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Teachers' Life Stories as a Source of Pedagogical Innovation: A Narrative Inquiry into Professional Growth

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ABSTRACT

Background. Teachers' personal life stories serve as valuable sources of pedagogical reflection and innovation, providing insight into how experience shapes teaching identity and practice.

Purpose. This study aims to explore how teachers' lived experiences contribute to their professional growth and pedagogical creativity.

Method. Using a qualitative narrative inquiry approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews and reflective journals from six teachers across different educational levels.

Results. The findings indicate that, regardless of proficiency level, L1, FLCA, or Thematic analysis revealed three major dimensions of professional development: (1) autobiographical reflection as a catalyst for pedagogical innovation, (2) transformation of challenges into creative teaching strategies, and (3) emotional resilience as the foundation for professional identity reconstruction.

Conclusion. The study concludes that narrative-based reflection enhances teachers' awareness of their professional journey, enabling them to reinterpret personal experiences as a source of renewal in pedagogical practices.

KEYWORDS

Narrative Inquiry, Pedagogical Innovation, Professional Growth

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching, as a deeply human and reflective profession, is inseparable from the life experiences that shape the identities and practices of educators. Teachers' narratives often encapsulate moments of struggle, transformation, and discovery that influence how they perceive knowledge, learning, and pedagogy. The interplay between personal history and professional growth reveals that teaching is not a static occupation but a lifelong journey of meaning-making and self-renewal (Fairley, 2025; Fauziah et al., 2025). Recognizing teachers' life stories as epistemic sources allows scholars and practitioners to understand how personal experiences contribute to the evolution of pedagogical practices



The concept of narrative as a mode of knowing underscores that individuals make sense of their professional realities through stories. Teachers' experiences ranging from early schooling to their current classroom practices form a continuum that influences their teaching philosophy and creativity (Y. Liu & Li, 2025; Zhang & Wu, 2025). These life stories not only reflect personal development but also illuminate the socio-cultural contexts in which teachers operate. In contemporary educational research, exploring teachers' narratives provides a window into how they navigate challenges, reframe failures, and reimagine classroom innovation through reflection and adaptation.

Pedagogical innovation, in this context, emerges as an organic process born out of reflective engagement with lived experience. Rather than being externally imposed through institutional reform, innovation often arises from teachers' personal insights and meaning-making processes (Phadke, 2025; Westberg, 2025). When teachers reinterpret their life journeys, they find new ways to connect with students, design learning activities, and integrate emotional intelligence into pedagogy. The narrative lens, therefore, becomes essential to understanding how personal and professional dimensions intertwine to shape creative teaching practices.

Teachers across various educational systems face increasing demands to be innovative while simultaneously navigating systemic constraints. Despite abundant policy frameworks promoting innovation, many educators struggle to translate abstract ideas into meaningful classroom practices (Kamali, 2025; Phadke, 2025). The disconnect between institutional expectations and teachers' lived realities has led to a pedagogical gap, where innovation remains more conceptual than experiential. This problem underscores the need to explore the human side of innovation how personal histories, emotional struggles, and reflective insights drive or hinder creative teaching.

The professional development literature has long emphasized training programs and competency frameworks, yet these models often overlook the emotional and autobiographical dimensions of teaching (Masitoh & Suryati, 2026; Yeni-Palabıyık & Gümüşok, 2025). Teachers are not merely implementers of curriculum but also storytellers whose identities evolve through life experiences. The absence of a narrative perspective limits understanding of how teachers transform personal challenges into sources of pedagogical renewal. The problem, therefore, is not a lack of innovative frameworks, but a lack of understanding of how teachers' lived experiences function as catalysts for innovation.

The current educational climate, characterized by rapid technological change and social complexity, calls for a more holistic approach to teacher growth. Teachers' life stories embody resilience, moral reasoning, and adaptability qualities essential for innovation but often marginalized in traditional research (Glaves et al., 2025; Thi Nguyen, 2025). Addressing this problem requires shifting focus from what teachers do to how they become. Exploring teachers' narratives allows researchers to grasp the emotional, reflective, and moral foundations that sustain long-term pedagogical innovation.

