizing research emphasizes collaboration, respect, reciprocity, and cultural sensitivity. It moves away from extractive forms of research, where communities are studied but not heard, toward participatory engagement where knowledge is co-created. This aligns with Indigenous research ethics and frameworks such as Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), which ensure that participants retain agency over their knowledge (Hayward et al., 2021).

Applying this to the current study, decolonizing methodologies guide how Ewe storytelling is approached, interpreted, and represented. Rather than treating the stories as mere “data,” this framework treats them as intellectual contributions from Ewe elders and custodians of knowledge. Their interpretations of nature and sustainability are respected as legitimate theoretical perspectives.

Moreover, this theoretical stance reinforces the cultural significance of storytelling as a tool of identity and empowerment. It acknowledges that indigenous people are not passive informants but active theorists of their environment. Therefore, the study’s methodological choices, such as the use of interviews, community engagement, and ethical storytelling practices, are grounded in decolonizing principles that honour cultural sovereignty.

2.2.3 Integration of Theories

Together, Biocultural Conservation Theory and Decolonizing Methodologies provide a comprehensive theoretical grounding for the study. The former situates storytelling within the nexus of ecology and culture, while the latter ensures that the study process itself respects and uplifts indigenous epistemologies.

The integration of these frameworks allows the study to move beyond description toward transformation, showing not only how storytelling encodes ecological knowledge, but also how revitalizing such traditions can serve as a culturally grounded strategy for sustainable development.

This theoretical foundation justifies the study's mixed-methods design: qualitative approaches capture the narrative and cultural depth of storytelling, while quantitative tools measure its influence on real-world environmental practices. Both dimensions are necessary to honour indigenous worldviews and to empirically demonstrate their relevance in contemporary sustainability discourse.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provides a visual and explanatory map of the study, showing how the key concepts (Luft et al., 2022), Ewe storytelling, indigenous ecological knowledge, and sustainable practices, interact with one another. For this research, the framework demonstrates how storytelling functions as both a cultural practice and a knowledge system that influences community behavior, ultimately contributing to environmental sustainability.

At the foundation of the framework lies Ewe storytelling, which encodes ecological wisdom through oral narratives, proverbs, myths, and songs. This storytelling serves as a vehicle for transmitting indigenous knowledge, particularly lessons about farming, land use, water conservation, and communal responsibility. These lessons, when understood and practiced by community members, shape sustainable environmental practices such as crop rotation, forest preservation, and responsible water use.

However, the framework also acknowledges barriers, such as modernization, digital media, and policy neglect, that can weaken the influence of storytelling (Ajayi, 2025). The integration of indigenous knowledge into modern sustainability initiatives depends on overcoming these barriers and creating pathways for recognition, documentation, and policy support.

Finally, the framework situates this process within broader biocultural conservation and decolonizing methodologies. Biocultural conservation emphasizes the link between cultural traditions and ecological balance, while decolonizing methodologies ensure that indigenous voices remain central to both the research and its applications (Lukawiecki et al., 2022).

In summary, the conceptual framework positions Ewe storytelling as both a cultural heritage and an ecological strategy, mediating between traditional knowledge systems and contemporary sustainability goals.

Proposed Model Diagram

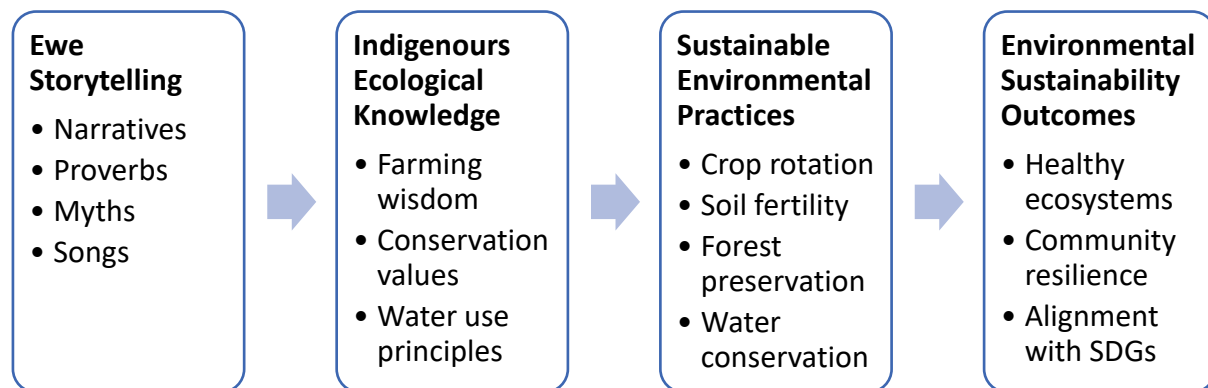


Figure 1. Proposed model diagram for the conceptual framework

2.6 Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter has examined the conceptual and theoretical foundations underpinning the study. The review began by situating storytelling within indigenous societies as a vital mechanism for transmitting cultural values, ecological wisdom, and moral education. It established that, in many African contexts, storytelling functions not merely as entertainment but as a living pedagogical system that shapes worldviews and environmental behaviour.

Within this broader framework, the Ewe storytelling tradition was explored as a distinct cultural form that encodes ecological knowledge through symbols, proverbs, and metaphors. Stories about animals, sacred groves, water bodies, and deities illustrate the Ewe worldview, which recognizes the interconnectedness between humans and nature. Through this oral system, environmental ethics such as moderation, respect for biodiversity, and communal stewardship are communicated and reinforced across generations.

The review further discussed indigenous knowledge as an essential foundation for sustainable practices. It highlighted that such knowledge systems combine empirical observation with spiritual and moral dimensions, offering insights into resource management, farming, and conservation that predate modern sustainability discourses. Storytelling serves as the communicative channel through which this knowledge is taught, remembered, and applied.

However, the chapter also identified significant barriers to the preservation and integration of indigenous knowledge. Modernization, globalization, urbanization, and the influence of digital media have disrupted the intergenerational transmission of oral traditions. Additionally, policy frameworks and formal education systems often marginalize indigenous epistemologies, leading to a gradual decline in storytelling as a tool for community learning and environmental awareness.

Addressing these challenges requires not only documentation of indigenous narratives but also recognition of their value in contemporary sustainability efforts.

The theoretical review established that Biocultural Conservation Theory provides the foundation for understanding the unity between cultural diversity and ecological sustainability, positioning Ewe storytelling as a biocultural mechanism for conservation. Decolonizing Methodologies, on the other hand, offer an ethical and epistemological framework for conducting research that values indigenous voices and knowledge systems. Together, these theories ensure that the study is both contextually grounded and methodologically respectful.

In summary, the literature reveals that storytelling is a multidimensional cultural practice that bridges knowledge, belief, and behaviour. Yet, despite growing interest in traditional ecological knowledge, there remains limited research on how Ewe storytelling directly informs sustainable environmental practices. This conceptual and theoretical understanding thus provides the foundation for the next chapter, which outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analytical approaches used to explore the ecological significance of Ewe storytelling in promoting sustainability within Ghana's Volta Region.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological procedures used to investigate the role of Ewe storytelling in shaping sustainable environmental practices in the Volta Region. It outlines the research design, study area, target population, sampling strategies, data collection instruments, and analytical techniques. The chapter also presents the ethical measures followed and the methodological limitations encountered during the study.

