

EDUCATION

Enhancing Grade 7 Students' Understanding of Symbolism and Allegorical Meanings in *Ibong Adarna* Through Symbol Hunt Activities

Jinky S. Lausa¹, Floramie M. Oliver²

¹Misamis University, Ozamiz City, Philippines

²Ozamiz City National High School, Ozamiz City, Philippines

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Abstract

This action research examined the effectiveness of Symbol Hunt activities in enhancing Grade 7 students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*. The study employed a one-group pretest–posttest design involving 43 Grade 7 students from a public secondary school in Misamis Occidental during the School Year 2025–2026. A validated 40-item researcher-made test measured students' comprehension before and after the intervention. Data were analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, and paired-samples t-test. Results revealed that students initially demonstrated a low level of understanding. After implementing Symbol Hunt activities, students' performance improved significantly to an outstanding level. The computed t-value of 31.48 and p -value < 0.001 indicated a highly significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The findings suggest that Symbol Hunt activities are highly effective in promoting students' critical thinking, engagement, and deeper interpretation of literary texts. The study recommends integrating interactive, student-centered strategies in literature instruction to enhance students' comprehension of symbolism and allegory.

Keywords: allegory; active learning; critical understanding; literary works; student engagement

1 Introduction

1.1 Context and rationale

Allegory is one of the distinctive features of many great works of literature. Many authors have communicated several symbolic messages about humanity over centuries and civilizations. However, these allegorical concepts are interconnected, with many embodied mental metaphors that inspire many modern ways of thinking and language (Gibbs, 2020).

The Philippines ranked lowest in the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) among the 79 nations that took part in the evaluation. This study aimed to determine Grade 7 students' level of competency and their reading comprehension challenges. The difficulty of literal and reorganizational comprehension is modest. However, students struggle with inferential and evaluative comprehension. This suggests that students must be adept at comprehending both explicit and implicit information in a text. Consequently, interventions are advised to address this issue (Cabural & Infantado, 2023).

Students found it difficult to analyze the literary works assigned by their teachers. This is carried out immediately in order to address the pervasive issue of most students' incapacity to analyze literary

works (Largo & Bautista, 2024). It was found that the following abilities were kids' biggest reading challenges: identifying various developmental patterns (compare and contrast, definition, description, narration, etc.) in writings; assessing the consistency, structure, syntax, and mechanics of a book; having a limited vocabulary; and figuring out how to choose and arrange information (Urbano et al., 2021).

The students exhibited considerable challenges in word recognition, reading fluency, and overall comprehension (Figuerres, 2025). A substantial percentage of individuals who could read correctly had trouble understanding the material. Additionally, these individuals lack the cognitive mechanisms needed to understand written content (Nailon et al., 2023).

Moreover, the students demonstrated a fair level of literary appreciation; however, they showed relatively low skills in recognizing the author's point of view, evaluating the text, identifying personal philosophy based on the literary work read, and relating the story to their own lives (Magulod, 2025).

This study aims to enhance Grade 7 students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* through Symbol Hunt activities. Specifically, it aims to improve students' ability to identify and interpret symbolic elements, analyze deeper meanings within the text, and relate these interpretations to personal experiences and real-life contexts. Furthermore, the study seeks to develop students' critical thinking skills and foster a deeper appreciation of Philippine literary works by engaging them in interactive and student-centered learning experiences.

Symbolism and allegory are essential literary elements that deepen students' understanding of texts and encourage critical interpretation. However, most existing studies on literary comprehension strategies emphasize general reading skills, role-playing, or surface-level text analysis, with limited focus on explicit instruction in symbolism and allegorical meanings, particularly within Philippine literary texts. Thus, the researcher identified a notable research gap regarding the use of interactive strategies, such as Symbol Hunt activities, to enhance Grade 7 students' understanding of symbolism and allegory in *Ibong Adarna*. Moreover, prior studies have insufficiently explored Philippine folk narratives as a medium for cultivating literary appreciation, cultural awareness, and higher-order thinking skills through symbol-focused instructional approaches. These unexplored dimensions align with emerging research interests in literature instruction and meaning-making strategies (Miles, 2017).