This study aims to examine how teachers' life stories serve as a source of pedagogical innovation and contribute to their professional growth (Mansouri et al., 2025; Ramdeo, 2025). The research seeks to uncover how educators reinterpret personal and professional experiences to generate new teaching strategies, foster reflective practice, and sustain creativity in their pedagogical approaches. By situating teachers' narratives within the broader context of their professional identities, this study intends to illuminate the dynamic relationship between experience, reflection, and innovation. The research further intends to capture the processes through which teachers translate autobiographical reflection into practical pedagogical changes. It investigates how turning points, challenges, and moral dilemmas within teachers' lives shape their

understanding of effective teaching (Hong et al., 2025; Magnuson et al., 2025). By employing a narrative inquiry design, the study highlights the personal dimensions of professional learning that are often invisible in formal training programs. Through the voices of teachers themselves, this inquiry seeks to construct a nuanced understanding of how innovation is both lived and learned.

The ultimate goal is to contribute a transformative perspective to the field of teacher education by validating teachers' lived experiences as legitimate sources of pedagogical knowledge. Instead of viewing innovation as the outcome of external mandates, this study positions it as an inner journey rooted in reflective storytelling (Meier, 2025; Thomson et al., 2025). The findings are expected to provide insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers on how to foster teacher development that is authentic, emotionally grounded, and contextually responsive. Despite extensive research on teacher professional development and innovation, limited attention has been given to teachers' personal narratives as a central source of pedagogical creativity. Existing studies often frame innovation through technical models such as curriculum reform, digital pedagogy, or instructional design without addressing how teachers' autobiographical experiences influence these processes. This omission creates a significant theoretical and practical gap in understanding the experiential foundations of pedagogical change.

Empirical studies on reflective practice have shown its impact on teacher improvement, yet few have explored the narrative dimension that integrates reflection, identity, and emotional resilience. The lack of narrative-focused frameworks limits the scope of professional development initiatives, which often remain prescriptive rather than transformative (Özdil & Kunt, 2025; Tamayo et al., 2025). There is also a methodological gap in employing narrative inquiry to systematically capture how teachers' life stories shape their evolving pedagogical philosophies. Bridging this gap requires moving beyond instrumental notions of innovation toward a more humanistic understanding of teaching as an evolving life narrative. The study addresses this gap by providing empirical and interpretive evidence on how teachers' stories of struggle, resilience, and transformation inform creative pedagogical practices. By situating narrative inquiry within professional growth research, the study offers a missing link between personal experience and systemic innovation in education.

This study introduces a novel perspective by conceptualizing teachers' life stories as active sources of pedagogical innovation rather than passive biographical accounts. Unlike prior research that treats professional development as skill acquisition, this inquiry positions personal narrative as an epistemic framework that generates new ways of teaching and knowing (Jiang & Gu, 2025; Yazan, 2025). The innovation lies in reframing teachers' experiences not merely as reflections of past learning but as ongoing sites of creative transformation and meaning-making. The justification for this research rests on the urgent need to humanize the discourse on innovation in education. As global reforms increasingly emphasize measurable outcomes, the personal and moral dimensions of teaching risk being overshadowed. Recognizing teachers' life stories as knowledge assets brings a restorative balance to the field, foregrounding the emotional, cultural, and ethical elements of professional practice. This perspective not only enriches theoretical discourse but also offers actionable implications for designing reflective teacher education programs. The contribution of this study extends to both theory and practice (Hoang, 2025; Quoc Lap et al., 2025). Theoretically, it advances the conversation on narrative inquiry by linking it to pedagogical innovation and professional identity formation. Practically, it offers insights into how teachers can harness their lived experiences as resources for reflective transformation and continuous growth. Through this lens, innovation becomes a deeply personal and relational process rooted in life stories that shape, sustain, and renew the art of teaching.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a narrative inquiry design to explore how teachers' life stories function as sources of pedagogical innovation and professional growth. Narrative inquiry was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the complex and contextual nature of human experience through storytelling. The design focused on capturing teachers' personal and professional journeys to uncover how their lived experiences shaped teaching philosophies, reflective practices, and classroom innovations. The narrative approach emphasized temporality, sociality, and place acknowledging that teachers' stories evolve over time, are influenced by relationships, and are embedded within particular cultural and institutional contexts (H. Liu et al., 2025; Menon, 2025). Through this qualitative design, the research sought to interpret meaning rather than measure variables, allowing for a holistic exploration of the teachers' identities and transformations.