A mixed-methods design was adopted to allow for the examination of both the qualitative dimensions of storytelling and the quantitative patterns of environmental behaviour within the selected communities. The qualitative component captured ecological knowledge embedded in oral narratives, while the quantitative component assessed the extent to which community members apply these lessons in their daily practices.

The chapter proceeds by describing the study locations, Ho, Adaklu, and Abutia, and explaining the criteria for selecting participants, including elders, storytellers, and general community members. It then details the tools used for data collection, namely semi-structured interviews, archival review, and structured questionnaires. The procedures for analysing qualitative data through thematic analysis and quantitative data through descriptive statistics are also presented.

Finally, the chapter identifies the ethical protocols that guided the study, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for cultural norms. It concludes with the methodological constraints that may have influenced the research process.

The approach is guided by community-based participatory research (CBPR) principles to ensure that the research process is inclusive, culturally sensitive, and beneficial to the communities involved (Corrigan & Oppenheim, 2024).

3.2 Research Design (Qualitative, CBPR)

The study employed a mixed method design, complemented by elements of community-based participatory research (CBPR). A mixed method approach is appropriate because the research seeks to explore and interpret the meanings embedded in Ewe storytelling, capturing ecological knowledge conveyed through oral traditions (Leavy, 2022). CBPR principles further ensure that the voices of Ewe elders, storytellers, and community leaders are not only documented but also centered in the research process.

This design emphasizes collaboration, respect for cultural protocols, and shared ownership of knowledge. Storytelling traditions were explored through semi-structured interviews and archival analysis, while thematic analysis was used to interpret the ecological wisdom encoded in the stories. The study incorporates elements of mixed methods through quantitative surveys to measure how ecological principles from storytelling are practiced in the community. This integration enhances the study's rigor and broadens its scope.

3.3 Study Area (Ho, Adaklu, Abutia)

The study is situated in the Volta Region of Ghana, specifically in Ho and its neighboring communities, Adaklu and Abutia. These communities were chosen because of their strong cultural ties to Ewe traditions and the continued presence of storytelling practices, especially among elders.

- Ho: The regional capital, serving as a hub of cultural and economic activity. While modern influences are strong here, traditional practices remain visible in family and community settings.
- Adaklu: A rural community where agricultural practices dominate. Storytelling sessions are often tied to farming and festivals, providing insights into ecological themes.

- Abutia: A smaller community where elders and cultural custodians play an active role in preserving oral traditions, making it ideal for accessing authentic narratives.

Together, these sites offer a balance between urbanizing contexts (Ho) and more traditional rural settings (Adaklu and Abutia), enabling the study to capture variations in how storytelling and sustainability intersect.



Figure 2. Volta Regional Map, showing Ho Central and its neighboring towns

3.4 Population, Sampling, and Sample Size

3.4.1 Target Population

The target population comprises members of Ewe communities in Ho, Adaklu, and Abutia. This includes:

1. Elders and storytellers – custodians of oral traditions who provide ecological narratives.
2. Community leaders – chiefs, opinion leaders, and cultural custodians.
3. General community members – farmers, traders, youth, and households whose practices may reflect ecological wisdom derived from storytelling.

3.4.2 Sampling Strategy

- For the qualitative strand, purposive sampling was used to select 45 elders and storytellers who are recognized by their communities as knowledge holders. This ensures depth and authenticity of narratives.
- For the quantitative strand, stratified random sampling was used to select community members. Stratification was based on gender, age, and occupation to ensure representativeness (Tejada & Punzalan, 2012).

3.4.3 Sample Size Determination (Quantitative Strand)

The sample size for the quantitative survey is calculated using Slovin's formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

- n = sample size

- N = population size
- e = margin of error (5% = 0.05)

According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, the combined estimated population of Ho, Adaklu, and Abutia districts is approximately **150,000**.

$$n = \frac{150,000}{1 + 150,000(0.05^2)} = 398.93617 = 399$$

Thus, the minimum recommended sample size for the quantitative survey is approximately **399** respondents.

However, due to resource and time constraints, the study will adopt a manageable sample of 350 respondents, stratified proportionally across Ho, Adaklu, and Abutia. This reduced sample maintains feasibility while still providing useful insights for the exploratory nature of the research.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The study will employ multiple data collection methods, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure depth and breadth of understanding.

3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 45 Ewe elders and storytellers across Ho, Adaklu, and Abutia. These interviews provided insights into oral narratives, proverbs, and cultural practices that encode ecological wisdom. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility, enabling participants to share stories in their own way while ensuring that key themes such as farming, land use, and conservation were addressed. Interviews were conducted in the Ewe language, with

translation into English where necessary, and were audio-recorded (with consent) for later transcription and analysis.

3.5.2 Archival Research

In addition to oral accounts, archival sources were consulted. these included collections of Ewe folktales, proverbs, and cultural records preserved in books, libraries, and local cultural centers. Archival data complemented the interviews, providing a broader base of narratives and ensuring that ecological themes were captured across different sources of knowledge.

3.5.3 Surveys (Quantitative Component)

A structured questionnaire was administered to 100 community members selected through stratified random sampling. The questionnaire focused on the extent to which ecological practices encoded in stories are adopted in daily life. Questions included both frequency-based responses (e.g., how often a particular farming practice is used) and Likert-scale items (e.g., level of agreement on the importance of conserving natural resources). Surveys were administered face-to-face, ensuring inclusivity for respondents with limited literacy.

3.6 Data Analysis (Manual and Excel-Based)

Data analysis was conducted in two phases: qualitative and quantitative.

- **Qualitative Analysis:** Interview transcripts and archival stories were transcribed, read carefully, and coded manually. Codes were grouped into themes such as “soil conservation,” “water management,” “sacred natural sites,” and “community responsibility.” These themes were then be analyzed to identify recurring ecological lessons in Ewe storytelling. Manual coding was supported by simple tools such as Excel

spreadsheets to track word frequencies, categorize codes, and compare themes across participants.

- **Quantitative Analysis:** Survey data was entered into Excel and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations. This revealed patterns such as the proportion of community members who adopted storytelling-inspired practices, or variations in adoption across age and gender groups. Simple charts and tables were also produced in Excel to present results clearly.

The integration of these analyses occurred during interpretation, where qualitative insights were compared with quantitative patterns to build a holistic understanding of the link between storytelling and sustainability.

3.7 Ethical Considerations (FPIC, Cultural Protocols, Confidentiality)

The study will strictly adhere to ethical research standards, particularly given its focus on indigenous knowledge.

- **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC):** Before data collection, participants were fully informed about the purpose, scope, and potential outcomes of the research. Consent was obtained verbally and in writing, with the option to withdraw at any point.
- **Cultural Protocols:** Permission was sought from local chiefs, elders, and opinion leaders before engaging with community members. Storytelling sessions were conducted with respect to cultural norms, ensuring that sacred or restricted knowledge is not disclosed inappropriately.