This action research aims to enhance Grade 7 students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* in a secondary school in Misamis Occidental during the School Year 2024–2025. The study will specifically examine the effectiveness of Symbol Hunt activities as a teaching strategy to improve students' ability to identify, interpret, and analyze symbolic elements in the text. The research will focus on a specific group of students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Additionally, the study will concentrate solely on *Ibong Adarna*, excluding other Philippine folk narratives or literary genres. Because the research is conducted within a limited timeframe, it will capture only the short-term effects of the intervention on students' comprehension. The use of pre-designed Symbol Hunt activities also leaves other instructional approaches unexplored, providing opportunities for future research to extend the scope of the findings.

This study addresses the challenge of developing students' literary comprehension, particularly in understanding symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*, which is vital for appreciating Philippine cultural heritage and fostering critical thinking skills. By integrating Symbol Hunt activities into literature instruction, the research introduces an engaging and learner-centered approach that

encourages active textual exploration, deepens interpretative skills, and enhances students' overall literary understanding.

1.2 Strategy

Studying mythology in art education deepens students' sense of cultural diversity and historical context, making it easier to understand how mythical narratives interact with larger cultural contexts. It offers insightful perspectives on human nature and the human condition. Students can appreciate mythology's enduring relevance and deepen their understanding of the universe and themselves by viewing it as symbolic narratives rather than literal truths (Baigutov, 2024a).

Mythology, demonology, and symbolism are included in art education to foster students' critical thinking and creativity. It investigates how these concepts relate to art education, offering students a rich tapestry to examine and analyze. It emphasizes how philosophical arguments, religious convictions, and symbolic representations shape artistic expression by drawing on historical and cultural contexts (Baigutov, 2024b).

It reveals the transformational potential of these symbols and their significant impact on the emotional context of character interactions through a thorough investigation of a few literary works. Learn about the profound bonds that these symbols create by looking at how they act as links between writers and readers (Loane & Jyldyz, 2023).

Effective reading programs are needed to encourage regular reading habits and provide engaging materials that help learners address the challenges they encounter. The qualitative findings highlight specific areas of difficulty, including learners' perceptions of the causes of these challenges, such as low interest, insufficient reading skills, and limited access to reading resources (Kilag et al., 2023).

The proposed strategy to enhance Grade 7 students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* will integrate Symbol Hunt activities as an interactive, student-centered teaching approach. This strategy aims to immerse students in the text by guiding them to actively search for, identify, and interpret symbolic elements and allegorical representations within the narrative. Through structured exploration of symbols, students will gain a deeper understanding of the cultural values, moral lessons, and underlying meanings embedded in *Ibong Adarna*. Symbol Hunt activities encourage critical thinking, collaborative discussion, and reflective interpretation, allowing learners to move beyond literal comprehension.

The researcher will design Symbol Hunt activities aligned with key episodes, characters, objects, and events in *Ibong Adarna*. These activities will prompt students to analyze symbols such as characters, places, and actions and connect them to their allegorical meanings and real-life values. The Symbol Hunt tasks will be guided by carefully prepared questions and worksheets that encourage students to examine multiple interpretations, justify their ideas using textual evidence, and collaborate with peers to deepen comprehension.

To implement the Symbol Hunt strategy effectively, the intervention will follow several structured steps. First, the teacher will introduce *Ibong Adarna* by providing background information on the text, its historical and cultural context, and its significance in Philippine literature. Selected passages will be read and discussed in class, focusing on basic comprehension, unfamiliar vocabulary, and initial identification of possible symbols. Guiding questions will activate prior knowledge and prepare students for deeper analysis.

Next, students will be grouped and assigned specific chapters or scenes from *Ibong Adarna* for the Symbol Hunt activity. Each group will identify symbols present in their assigned sections and discuss their possible allegorical meanings. Students will be encouraged to explain how these symbols relate to Filipino values, moral lessons, and human experiences. The teacher will facilitate discussions, provide clarification when needed, and guide students in supporting their interpretations with evidence from the text.

After the Symbol Hunt activity, each group will present their identified symbols and interpretations to the class. A reflective discussion will follow, allowing students to compare ideas, refine their understanding, and recognize multiple interpretations of symbols and allegories. The teacher will synthesize key points, emphasizing the importance of symbolism and allegory in understanding the narrative's deeper meanings.