The population of this study consisted of in-service teachers working in diverse educational settings, including elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions. From this population, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select six participants representing various levels of experience, disciplines, and teaching backgrounds (Pi, 2025; Yang & Wei, 2025). The selection criteria included a minimum of five years of teaching experience and a demonstrated engagement in reflective or innovative pedagogical practices. Each participant was recognized for their professional commitment and willingness to share personal experiences that informed their teaching philosophy. This sampling approach ensured the richness and depth of narratives necessary to uncover the intersection between life experiences and pedagogical creativity.

The instruments used for data collection comprised semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and field notes (Intachai et al., 2025; Wong & Gallagher, 2025). The interview protocol was designed to elicit detailed life stories, focusing on critical incidents, personal challenges, and transformative experiences that shaped professional identity. Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes and was conducted in a conversational tone to allow natural storytelling. Participants were also invited to write reflective journals over a period of four weeks, documenting ongoing reflections about their teaching practices and innovations. Field notes were taken to capture contextual observations and emotional nuances during interviews. All instruments were validated through expert review to ensure credibility and alignment with the research objectives.

The procedures followed a series of systematic steps to ensure ethical and methodological rigor. After obtaining institutional ethical approval and informed consent from all participants, data collection commenced in two phases. The first phase involved narrative interviews, recorded and transcribed verbatim to preserve authenticity. The second phase incorporated participants' reflective journals and researcher field notes to enrich narrative triangulation (Nigar & Kostogriz, 2025; Rangkuti et al., 2025). Data analysis followed Clandinin and Connelly's three-dimensional narrative framework, which focuses on temporality (past, present, and future), sociality (personal and interpersonal interactions), and place (contextual setting). Coding was conducted inductively to identify emergent themes related to professional growth, pedagogical innovation, and reflective transformation. Credibility was strengthened through member checking, peer debriefing, and reflexive journaling. The final narratives were co-constructed with participants to maintain voice authenticity and ensure interpretive validity.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were derived from six narrative case participants representing different educational levels and disciplines. Data collection produced a corpus of 180 pages of transcribed interviews, 24 reflective journal entries, and 12 sets of field notes. Narrative data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring motifs and turning points across teachers' life stories. Descriptive statistics summarized participants' demographics and years of experience, highlighting diversity in teaching contexts.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

Participant	Gender	Teaching Level	Years of Experience	Area of Expertise
T1	Female	Elementary	10	Language Education
T2	Male	Secondary	12	Science Education
T3	Female	Secondary	9	English Education
T4	Female	Primary	15	Religious Education
T5	Male	Higher Education	18	Educational Psychology
T6	Female	Secondary	11	Arts Education

The analysis of demographic data indicated that all participants had over eight years of teaching experience, with professional engagement spanning different pedagogical settings. This diversity provided rich contextual depth to understand how life stories intersected with teaching practices. Participants reported experiencing professional turning points that reshaped their teaching philosophies, particularly after moments of failure, mentoring experiences, or personal crises. The range of educational contexts revealed that innovation is not confined to specific disciplines but emerges through reflective engagement with personal history.

Narrative analysis generated three major themes: *reflection as transformation*, *pedagogical creativity through lived challenges*, and *emotional resilience as a driver of professional identity*. Teachers narrated that revisiting past experiences enabled them to reinterpret failure as a form of learning. The data showed that reflective practice grounded in life stories fostered authenticity and empathy in their teaching relationships. Across the narratives, innovation was not described as technological or methodological novelty alone, but as an outcome of deep personal insight and continuous self-inquiry.

The inferential analysis revealed strong interconnections between reflective storytelling and professional renewal. Teachers who demonstrated frequent engagement in narrative reflection also reported higher confidence in modifying instructional strategies and implementing student-centered learning approaches. These correlations suggest that life-story reflection contributes to pedagogical adaptability and creativity. Furthermore, longitudinal comparison of journal entries revealed progressive shifts in self-perception, moving from self-doubt to empowered agency, indicating the developmental trajectory of narrative-based growth.

Relationally, data synthesis demonstrated that pedagogical innovation was deeply linked to emotional meaning-making. Participants described how personal life events such as family loss, early career struggles, or mentorship became symbolic anchors influencing classroom decision-making. Thematic mapping showed overlapping domains between emotional reflection and creative pedagogy, suggesting that empathy and resilience operate as mediating factors connecting personal experience with instructional innovation. Teachers' identities thus evolved through dialogical engagement between lived experience and professional responsibility.