- **Confidentiality:** Participants' identities were protected by using pseudonyms in transcripts and reports. Audio recordings and transcripts were securely stored, accessible only to the researcher.
- **Reciprocity:** Findings were shared with the communities in accessible formats, such as oral presentations or community discussions, ensuring that the benefits of the research are not limited to academic audiences (Hasan et al., 2021).

3.8 Limitations of Methodology

Several limitations are anticipated in this study.

1. **Time Constraints:** The three-month research period may limit the number of interviews conducted and the breadth of archival sources reviewed.
2. **Sample Size:** While the ideal sample size calculated was approximately 399 respondents, resource limitations necessitate a smaller sample of 100. This may affect the generalizability of quantitative findings, though it remains sufficient for exploratory purposes.
3. **Language and Translation:** Conducting interviews in Ewe and translating into English may risk loss of nuance. Efforts were made to minimize this by working with skilled translators and validating interpretations with community members.
4. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Some stories may be considered sacred or inappropriate for disclosure in research. Respecting cultural boundaries may restrict access to certain narratives, but this is necessary to uphold ethical integrity.

5. **Researcher Bias:** As with most qualitative research, interpretation may be influenced by the researcher's perspective. This was mitigated by cross-checking themes with participants and maintaining reflexive field notes.

Despite these limitations, the chosen methodology provides a robust framework for capturing the ecological wisdom embedded in Ewe storytelling and its relationship to sustainability practices.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

. This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from the field. After several weeks of collecting responses across Ho, Adaklu, and Abutia, the study settled with 350 usable questionnaires, supported by a handful of informal comments and observations that helped give some texture to the numbers. The methods described in Chapter Three guided the way the analyses are presented here. The goal is to show, as plainly as possible, what respondents said and how these patterns begin to speak to the larger story of Ewe storytelling and environmental practice.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Understanding who participated in the study helps ground the rest of the analysis. People do not experience storytelling or environmental responsibility in the same way, and differences in age, gender, education, occupation and community context shape how cultural knowledge is received and acted upon. These demographic patterns therefore provide a backdrop against which later findings on ecological knowledge and behaviour can be interpreted.

4.1.1 Age distribution

The age distribution leans toward adults in their thirties, although every major age group in the community appears in the sample. This spread is useful because younger residents often relate differently to cultural stories compared to older ones, who tend to be closer to tradition-bearers, as shown in Table 1 below. The strong presence of adults suggests that responses reflect individuals who are actively involved in livelihoods and decision-making, which may influence how

storytelling messages are applied in environmental practice. Older participants may recall traditional narratives more vividly, while younger ones may filter them through modern media or schooling, a trend noted by Nurdauletova et al. (2023) in relation to oral culture and youth engagement.

Table 1 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–29	57	16.3
30–39	139	39.7
40–49	52	14.9
50–59	50	14.3
60+	52	14.9
Total	350	100

4.1.2 Gender distribution

Women make up slightly more than half of the respondents. In many households in the Volta Region, women are not only listeners but sometimes facilitators of evening storytelling, so their strong representation adds nuance to how the later findings might be read. Since women often manage household water use, food preparation, farming tasks and child socialisation, their perspectives may reflect practical environmental concerns embedded in storytelling. This aligns with Dei’s (2024) findings which noted the role of women as knowledge carriers in indigenous ecological systems.

Table 2 Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	191	54.6
Male	159	45.4
Total	350	100

4.1.3 Education level

Most respondents reported secondary or tertiary education. This higher educational profile might influence how they recall or interpret traditional stories, and may also help explain some of the attitudes that emerge later in the chapter, especially when modern schooling interacts with indigenous knowledge. For some respondents, formal schooling may reinforce environmental lessons found in stories, while for others it may compete with or reshape traditional perspectives. This tension between schooling and indigenous knowledge transmission has been identified in studies such as Boatbil et al. (2025) and Nurdauletova et al. (2023).

Table 3 Education Level of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tertiary	106	30.3
Secondary	189	54.0
Primary	35	10.0
No formal education	20	5.7
Total	350	100

4.1.4 Occupation

Respondents work in a range of occupations, but farmers and small-scale traders stand out. Because these groups interact closely with land and natural resources, their views on ecological lessons in storytelling may be shaped by practical experience. Farmers, in particular, may respond to stories about soil care, tree planting or bush burning with greater familiarity, since these directly affect their livelihoods. This reflects patterns noted in indigenous ecological knowledge literature, where environmental messages are commonly tied to resource use and land stewardship (Berkes, 2017; Thompson et al., 2024).

Table 4 Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farmer	106	30.3
Trader	44	12.6
Artisan	33	9.4
Student	32	9.1
Other	135	38.6
Total	350	100

4.1.5 Community distribution

The sample reflects a reasonable balance across Ho, Adaklu and Abutia, though with a slightly higher number from Ho. Since these communities vary in size, urban influence and cultural rhythm, the differences may surface later when we look at storytelling participation and environmental behaviour. Communities closer to urban centres may experience greater influence from media and modern schooling, while more rural communities may maintain stronger storytelling traditions. These variations mirror discussions in literature on the impact of modernization and media on indigenous practices (Hayward et al., 2021; Sokk, 2024).

Table 5 Community Distribution

Community	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ho	156	44.6
Adaklu	110	31.4
Abutia	84	24.0
Total	350	100

4.2 Storytelling Participation and Ecological Content

Storytelling in Ewe communities is not a casual pastime; it is a social event that once shaped the rhythm of evening life. In many households, family members and neighbours gathered outdoors after the day's work to listen to elders recount the stories they learned from their own parents and

grandparents. These sessions were often preceded by drumming, clapping, folksongs and short performances that set the tone for the night. Children sat close, adults formed a circle, and the storyteller held the floor, sometimes with humour, sometimes with authority, and often with lessons hidden beneath the surface of the tale.

Within these narratives, values about respect, caution, cooperation and care for the environment were interwoven with entertainment. The stories that warned against burning the bush, polluting rivers or entering sacred groves were not delivered as lectures but as parables, metaphors and moral guidance. Because storytelling was a communal experience, the messages were absorbed collectively, making them part of both memory and identity.

Respondents participated in this tradition and this led to the kinds of ecological messages they recall. The responses explored participation in storytelling sessions, exposure to environmental themes and specific ecological lessons learned.

4.2.1 Participation in Storytelling Sessions

Table 6 presents respondents' participation in storytelling sessions. Out of the three hundred and fifty (350) respondents, two hundred and sixty-five (265), representing seventy-five-point seven percent (75.7%), indicated that they participate in storytelling, while eighty-five (85) respondents, representing twenty-four-point three percent (24.3%), reported that they do not. The results suggest that storytelling remains a common practice within the study communities, although participation is not universal. This continued participation reflects the persistence of oral traditions as everyday communication systems, which aligns with Abdulai et al. (2023) findings, which said communication systems are great for rural development and one of the best ways is the use of indigenous storytelling.

Table 6. Participation in Storytelling Sessions

Participation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	265	75.7
No	85	24.3
Total	350	100

4.2.2 Main Storytellers in the Community

Respondents' views on who usually tells stories in their communities indicate that elders were the main storytellers as shown by one hundred and ninety-two (192) respondents, representing almost fifty-five percent (54.9%). Parents, teachers and peers were mentioned less frequently. The results indicate that storytelling is still largely associated with elders, although parents and teachers also play a role in transmitting stories. The central role of elders mirrors observations in indigenous knowledge studies that identify elders as primary custodians of cultural and ecological knowledge, as noted by Berkes (2017).