Lastly, students will complete a written reflection or answer comprehension questions focusing on symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*. This assessment will measure students' ability to identify symbols, interpret their meanings, and explain their significance within the story. The teacher will review students' outputs and provide feedback and additional support as needed to ensure a deeper and more accurate understanding of the literary elements.

This structured approach ensures that Symbol Hunt activities serve as an effective and meaningful strategy in enhancing students' understanding of symbolism and allegory in *Ibong Adarna*, promoting active learning, critical thinking, and appreciation of Philippine literary heritage.

1.3 Statement of the problem

This action research aims to enhance Grade 7 students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* during the School Year 2024–2025. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before the implementation of the symbol hunt activities?
2. What is the level of students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* after the implementation of the symbol hunt activities?
3. Is there a significant difference in students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before and after the implementation of the symbol hunt activities?

1.4 Null hypothesis

H_{01} : There is no significant difference in the level of students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before and after the implementation of Symbol Hunt activities.

2 Research methodology

2.1 Research design

This study utilized a classroom-based action research design to enhance Grade 7 students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* through Symbol Hunt activities. The action research design was a recognized methodology that supported problem-solving through iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. These cycles allowed for the direct implementation of the intervention and the continuous evaluation of its effectiveness within

the classroom setting (Cronholm & Göbel, 2022). This design was appropriate for the study as it enabled the systematic integration of Symbol Hunt activities into literature lessons while closely monitoring their effects on students' comprehension of symbolic and allegorical meanings.

2.2 Research setting

The study will be conducted at a public secondary school in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental, Philippines, focusing on Grade 7 students. The school serves a diverse student population, accommodating learners with varying backgrounds, learning abilities, and academic performance levels.

2.3 Respondents of the study

The study participants consisted of 42 Grade 7 students enrolled in one of the public high schools in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental, Philippines, during the School Year 2025–2026. Purposive sampling was used to select students based on their enrollment in Filipino and their willingness to participate in the research. The group included learners with varying levels of comprehension in literary texts, particularly those with moderate to low performance. Students from other Grade 7 sections were not included to maintain a controlled group and ensure consistent implementation of the intervention.

2.4 Research instruments

The study utilized the following instruments for data gathering and implementation.

Understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings test (Appendix A). The paper-and-pencil test, presented in Appendix A, was used as both the pretest and posttest to assess students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*. This 40-item test measured students' comprehension before and after implementing the Symbol Hunt activities. Subject-matter experts validated it, and the researcher pilot-tested it among students not part of the study to ensure reliability. The researcher obtained a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating good internal consistency and reliability. Therefore, the instrument was considered reliable for use in the study. The same test was administered as both the pretest and posttest to allow for accurate comparison of students' performance. Scores were interpreted using the scale in Table 1.

Table 1. Scale for interpreting students' scores.

Score	Interpretation
34-40	Outstanding
31-33	Very Satisfactory
28-30	Satisfactory
24-27	Fairly Satisfactory
0-24	Did Not Meet Expectations

Lesson plan (Appendix B). In addition, the lesson plans, presented in Appendix B, served as instructional guides for the daily teaching of *Ibong Adarna*. These lesson plans aligned with the study objectives and integrated Symbol Hunt activities to enhance students' ability to identify and interpret symbolism and allegorical meanings. The plans incorporated inquiry-based questions and collaborative learning tasks to promote active engagement. The cooperating teacher reviewed and validated them to ensure their quality, clarity, and appropriateness for Grade 7 learners.

Symbol Hunt activities (Appendix C). Lastly, the Symbol Hunt activities, included in Appendix C, were implemented through a structured intervention process. Students were grouped and assigned specific chapters or scenes from *Ibong Adarna*, where they identified symbols and analyzed their corresponding allegorical meanings. Through guided questions, group discussions, and presentations, students actively constructed meaning from the text. Each activity was followed by reflective discussions to deepen their understanding of symbolic elements and to emphasize their cultural and moral significance.