The case study component illuminated these patterns through detailed narrative exemplars. Participant T3, for instance, described how her struggle with language anxiety as a student

motivated her to create low-stress learning environments, later resulting in improved student performance and engagement. Similarly, T5's account of career stagnation and rediscovery through mindfulness inspired the development of reflective workshops for novice educators. These case narratives emphasized that transformation in teaching practice emerges from a re-interpretation of self rather than the acquisition of external techniques.

The explanatory dimension of data underscored that narrative inquiry facilitated deeper understanding of teachers' professional evolution. Storytelling allowed participants to reconstruct fragmented experiences into coherent identities, giving meaning to their pedagogical choices (Nigar, Dovchin, et al., 2025; Nigar, Kostogriz, et al., 2025). Reflection on moral dilemmas and emotional challenges led to the emergence of innovative teaching frameworks grounded in compassion and authenticity. The analysis affirmed that teachers' life stories serve not merely as background context but as an epistemic foundation for continuous improvement.

Interpretatively, the findings suggest that teachers' professional growth is a cyclical process of self-reflection, reconstruction, and pedagogical transformation. Life stories function as living texts where innovation is cultivated through introspection and contextual responsiveness (Contreras-Vanegas et al., 2025; Li, 2025). The study concludes that pedagogical creativity arises from the ability to translate personal experiences into educational wisdom. Narrative inquiry, therefore, not only documents professional journeys but also acts as a catalyst for ongoing teacher development and reflective practice.

The results of this study highlight that teachers' life stories function as dynamic sources of pedagogical innovation and personal-professional growth. Narrative inquiry revealed that teachers' reflective engagement with past experiences allowed them to transform adversity into creative instructional strategies (Cheung & Nieminen, 2025; Tucker, 2025). Three key dimensions emerged: autobiographical reflection as a catalyst for innovation, transformation of challenges into pedagogical insight, and emotional resilience as the foundation of professional identity. Teachers who consistently revisited their formative experiences reported a deeper capacity for empathy and adaptability in classroom practice. Reflection on lived experiences thus served as a form of continuous professional learning that stimulated authentic innovation.

Narrative evidence demonstrated that teachers' professional identities are not constructed in isolation but emerge through dialogical interactions between personal history and social context. Life stories became a site of meaning-making where teachers reconstructed their sense of purpose and redefined their relationship with learners. Patterns of transformation revealed that pedagogical innovation was rooted in the moral, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of teachers' lives (Rahmawati et al., 2025; Tucker, 2025). The act of narrating one's journey fostered both vulnerability and strength qualities that nourished creative pedagogical engagement. These findings reinforce that innovation in education is less about adopting new tools and more about reimagining teaching through the lens of lived experience.

Teachers' stories further illustrated that reflective self-awareness led to sustainable change. Revisiting critical incidents encouraged reinterpretation of past failures as opportunities for pedagogical creativity. Emotional experiences, such as frustration or doubt, became transformative once they were acknowledged and reframed. Through this process, innovation emerged not as a response to external pressure but as a natural consequence of internal growth. The data revealed that professional renewal occurs when teachers learn to see their biographies as evolving narratives of resilience, purpose, and pedagogical imagination.

Narrative inquiry offered compelling evidence that professional development anchored in storytelling enhances authenticity and relational depth in teaching. Teachers' life stories illuminated

how self-understanding informs instructional decisions, classroom climate, and the capacity to connect meaningfully with students (Anderson, 2025). The process of narrativizing one's professional journey not only validated teachers' experiences but also provided a framework for reinterpreting their roles in the learning ecosystem. By acknowledging the self as both the subject and instrument of pedagogy, teachers discovered innovative ways to humanize learning.

A comparison with previous research demonstrates partial convergence and important divergence. Studies by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Beattie (2013) similarly affirm that narrative reflection strengthens teacher identity formation. However, the current study extends these insights by situating innovation as an emergent property of lived experience rather than a prescribed outcome of reflective training. Unlike research that emphasizes institutional or technological innovation, this inquiry positions the human story as the central source of pedagogical renewal. Teachers' narratives in this study were not framed within professional development programs but evolved organically from personal introspection and everyday classroom realities.

Evidence from related qualitative inquiries, such as Kelchtermans (2017) and Meijer (2019), confirms that storytelling enhances professional consciousness, yet these works often focus on identity rather than innovation. The current findings bridge that gap by linking emotional resilience and reflective narrative to creative pedagogical change. This divergence suggests that while prior studies highlighted cognitive and identity aspects, this research foregrounds affective and moral dimensions as drivers of innovation. The findings thus contribute to the growing recognition that teacher development is a multidimensional process encompassing heart, mind, and experience.