Table 7. Persons Who Usually Tell Stories in the Community

Storyteller	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Elders	192	54.9
Parents	65	18.6
Teachers	44	12.6
Peers	33	9.4
Others	16	4.6
Total	350	100

4.2.3 Exposure to Environmental-Themed Stories

Respondents were asked whether they had heard Ewe stories that relate to environmental issues. As shown in **Table 8**, two hundred and sixty-five (265) respondents, which makes up

approximately seventy six percent (75.7%) answered yes, while eighty-five (85) respondents, which make up approximately twenty-four percent (24.3%) answered no. This suggests that environmental themes are present in many of the stories encountered by respondents. The presence of environmental themes in oral narratives reflects a common pattern in African storytelling traditions, as discussed by Abubakari (2025).

Table 8. Those Who Have Heard Environmental-Related Ewe Stories

Heard Environmental Story	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	265	75.7
No	85	24.3
Total	350	100

4.2.4 Main Ecological Messages in Stories

Respondents identified the main ecological message conveyed in the stories they remembered. Protecting nature was the most frequently reported message. The responses indicated that environmental stories often emphasise protection, restraint and respect for both natural and social systems. Similar emphases on protection and restraint within indigenous narratives have been documented in studies of sacred ecology, including Berkes (2017) who said sacred ecology is very necessary for the development of social systems.

Table 9. Main Message of Environmental Stories Heard

Main Message	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Protect nature	114	32.6
Avoid harmful practices	67	19.1
Care for water bodies	56	16.0
Respect sacred sites	55	15.7
Promote unity	36	10.3
Other	22	6.3
Total	350	100

4.2.5 Ecological Lessons Learned

Respondents were allowed to select more than one ecological lesson learned from storytelling, and the multiple-response results are summarised in **Table 10**. The data show that respondents link storytelling to a broad spectrum of practical environmental actions, rather than to general moral advice alone. Protecting water bodies and planting trees were the most frequently reported lessons, suggesting that stories do not simply warn or entertain, they communicate concrete expectations for caring for rivers, streams and forests. Lessons on avoiding bush burning and practising soil care indicate that respondents recognise storytelling as addressing everyday land-use practices that directly affect farming and the local environment. Respect for sacred groves also features strongly, reflecting how cultural beliefs intersect with ecological protection in many Ewe communities.

Taken together, these results indicate that ecological knowledge transmitted through stories is not abstract but grounded in familiar environmental concerns. The prominence of lessons on water, forests and fire management aligns with descriptions of traditional ecological knowledge systems in which oral narratives encode place-based environmental guidance (Dei, 2024b; Thompson et al., 2024). In this sense, storytelling continues to function as more than cultural heritage; it remains a practical medium that links environmental responsibility to shared values and collective memory.

Table 10. Ecological Lessons Learned from Ewe Storytelling

Ecological Lesson	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Protecting water bodies	242	69.1
Planting trees / not destroying forests	222	63.4
Avoiding bush burning	201	57.4
Practising crop rotation or soil care	199	56.9
Respecting sacred groves or lands	171	48.9
Other	44	12.6

Note: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents selected multiple options.

4.3 Perceived Influence of Storytelling on Environmental Practices

For many people in the study communities, storytelling does more than entertain. It shapes how they think about the land, water and sacred places they live with every day. The responses in this section show the extent to which individuals believe that the lessons carried in Ewe stories affect their choices and behaviour, whether in protecting rivers, avoiding bush burning, or treating sacred groves with caution. In other words, it begins to reveal how narrative tradition and environmental practice meet on the ground.”

4.3.1 Perceived Usefulness of Environmental Lessons

Table 11 presents respondents’ views on whether Ewe stories contain useful environmental lessons. Out of the three hundred and fifty (350) respondents, two hundred and thirty-four (234), representing sixty-six-point eight percent (66.8%), either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. A total of forty-nine (49) respondents, representing fourteen-point zero percent (14.0%), disagreed or strongly disagreed, while sixty-seven (67) respondents, representing nineteen-point one percent (19.1%), selected the neutral option. The results indicate that most respondents recognise Ewe storytelling as a source of useful environmental guidance. Recognition of storytelling as a source of guidance aligns with findings on narrative-based environmental learning reported by Hofman-Bergholm (2023).

Table 11. Belief that Ewe Stories Contain Useful Environmental Lessons

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 (Strongly Disagree)	17	4.9
2 (Disagree)	32	9.1
3 (Neutral)	67	19.1
4 (Agree)	103	29.4
5 (Strongly Agree)	131	37.4
Total	350	100

4.3.2 Application of Lessons in Daily Life

When asked how they apply lessons from Ewe stories in their daily farming or household practices, respondents, as presented in **Table 12**, showed whether they apply lessons learned from Ewe stories in their daily environmental practices. A total of two hundred and twenty-nine (229) respondents, representing sixty-five-point four percent (65.4%), agreed or strongly agreed that they apply such lessons. In contrast, sixty-one (61) respondents, representing seventeen-point four percent (17.4%), disagreed or strongly disagreed, while sixty (60) respondents, representing seventeen-point one percent (17.1%), were neutral. These results suggest that a majority of respondents perceive storytelling as influencing their everyday environmental behaviour. The translation of narrative lessons into daily practice reflects patterns observed in indigenous storytelling studies, such as those discussed by Atiku (2022) that storytelling helps in the preservation of indigenous culture.

Table 12. Application of Lessons from Ewe Stories in Daily Practices

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 (Strongly Disagree)	19	5.4
2 (Disagree)	42	12.0
3 (Neutral)	60	17.1
4 (Agree)	106	30.3
5 (Strongly Agree)	123	35.1
Total	350	100

4.3.3 Influence on Treatment of Sacred Sites

Responses to the statement that Ewe stories influence how respondents treat sacred groves, forests and rivers are presented in Table 13. In total, two hundred and thirty (230) respondents, representing sixty-five-point seven percent (65.7%), agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Fifty-six (56) respondents, representing sixteen-point zero percent (16.0%), disagreed or strongly disagreed,

while sixty-four (64) respondents, representing eighteen-point three percent (18.3%), selected the neutral option. These results suggest that a substantial number of respondents recognise storytelling as shaping their attitudes toward culturally significant natural sites (Ajayi, 2025). Sacred groves and water bodies carry both spiritual and ecological value within Ewe communities, and the strong agreement levels indicate that narratives may reinforce norms of caution and respect when interacting with these areas. The neutral responses, however, point to a segment of the population that either does not clearly connect stories with environmental behaviour or feels that other influences, such as modern schooling or media, play a stronger role. The protective role of narratives around sacred groves and water bodies is consistent with findings reported by Asante (2024), who notes that cultural beliefs often serve as informal mechanisms for environmental stewardship.