2.5 Data collection

Pre-Implementation phase. The researcher sought permission from the Dean, Schools Division Superintendent, school principal, and cooperating teacher before conducting the study. Data collection commenced only after all necessary approvals were secured. During this phase, the researcher developed the research instruments and learning activities in alignment with the approved lesson plans and instructional materials. A pretest was prepared and administered to assess the students' initial understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*. Lesson plans were also designed to integrate Symbol Hunt activities as the primary instructional strategy effectively.

Implementation phase. The researcher presented and discussed the lessons using Symbol Hunt activities during the regular Filipino classes. The researcher provided clear instructions on the objectives, procedures, and significance of identifying and interpreting symbols and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*. The students actively participated in identifying symbolic elements from selected chapters or scenes, analyzing their meanings, and engaging in guided group discussions and presentations. The intervention was implemented over one month. After completing the Symbol Hunt activities, a posttest was administered to measure improvements in students' understanding of symbolism and allegory. To support data triangulation, classroom observations and interviews were conducted alongside the assessments. The researcher documented the data by taking field notes, capturing photographs and video recordings of classroom activities (with permission), and observing student engagement and participation. The researcher also conducted unstructured interviews with selected students and the cooperating teacher to gather insights into their experiences with the Symbol Hunt activities. These interviews were audio-recorded or documented through written notes for further analysis.

Post-Implementation phase. In the post-implementation phase, the researcher analyzed the data gathered from the pretest, posttest, classroom observations, and interviews. The researcher concluded that the Symbol Hunt activities effectively enhanced students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*. The study underwent proofreading, editing, and finalization before the findings were presented to relevant stakeholders, including school administrators and teachers, for possible integration into future literature instruction.

2.6 Ethical considerations

Before conducting the study, ethical considerations were carefully established to prioritize the well-being, rights, and privacy of all participants. Approval was sought from the Misamis University Research Ethics Committee (MUREC) to ensure compliance with institutional and ethical research standards. Additionally, the researcher ensured that all ethical standards were followed to protect the well-being of the respondents. Approval to conduct the study was sought from the School Principal, the Grade Level Head, and the class Adviser, with each authority's consent obtained before any data collection. These approvals confirmed that the study complies with institutional and research

guidelines. Informed consent procedures were implemented for all participants. Parents or guardians of the selected Grade 7 students provided formal consent, and the students themselves were given assent, indicating their voluntary participation. Participants were fully informed of the study's objectives, procedures, potential benefits, and possible risks, and they would have the option to withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. All collected data will be anonymized; personally identifiable information will be excluded, and participants will be assigned coded identifiers. Both digital and physical data will be securely stored, with digital files encrypted and physical copies kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to the researcher. These measures comply with Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012), ensuring participants' privacy, dignity, and security. By adhering to these ethical considerations, the researcher safeguards participant welfare while maintaining the integrity and credibility of the study.

2.7 Data analysis

This study utilized the following statistical methods for data analysis using JAMOV software:

- *Mean and Standard Deviation* were used to summarize the students' pre-test and post-test scores on their understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*.
- *Paired Samples t-Test* was employed to determine whether there was a significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test scores following the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities.

2.8 Dissemination plan

The findings of the study were communicated to the school administrators, cooperating teacher, and Grade 7 learners through several means. The completed action research was shared with the school administrators and teachers through printed and digital copies of the research report to provide them with access to the study's findings and implications. The findings were also disseminated through online publication, including academic platforms, school repositories, and educational social media pages, to provide wider access to the results of the study. Furthermore, the study was intended for submission to local or national academic journals and presentation in research forums or conferences to share the findings with a broader academic community and contribute to discussions on effective strategies for enhancing students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*.

2.9 Utilization plan

The results of the study were utilized through poster presentation and publication to disseminate the study's findings, methodology, and pedagogical recommendations. A research poster summarizing the key findings and recommendations was prepared and presented to provide an accessible overview of the study. In classroom utilization, Filipino and literature teachers were encouraged to use Symbol Hunt activities in teaching *Ibong Adarna* and other literary texts to strengthen students' ability to identify and interpret symbolism and allegorical meanings. Teacher support and capacity building were also promoted through the provision of instructional guides, sample Symbol Hunt worksheets, and collaborative sharing sessions to assist teachers in effectively implementing the strategy in their classrooms. Furthermore, the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities was continuously monitored and evaluated through classroom observations, students' outputs, and

feedback. The results of these evaluations were used to refine the strategy and improve future instruction in teaching symbolism and allegorical meanings in literary texts.