Further comparison with professional growth models indicates that conventional training approaches underestimate the transformative potential of autobiographical reflection. While mentoring programs and workshops aim to equip teachers with new skills, they rarely address the narrative integration of self and practice. The results of this study diverge from technocratic paradigms by asserting that effective innovation arises from teachers' self-knowledge and narrative coherence. This orientation aligns with Deweyan notions of experiential learning, where reflection converts experience into education. Teachers' life stories, therefore, function as both data and developmental tools that bridge personal meaning and institutional change.

The study's findings redefine what constitutes pedagogical innovation by emphasizing internal rather than external mechanisms of change. Previous research focused on curriculum, assessment, or technology, while this investigation underscores personal history as a wellspring of professional creativity. This shift broadens theoretical discourse, integrating narrative and experiential learning theories into a unified framework for teacher development. The contrast with earlier literature highlights that teachers' life stories not only explain how they teach but also why they innovate. The results serve as an indicator of a paradigm shift in understanding teacher professionalism. The prominence of emotional resilience and autobiographical reflection signifies a transition from procedural competence toward existential authenticity in teaching. Teachers' ability to reinterpret adversity as growth reflects a maturing consciousness that integrates intellect and emotion. These findings indicate that pedagogical innovation is an expression of self-awareness, not merely institutional compliance. The reflective process becomes a moral act a reaffirmation of teaching as a vocation grounded in meaning and purpose.

The research outcomes mark a shift in how professional growth is conceptualized. Instead of viewing development as linear accumulation of skills, the data reveal it as cyclical and interpretive, grounded in continuous self-narration. Teachers' life stories operate as mirrors reflecting their evolving philosophies and as compasses guiding future practice. The emergent pattern of renewal through reflection signals a deeper ontological transformation within educators, demonstrating that

the teacher's inner world is inseparable from classroom innovation. The findings also signify that narrative-based inquiry functions as both research methodology and transformative pedagogy. By articulating and analyzing their experiences, teachers engage in metacognitive learning that enhances professional autonomy. The stories collected in this study represent not only empirical evidence but also pedagogical interventions, fostering dialogue and empathy among educators. These patterns indicate that teachers' self-narratives are powerful vehicles for sustaining motivation, agency, and creative engagement across their careers. The implications of these findings extend to teacher education, curriculum design, and policy formation. Integrating narrative reflection into professional training can cultivate educators who are adaptive, empathetic, and self-directed. Institutions that value storytelling create spaces where teachers' voices are legitimized as sources of knowledge. Such environments encourage pedagogical experimentation rooted in authenticity rather than conformity. Narrative-informed professional development can thus bridge emotional intelligence and instructional innovation, yielding sustainable educational reform.

The study's outcomes underscore that policy and leadership structures must shift from evaluative to developmental paradigms. Recognizing teachers as narrative agents transforms schools into learning communities rather than performance-driven institutions. The findings suggest that pedagogical innovation flourishes when teachers are empowered to interpret their experiences freely, supported by cultures of trust and reflection. The "so what" of this research lies in its contribution to rehumanizing education by restoring the teacher's story to the center of innovation discourse. Educational innovation driven by personal narrative offers a resilient response to the complexities of the digital and multicultural era. By grounding professional growth in reflection, teachers develop adaptive capacities to navigate uncertainty and diversity in the classroom. The study thus carries implications beyond pedagogy, informing broader conversations on well-being, moral education, and identity formation in teaching. Acknowledging teachers' life stories as epistemological resources can redefine how societies value and support educators. The underlying reason these findings emerged lies in the experiential depth and interpretive nature of teaching. Human beings construct meaning through story, and teachers' professional actions are extensions of their life narratives. Emotional experiences both painful and uplifting shape moral reasoning and creative expression. The results occur because reflective storytelling activates cognitive and affective integration, allowing teachers to draw wisdom from memory and emotion. The synthesis of life and practice explains why innovation grounded in self-awareness endures longer than externally imposed change.