Table 13. Influence of Stories on Treatment of Sacred Groves, Forests, and Rivers

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 (Strongly Disagree)	21	6.0
2 (Disagree)	35	10.0
3 (Neutral)	64	18.3
4 (Agree)	123	35.1
5 (Strongly Agree)	107	30.6
Total	350	100

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4.3.4 Avoidance of Harmful Practices

Responses to Question 14; I avoid harmful practices (e.g., bush burning, overfishing) because of lessons from stories I was told, is summarised in Table 14, indicate whether Ewe storytelling discourages harmful environmental practices such as bush burning and overfishing. A total of one hundred and ninety-four (194) respondents, representing fifty-five-point four percent (55.4%), agreed or strongly agreed that stories influence them to avoid such practices. Seventy-three (73)

respondents, representing twenty-point nine percent (20.9%), disagreed or strongly disagreed, while eighty-three (83) respondents, representing twenty-three-point seven percent (23.7%), were neutral. These results suggest that while more than half of the respondents acknowledge the role of storytelling in discouraging environmentally harmful behaviour, a considerable proportion either does not make this connection or feels that external pressures, such as economic need, changing livelihoods or modern influences, may override narrative influence (Hofman-Bergholm, 2023). The neutral responses also indicate uncertainty or weakened transmission of these lessons, particularly among groups less exposed to traditional storytelling (Dessart & Standaert, 2023). Such variations between awareness and consistent practice reflect broader findings on indigenous environmental communication, including those highlighted by Ens et al. (2022), who note that cultural messages can shape attitudes even when behavioural change is uneven or constrained.

Table 14. Respondents' views on avoidance of harmful practices due to story lessons

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 (Strongly Disagree)	29	8.3
2 (Disagree)	44	12.6
3 (Neutral)	83	23.7
4 (Agree)	113	32.3
5 (Strongly Agree)	81	23.1
Total	350	100

4.3.5 Intergenerational Learning Through Storytelling

Respondents' perceptions of whether younger generations continue to learn ecological lessons through storytelling is presented in Table 15. A total of one hundred and seventy-six (176) respondents, representing fifty-point three percent (50.3%), agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Seventy (70) respondents, representing twenty-point zero percent (20.0%), disagreed or strongly disagreed, while one hundred and four (104) respondents, representing twenty-nine-point

seven percent (29.7%), were neutral. These results indicate that views on intergenerational learning are more divided than in earlier questions, suggesting that while many believe storytelling still functions as a medium of ecological transmission, a significant portion of respondents are uncertain or perceive a decline (Cochrane, 2023). This level of neutrality may reflect changing household routines, increased media consumption, or reduced opportunities for communal storytelling among youth (Nair & Yunus, 2021; Osei-Tutu, 2023). The disagreement responses, though smaller, point to respondents who feel that traditional narratives may be losing relevance or accessibility for younger audiences. Concerns about weakening intergenerational transmission have also been highlighted in studies on oral culture and modernization, including the work of Nurdauletova et al. (2023), who note that digital media and shifting social patterns can disrupt traditional pathways of knowledge sharing.

Table 15. Perception that Younger Generations Still Learn Through Storytelling

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 (Strongly Disagree)	28	8.0
2 (Disagree)	42	12.0
3 (Neutral)	104	29.7
4 (Agree)	97	27.7
5 (Strongly Agree)	79	22.6
Total	350	100

4.4 Barriers and Community Suggestions

While earlier sections highlight the continued presence and influence of Ewe storytelling, this section shifts attention to the challenges that affect its practice and transmission. The results presented here focus on factors that respondents believe limit the effectiveness of storytelling as a tool for environmental awareness, as well as the practical suggestions they propose for strengthening it. Together, these findings provide insight into both the constraints facing

storytelling in contemporary community life and the opportunities identified by respondents for sustaining its role in environmental education and practice.

4.4.1 Barriers to Storytelling as a Sustainability Tool

Respondents were asked to identify the main challenges facing storytelling in their communities. This was a multiple-response question, allowing respondents to select more than one option. The results are presented in Table 16. The most frequently reported barrier was lack of interest among youth, followed by the influence of television and social media. The impact of media influence and youth disengagement echoes concerns raised in studies on cultural transition and digital communication, including Sokk (2024). More than half of the respondents also identified the decline in elders who actively tell stories and the influence of modern education as challenges to the continuation of storytelling practices.

Table 16. Main Challenges Facing Storytelling in the Community

Barrier	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Influence of modern education	207	59.1
Influence of television / social media	238	68.0
Lack of interest among youth	256	73.1
Decline in elders who tell stories	189	54.0
Other (e.g., migration, busy schedules)	41	11.7

Note: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents selected multiple options.

4.4.2 Community Suggestions for Strengthening Storytelling

Question 17; What can be done to preserve Ewe storytelling as a way of teaching about the environment, invited respondents to suggest ways of improving or preserving Ewe storytelling as a means of environmental education. The open-ended responses were grouped into thematic categories and are summarised in Table 17.

Table 17. Preserving Ewe Storytelling as an Environmental Education Tool

Suggestion Theme	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Revive community storytelling events	98	28.0
Integrate storytelling into school activities	76	21.7
Encourage elders to mentor youth storytellers	71	20.3
Use radio / local media to promote stories	49	14.0
Create community spaces for cultural education	33	9.4
Other (church groups, youth clubs, NGOs)	23	6.6

The responses show a range of practical suggestions, with emphasis placed on community-based events, school involvement, and intergenerational mentorship. Similar strategies for sustaining indigenous knowledge transmission have been recommended by Boatbil et al. (2025).

4.5 Summary of Chapter Four

Chapter Four presented the results of the study based on data collected from 350 respondents across Ho, Adaklu and Abutia. The demographic profile showed a broad representation across age groups, with the largest share of respondents in their economically active years and a slight majority being women. Most respondents reported secondary or tertiary education, and farming and trading emerged as the dominant occupations. This profile indicates that many participants engage directly with land and natural resources, which provides a relevant social context for understanding the relationship between storytelling and environmental practices in the study areas.

The analysis demonstrated that storytelling remains a widely practised cultural activity. A significant majority of respondents reported participating in storytelling sessions, with elders identified as the main storytellers. This reflects patterns noted in indigenous knowledge literature, where elders serve as principal custodians of ecological and cultural knowledge (Berkes, 2017; Odora Hoppers, 2021). A large proportion of respondents also reported having heard stories containing environmental themes. These included messages on protecting nature, avoiding

destructive practices, caring for water bodies and respecting sacred sites. The prominence of such themes aligns with work by (Dei, 2024a) and (Abubakari, 2025), who argue that indigenous storytelling embeds ecological ethics and land-use guidance within moral and spiritual narratives rather than separating environment from culture.

Respondents also identified a range of specific ecological lessons learned through storytelling, such as protecting water bodies, planting trees, avoiding bush burning and respecting sacred groves. These lessons correspond with descriptions of traditional ecological knowledge that link narratives to practical environmental actions (Thompson et al., 2024). The results therefore indicate that Ewe storytelling continues to serve as a medium through which environmental understanding is transmitted and reinforced.