2.10 Cost estimates (Grade 7)

The estimated budget for the conduct of this study is broken down below from the proponent's personal funds. The proponent has a personal laptop and printer. The items are listed in Table 5.

Table 2. Estimated cost of the study.

Materials	Amount
1 ream A4 US bond paper	Php 180.00
1 set 664 ink	Php 1,179.00
2 sliding folders	Php 15.00 x 2 (Php 30.00)
Tokens (Pencil & Paper)	Php 1,000.00
Snacks	Php 1,500.00
Total	Php 3,889.00

3 Results and discussion

3.1 Level of students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities

Table 2 presents the level of students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities, addressing Objective 1. The data show that 95.35% of the students fell under the Did Not Meet Expectation (DME) category, while only 4.65% achieved a Very Satisfactory rating. The overall mean score of 18.000, interpreted as DME, indicates that most students had limited comprehension of symbolic and allegorical elements before the intervention.

This result suggests that students initially struggled to interpret deeper meanings embedded in the text. Symbolism and allegory require higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis and interpretation, which may not have been sufficiently developed through traditional teaching approaches. The relatively high standard deviation ($SD = 3.281$) also indicates variability in students' prior knowledge, although the majority consistently performed at a low level.

Furthermore, the findings imply that without targeted instructional strategies, students tend to focus only on the literal aspects of literary texts. This aligns with common classroom observations where learners can recall events but have difficulty extracting underlying meanings. Hence, there was a clear need for an engaging and structured approach, such as the Symbol Hunt activities, to improve students' comprehension of symbolism and allegory.

Students initially struggled to interpret symbols because symbolism involves abstract meanings that are not easily identified. However, with guided instruction, students improved their ability to interpret literary texts (Kinasih, 2020). Similarly, symbolism plays a critical role in understanding literature, but many readers struggle to interpret symbolic meanings without guidance, as symbols often represent deeper abstract ideas (Abubakar, 2022).

Moreover, allegory is complex and requires structured teaching approaches. Students often struggle to interpret allegorical meanings without guided instruction and opportunities for analysis (McNeece, 2020). The results imply that teachers should not assume that students can naturally interpret symbolic and allegorical meanings without explicit guidance. Instructional strategies should incorporate activities that actively engage learners in uncovering deeper meanings, rather than relying solely on lecture-based methods. The low baseline performance highlights the importance of diagnostic assessments before instruction. Identifying students' initial level of understanding allows educators to design targeted interventions, such as interactive and exploratory learning activities, to bridge comprehension gaps effectively.

Table 3. Level of students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities.

Comprehension	Frequency	Percentage	M	SD
Did Not Meet Expectation	41	95.35	17.707	3.068
Very Satisfactory	2	4.65	24.000	0.000
Overall	43	100	18.000	3.281

Scale: 34–40 (outstanding); 31–33 (very satisfactory); 28–30 (satisfactory); 24–27 (fairly satisfactory); 0–24 (did not meet expectations).

3.2 Level of students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* after the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities

Table 3 presents the level of students' understanding after the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities, addressing Objective 2. The results reveal that 100% of the students achieved an Outstanding level, with a mean score of 36.698. This indicates a dramatic improvement from the pre-intervention results, demonstrating that all students reached a high level of comprehension in identifying and interpreting symbolism and allegory.

The low standard deviation ($SD = 1.489$) suggests that students' performance became more consistent after the intervention. This implies that the Symbol Hunt activities were effective not only in improving overall performance but also in minimizing learning disparities among students. The structured and interactive nature of the activity likely helped learners engage more deeply with the text and develop critical thinking skills.

Moreover, the findings highlight the effectiveness of experiential and student-centered learning strategies. By actively involving students in locating and interpreting symbols within the story, the Symbol Hunt activities transformed abstract literary concepts into concrete learning experiences. This approach encouraged collaboration, critical analysis, and deeper engagement with the text.