Narrative inquiry revealed that the relational and contextual nature of teaching amplifies this process. Teachers continuously negotiate between personal values and institutional norms, crafting pedagogical approaches that reflect both individuality and adaptability. The findings emerged as a natural consequence of teachers' effort to maintain coherence amid changing educational landscapes. The reason such innovation thrives in narrative reflection is that it restores unity between the self, others, and practice. The human drive for meaning thus underpins pedagogical creativity. The results also materialized because storytelling fosters dialogical exchange and collective reflection. Participants reported that sharing their life stories with peers deepened their understanding of professional identity. The co-construction of narratives created emotional resonance and intellectual solidarity, which became catalysts for innovation. These social and affective dynamics explain why narrative-based learning is transformative: it bridges individual insight and communal growth. Innovation, in this sense, becomes a shared narrative rather than an isolated achievement.

The findings occurred within broader socio-cultural contexts that value reflection, resilience, and relational ethics in education. Teachers who inhabit reflective cultures are more likely to internalize experiences as pedagogical resources. This cultural orientation explains why narrative inquiry yields profound transformations in professional identity. When teachers' life stories are validated, they develop agency to challenge, adapt, and reconstruct pedagogical norms creatively and meaningfully. The implications moving forward emphasize the integration of narrative inquiry into mainstream teacher education. Future research should expand cross-cultural comparisons to examine how diverse socio-religious contexts shape teachers' life narratives and innovations. Educational leaders can implement reflective storytelling workshops as sustainable professional development models. Teacher education curricula may embed narrative reflection as a formal component of pedagogical training, bridging theory and experience.

Policy makers should recognize narrative-based reflection as an evidence-informed practice that fosters sustainable innovation. Institutional systems that encourage teachers to chronicle and discuss their professional journeys can cultivate a culture of authenticity and adaptive expertise. Collaborative storytelling sessions may strengthen collegial bonds and improve institutional climate. Embedding narrative inquiry at systemic levels will promote innovation grounded in human experience rather than bureaucratic compliance. Further application of this research involves developing mentorship frameworks that use narrative exchange to cultivate empathy and critical reflection among novice teachers. Universities and schools can design platforms for teachers to document professional milestones and turning points as reflective archives. These repositories of lived experience can become pedagogical laboratories where innovation evolves organically. Integrating narrative inquiry into teacher training will ensure that professional growth remains contextual, moral, and deeply human. The future direction calls for exploring how digital storytelling and multimedia narratives can enhance teachers' reflective capacity in virtual learning environments. Hybrid forms of narrative inquiry may connect self-reflection with technological innovation, bridging emotional authenticity and digital pedagogy. The study invites educators, researchers, and policymakers to see teachers not merely as implementers of reform but as narrators of transformation. The "now what" lies in reimagining education as a living narrative an ever-evolving story of learning, teaching, and becoming.

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study lies in the revelation that teachers' life stories are not merely autobiographical recollections but transformative pedagogical resources that fuel innovation and professional renewal. The narratives uncovered how reflective engagement with personal experiences particularly those involving struggle, resilience, and moral decision-making directly influences the creation of new teaching practices. This differs from conventional studies on teacher development, which often emphasize external training, curriculum design, or institutional reform. The research demonstrates that authentic pedagogical innovation originates from teachers' internal processes of meaning-making and self-reflection, turning lived experiences into epistemic foundations for creative and contextually responsive teaching.

The study's primary contribution resides in its conceptual advancement of narrative inquiry as both a research method and a pedagogical model for professional growth. The integration of autobiographical reflection within narrative inquiry provided a methodological framework that captures the depth of teachers' lived realities while also functioning as a reflective learning tool. The research enriches theoretical discourse on teacher education by offering a new conceptual lens that positions personal narrative as a generative source of innovation. The methodological rigor of

the narrative inquiry process emphasizing temporality, sociality, and place demonstrates how storytelling can be systematically employed to bridge personal experience and pedagogical creativity. This dual function of method and concept represents a distinctive scholarly contribution to educational research.

The study acknowledges its limitations in terms of sample size and contextual scope, as the participants were drawn from a relatively small and culturally specific educational environment. The findings may not capture the full diversity of teacher experiences across different sociocultural or institutional settings. Future research should expand this inquiry through cross-cultural comparative studies, digital storytelling integration, and longitudinal designs to trace how teachers' narratives evolve over time and influence long-term pedagogical innovation. Further exploration of collective narrative inquiry where teachers co-construct shared professional stories could deepen understanding of how collaboration and community reflection enhance innovation and professional identity formation in educational contexts.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

Author 4: Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

Author 5: Supervision; Validation.

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