In relation to environmental behaviour, most respondents agreed that Ewe stories contain useful environmental lessons, and many reported applying these lessons in their daily lives. Storytelling was also perceived to shape attitudes toward sacred groves, forests and rivers, which echoes findings that narratives and taboos contribute to conservation outcomes in indigenous contexts (Asante, 2024; Ens et al., 2022). However, responses concerning avoidance of harmful practices and intergenerational learning were more varied. These patterns point to an emerging gap between awareness and behaviour, shaped in part by changing lifestyles, modern education and media influence, a trend also highlighted by authors examining cultural transition and digital communication (Carlson & Frazer, 2021; Sökk, 2024).

The chapter further highlighted challenges that threaten the continuity and influence of storytelling. Lack of interest among youth, the influence of television and social media, and the declining number of elders were identified as major barriers. These concerns are consistent with literature discussing the erosion of oral culture under modern pressures (Nurdauletova et al., 2023).

Respondents also proposed strategies to strengthen storytelling, including community storytelling events, school integration, mentorship between elders and youth, and use of media platforms. These suggestions mirror recommendations found in studies advocating for the preservation and revitalisation of indigenous knowledge (Boatbil et al., 2025).

Overall, the findings in Chapter Four showed that storytelling remains embedded in community life, continues to transmit ecological knowledge, and retains influence over certain environmental attitudes and practices. However, its reach is uneven, particularly among younger generations and in contexts shaped by modern media and education. The chapter concluded by noting that these results provide a foundation for discussing how Ewe storytelling can contribute to sustainability efforts, while acknowledging the barriers that may limit its long-term effectiveness.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter interprets the analysis presented in Chapter Four and situates them within the broader context of existing literature and the conceptual framework developed earlier in the study. Rather than introducing new data, the chapter focuses on explaining what the results mean in relation to the research aim and objectives. The discussion draws directly on the empirical patterns observed in the data, engages relevant scholarly work reviewed in Chapter Two. This also calls to integrate indigenous knowledge into sustainability research and practice are emphasised by Albuquerque et al. (2021) and Dei (2024b), and reflects on how Ewe storytelling operates as a cultural and ecological system within the study communities. This framing reflects indigenous ecological knowledge perspectives that treat cultural narratives as part of environmental governance, as discussed by Berkes (2017) and Turner et al. (2022).

5.1 Summary

The study was undertaken to examine how Ewe storytelling can serve as a pathway to sustainable environmental practices in the Volta Region, with particular focus on Ho, Adaklu and Abutia. The research responded to concerns that formal environmental policies and education often overlook indigenous knowledge systems that continue to shape everyday behaviour in many communities. Related critiques of the limited recognition of indigenous ecological knowledge in conservation and sustainability efforts are raised by Ens et al. (2022) and Magni (2017).

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collected data from three hundred and fifty (350) respondents through structured questionnaires and supported by a small number of informal comments. The use of mixed methods alongside community-grounded insights is consistent with guidance on research design and community-based approaches outlined by Leavy (2022) and Corrigan and Oppenheim (2024). The questionnaire covered demographic characteristics, participation in storytelling, exposure to environmental narratives, perceived influence on environmental practices, and challenges affecting storytelling. This design made it possible to capture both the prevalence of storytelling and how respondents relate it to environmental knowledge and behaviour.

At a general level, the findings indicate that storytelling remains an active practice within the study communities, with elders continue to play a central role as storytellers. A large proportion of respondents reported exposure to stories that contain ecological themes, and many identified clear lessons related to water protection, forest care, avoidance of harmful practices and respect for sacred sites. The results also suggest that storytelling influences environmental attitudes and behaviour for many respondents, although this influence is not uniform across all practices or age groups. At the same time, several barriers were identified, including youth disinterest, the growing influence of television and social media, and the declining number of elders who actively tell stories. These patterns provide the basis for the objective-based discussion that follows.

5.2 Findings

The first objective sought to examine whether Ewe storytelling in Ho, Adaklu and Abutia still contains ecological knowledge, and to identify the nature of that knowledge. The findings from the data provide clear evidence that storytelling continues to function as a carrier of environmental knowledge within the study communities.

Participation in storytelling remains relatively high, with a large majority of respondents reporting involvement in storytelling sessions. This supports the view, widely noted in indigenous knowledge literature (Abubakari, 2025; Cochrane, 2023; Juma, 2022; Osei-Tutu, 2023), that oral traditions remain active knowledge systems rather than residual cultural practices. Berkes (2017) argues that indigenous ecological knowledge is often transmitted informally through narratives, rituals and shared experiences rather than formal instruction. This argument is also consistent with Odora Hoppers (2021), who frames indigenous knowledge as a living system shaped by context and practice. The patterns observed in this study align with this position, as respondents reported learning environmental lessons primarily through stories told by elders, parents and, to a lesser extent, teachers.

The content of the stories described by respondents further reinforces this point. The ecological messages identified, such as protecting nature, caring for water bodies, avoiding harmful practices and respecting sacred sites, reflect practical environmental concerns rooted in everyday life. These findings resonate with Dei (2024b) argument that indigenous knowledge systems in Ghana embed environmental ethics within moral and spiritual narratives rather than separating ecology from social life. The prominence of water protection, forest conservation and fire control in the responses suggests that storytelling addresses environmental issues that are locally relevant and directly tied to livelihoods. Similar place-based ecological emphases within oral traditions have been noted in African folklore and sustainability discussions by Thompson et al. (2024).

The detailed ecological lessons reported by respondents, including soil care, tree planting and respect for sacred groves, also support Abubakari (2025) observation that oral traditions often encode specific land-use practices, even when they are framed symbolically. The ecological value

of sacred groves as culturally protected spaces has also been documented in Ghanaian contexts by Asante (2024).

In this study, stories appear to operate as repositories of accumulated environmental experience, linking particular places and practices to shared values and expectations. However, the findings also reveal some variation in exposure and recognition of ecological content. A notable minority of respondents reported that they had not heard environmental-themed stories. This suggests that ecological knowledge embedded in storytelling may not be uniformly recognised or transmitted, possibly because environmental lessons are interwoven with broader moral or spiritual themes. This layered nature of indigenous knowledge, noted in the literature, means that listeners may emphasise different aspects of a story depending on age, experience or context.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Ewe storytelling continues to carry ecological knowledge that aligns closely with indigenous ecological knowledge theory and the conceptual framework of the study. Storytelling remains a living medium through which environmental understanding is shared, even as its reach varies across individuals and generations.

Findings indicate that storytelling plays a meaningful, though not uniform, role in shaping how respondents think about and engage with the environment. This affirms the second objective that indigenous storytelling affects the extent to which community members' environmental practices in Ho, Adaklu, and Abutia are affected.

Most respondents agreed that Ewe stories contain useful environmental lessons, and a similarly large proportion reported applying these lessons in their daily lives. This pattern supports arguments in narrative and behavioural literature that stories can function as informal regulatory mechanisms. Ajayi (2025) describes storytelling as a form of moral guidance that shapes

perceptions of right and wrong without relying on formal enforcement. The responses in this study suggest that storytelling influences behaviour by framing certain actions, such as bush burning or misuse of water bodies, as socially and morally undesirable. This reflects broader claims that storytelling operates as a practical tool for communicating sustainability norms, as discussed by Hofman-Bergholm (2023) and Dessart and Standaert (2023).

The influence of storytelling on the treatment of sacred sites stands out particularly strongly. A majority of respondents indicated that stories affect how they treat sacred groves, forests and rivers. This finding aligns with studies by Ens et al. (2022), which highlight how narratives and taboos contribute to the protection of ecologically significant areas in indigenous contexts. In the Volta Region, stories appear to reinforce restrictions around sacred sites, effectively supporting conservation through cultural norms rather than formal regulation. Comparable links between indigenous belief systems and environmental restraint around water bodies and sacred spaces are discussed in related African contexts by Raheem (2024) and Ogar (2023).

At the same time, the findings point to an attitude–behaviour gap. Although belief in the usefulness of environmental lessons is high, reported application is slightly lower, and responses related to avoiding harmful practices show greater variation. This gap reflects a broader challenge noted in environmental behaviour research, where individuals may endorse environmental values but struggle to act on them due to economic pressures, time constraints or competing demands. Atiku (2022) notes that narrative influence operates alongside structural factors, and the findings of this study support that view. Storytelling shapes attitudes and intentions, but it does not fully override practical realities.

Intergenerational learning also emerged as an area of uncertainty. Only about half of the respondents felt that younger generations continue to learn environmental lessons through

storytelling, while a substantial proportion were neutral or doubtful. This perception aligns with concerns raised in the literature about the influence of modern media and changing family routines on traditional knowledge transmission. The disruptive and reshaping effects of digital media on indigenous cultural transmission have been explored by Carlson and Frazer (2021) and Vohidova (2024). While storytelling remains influential for many adults, its role among younger people appears less secure.

Taken together, the findings indicate that storytelling continues to influence environmental behaviour, particularly in relation to sacred sites and general environmental awareness. However, this influence is uneven and increasingly mediated by economic conditions, media exposure and generational change. The second objective is therefore supported, but with important qualifications.

In trying to find out how the integration of ecological knowledge was embedded in Ewe storytelling (Objective 3), it was observed that it had influence on environmental practices, and the barriers and opportunities were identified by respondents into a coherent sustainability model. Rather than treating storytelling as an isolated cultural activity, this objective focused on understanding how it functions as part of a wider social system shaping environmental behaviour in the Volta Region.

Based on the analysis presented in Chapter Four, the study proposes a culturally grounded sustainability model that explains how Ewe storytelling contributes to environmental stewardship at the community level. The model captures the processes through which ecological knowledge is transmitted, interpreted, and translated into practice, while also accounting for social factors that either strengthen or weaken this process. This structure reflects biocultural approaches that link

cultural meaning, knowledge transmission and ecological outcomes, as discussed by Lukawiecki et al. (2022).

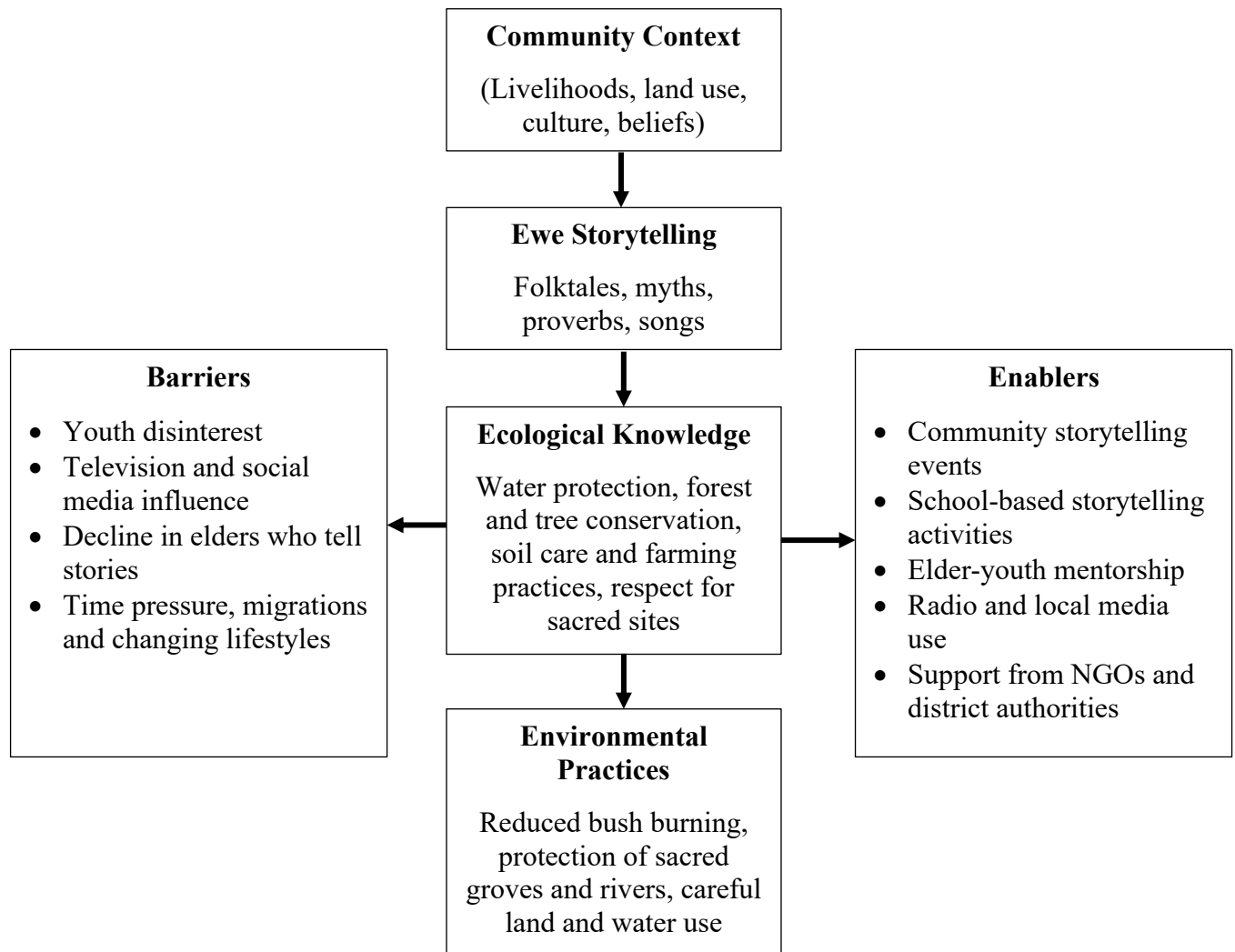


Figure 3: Culturally Grounded Sustainability Model Based on Ewe Storytelling in the Volta Region

As shown in Figure 3, Ewe storytelling occupies a central position in the model as the primary medium through which ecological knowledge is communicated within the community. Stories told by elders, parents, teachers and, in some cases, peers convey lessons related to water protection,

forest and tree conservation, soil management, avoidance of destructive practices such as bush burning, and respect for sacred sites. These narratives are shared within family compounds, community gatherings, schools and other social spaces, anchoring environmental knowledge in familiar cultural contexts.

The model illustrates how ecological knowledge conveyed through storytelling shapes shared values and norms, including respect for nature, moral restraint and collective responsibility. These values influence everyday environmental practices, such as careful use of water sources, protection of sacred groves and rivers, and more cautious engagement with land and forest resources. In this way, storytelling links cultural meaning directly to environmental action, contributing to local sustainability outcomes.

At the same time, the model recognises that this pathway is not automatic or uniform. As indicated in Figure 3, several barriers interfere with both the transmission of stories and their behavioural influence. This gap between knowledge and implementation is a recurring theme in conservation research, and is highlighted in the knowledge–implementation discussion by Ens et al. (2022). These include declining youth interest in storytelling, the growing influence of television and social media, the gradual loss of elders who actively tell stories, and changing social routines. These constraints help explain why the study found strong recognition of ecological lessons alongside uneven application in practice.

The model also incorporates enabling factors identified by respondents, such as reviving community storytelling events, integrating storytelling into school activities, encouraging elder–youth mentorship, and using local media platforms to promote indigenous narratives. The idea of strengthening transmission through schooling and media aligns with work on storytelling as pedagogy and communication for sustainability by Claybrook Jr (2023) and Cochrane (2023).

When these enabling conditions are present, storytelling remains a dynamic and adaptive practice, capable of reinforcing environmental responsibility while maintaining cultural continuity.

Overall, Figure 3 demonstrates that Ewe storytelling can function as a culturally grounded pathway to environmental sustainability in the Volta Region. The model does not suggest replacing formal environmental education or policy, but rather complementing them by embedding environmental responsibility within locally meaningful narratives and social relationships. In this sense, Objective Three is achieved by showing how storytelling, when supported by appropriate social conditions, can contribute to sustainable environmental practices rooted in community life.

5.3 Conclusion

This study has shown that Ewe storytelling in Ho, Adaklu and Abutia continues to function as a meaningful repository of ecological knowledge. The findings demonstrate that storytelling remains widely practised, with elders playing a central role as custodians of narratives that encode guidance on water protection, forest use, soil care, avoidance of harmful practices and respect for sacred sites. These ecological lessons are not abstract or symbolic alone; they reflect locally grounded knowledge shaped by long-term interaction with the environment. Similar arguments about indigenous knowledge as grounded environmental experience are emphasised by Turner et al. (2022). Although exposure to such stories is not uniform across all respondents, the evidence confirms that Ewe storytelling still carries substantial environmental content relevant to contemporary sustainability concerns.

The study has also shown that storytelling influences environmental attitudes and practices, though this influence is neither universal nor automatic. Many respondents recognise the usefulness of environmental lessons in stories and report applying them in daily life, particularly in relation to

the treatment of sacred sites and general environmental care. At the same time, the findings reveal a gap between awareness and consistent practice, shaped by factors such as economic pressures, changing lifestyles and the growing influence of modern media. Perceptions of declining intergenerational transmission further suggest that the behavioural influence of storytelling is uneven and vulnerable to social change. This weakening of transmission under modernization pressures is consistent with broader discussions of cultural transition presented by Sokk (2024).

Finally, the study has shown that Ewe storytelling can be integrated into a culturally grounded model for promoting environmental sustainability in the Volta Region. The findings indicate that storytelling operates through identifiable pathways of knowledge transmission and behavioural influence, while also being constrained by specific barriers. Community members themselves have identified practical strategies for strengthening storytelling, including revitalising community events, integrating stories into schools, supporting elder–youth mentorship and using media platforms to circulate local narratives. Taken together, these conclusions show that storytelling is not a relic of the past, but a living cultural resource whose contribution to sustainability depends on deliberate support and adaptation within contemporary social conditions.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

The findings of this study point to several areas where further research would deepen understanding of the relationship between storytelling and environmental sustainability.

1. Youth engagement: Examine how children and adolescents interpret Ewe stories and whether these narratives still shape their environmental behaviour in a digital age (Nurdauletova et al., 2023).

2. Digital storytelling: Explore whether radio, social media or video formats can adapt indigenous narratives for modern audiences without losing cultural meaning (Corwin, 2016; Nair & Yunus, 2021).
3. Comparative perspectives: Conduct similar studies among other ethnic groups or regions to assess whether storytelling-based ecological knowledge is unique to Ewe communities or part of broader indigenous sustainability patterns (Magni, 2017; Nepal, 2025).
4. Deeper qualitative insight: Use interviews or focused group discussions to capture how elders and youth interpret stories, and how meaning shifts across generations.
5. Longitudinal tracking: Monitor changes over time to understand how modernization, schooling and media continue to influence storytelling practices and environmental behaviour.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

Sample Questionnaire

Title: Harnessing Ewe Storytelling: A Study of Cultural Narratives and Sustainable Environmental Practices in Ghana's Volta Region

Instructions to Respondent:

This questionnaire is part of an academic study on the role of Ewe storytelling in promoting sustainable environmental practices. Your responses will remain confidential and used only for academic purposes. Please answer as honestly as possible.

Section A: Demographic Information

(Helps identify patterns in knowledge and practice)

1. Age: ☐ 18–29 ☐ 30–39 ☐ 40–49 ☐ 50–59 ☐ 60+
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other/Prefer not to say
3. Education Level: ☐ No formal education ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary
4. Occupation: ☐ Farmer ☐ Trader ☐ Student ☐ Artisan ☐ Other (specify) _____
5. Community: ☐ Ho ☐ Adaklu ☐ Abutia

Section B: Knowledge of Storytelling Traditions

(Captures awareness of ecological knowledge in storytelling)

6. Do you participate in storytelling sessions in your community?
☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Who usually tells stories in your community?
☐ Elders ☐ Parents ☐ Peers ☐ Teachers ☐ Others (specify) _____
8. Have you ever heard an Ewe story that talks about nature or the environment (e.g., land, water, farming, trees, or animals)?
☐ Yes ☐ No
9. If **Yes**, what was the main message of that story?
10. Which of the following ecological lessons have you learned from Ewe storytelling?
(Select all that apply)
- ☐ Protecting water bodies
 - ☐ Planting trees / not destroying forests
 - ☐ Avoiding bush burning
 - ☐ Respecting sacred groves or lands
 - ☐ Practicing crop rotation or soil care
 - ☐ Other (specify) _____

Section C: Application of Storytelling-Inspired Practices

(Measures whether ecological lessons from stories are put into practice)

On a scale of 1–5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree, please indicate your response.

11. I believe Ewe stories contain useful lessons for caring for the environment.
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

12. I apply lessons from Ewe stories in my daily farming or household practices.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

13. Stories about sacred groves, rivers, or forests influence how I treat these places.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

14. I avoid harmful practices (e.g., bush burning, overfishing) because of lessons from stories I was told.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

15. Younger generations in my community still learn environmental lessons through storytelling.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Section D: Barriers and Suggestions

(Explores obstacles to using storytelling as a sustainability tool)

16. In your view, what are the main challenges facing storytelling in your community?

☐ Influence of modern education

☐ Influence of television / social media

☐ Lack of interest among youth

☐ Decline in elders who tell stories

☐ Other (specify) _____

17. What can be done to preserve Ewe storytelling as a way of teaching about the environment?

Closing

Thank you for your time and contribution. Your responses will help preserve Ewe cultural traditions and promote sustainable environmental practices in our communities.