Metacognitive strategies significantly improved students' reading comprehension. After the intervention, students were better able to connect ideas and understand deeper meanings in texts (Nobles & Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2020). Furthermore, innovative instructional methods significantly improved students' comprehension of literary texts compared to traditional instruction (Kabigting, 2020). Engaging and meaningful learning environments improve students' understanding and perception of abstract concepts through metaphor and interpretation (Bolat, 2020).

The results suggest that interactive teaching strategies, such as Symbol Hunt activities, can significantly enhance students' comprehension of complex literary concepts. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate similar learner-centered approaches to promote active engagement and deeper

understanding. The consistently high performance indicates that such strategies can support diverse learners. Implementing structured, guided activities can help ensure that all students, regardless of prior ability, achieve meaningful learning outcomes in literature classes.

Table 4. Level of students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* after the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities.

Comprehension	Frequency	Percentage	M	SD
Outstanding	43	100	36.698	1.489
Overall	43	100	36.698	1.489

Scale: 34–40 (outstanding); 31–33 (very satisfactory); 28–30 (satisfactory); 24–27 (fairly satisfactory); 0–24 (did not meet expectations).

3.3 Difference in students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before and after the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities

Table 4 presents the difference in students' understanding before and after implementing the Symbol Hunt activities, addressing Objective 3. The computed t -value of 31.48 and p -value < 0.001 indicate a highly significant difference between the two sets of scores. Since the p -value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that the intervention had a statistically significant effect on students' understanding.

The substantial increase in mean scores from 18.000 (before) to 36.698 (after) further supports the effectiveness of the Symbol Hunt activities. This large mean difference demonstrates that the intervention was not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful. The improvement reflects a shift from basic comprehension to advanced interpretative skills.

These findings emphasize that innovative instructional strategies can lead to significant learning gains. The Symbol Hunt activities gave students opportunities to actively explore, analyze, and interpret literary elements, enhancing their critical thinking abilities. This reinforces the idea that teaching methods play a crucial role in shaping students' learning outcomes. Instructional strategies significantly influence students' ability to interpret meaning, leading to measurable improvements (Butler, 2020). Furthermore, structured teaching practices significantly enhance students' interpretative skills and literary understanding (Muehling, 2020).

The significant difference between pretest and posttest results implies that incorporating interactive and inquiry-based strategies can greatly improve students' higher-order thinking skills. Educators should consider integrating similar approaches in teaching literature and other subjects that require deep analysis. The findings support adopting activity-based learning in curriculum design. Schools and educators may use this evidence to justify integrating innovative teaching practices that promote engagement, critical thinking, and improved academic performance.

Table 5. Difference in students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before and after the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities.

Variables	M	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
Before Symbol Hunt activities	18.000	3.281	31.48**	< 0.001	Reject H_0
After Symbol Hunt activities	36.698	1.489			

** $p < 0.01$ (highly significant); * $p < 0.05$ (significant); $p > 0.05$ (not significant).

4 Summary, findings, conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Summary

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the Symbol Hunt activities in enhancing Grade 7 students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*. Specifically, it examined the students' level of understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before and after the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities and determined whether there was a significant difference in their understanding before and after the intervention. The study focused on Grade 7 students to determine how Symbol Hunt activities could enhance their understanding and interpretation of symbolism and allegorical meanings in the literary text.

4.2 Findings

Based on the data gathered and analyzed, the following findings were obtained:

1. The level of students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities was low.
2. The level of students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* after the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities was outstanding.
3. There was a highly significant difference in students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before and after the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities.

4.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Grade 7 students demonstrate a low level of understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* before the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities.
2. Grade 7 students demonstrate an outstanding level of understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna* after the implementation of the Symbol Hunt activities.
3. The Symbol Hunt activities significantly enhance students' understanding of symbolism and allegorical meanings in *Ibong Adarna*.

4.4 Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Teachers are encouraged to integrate Symbol Hunt activities and other interactive strategies in teaching literature to enhance students' comprehension of symbolism and allegory.
2. Students should actively participate in collaborative and exploratory learning activities to develop their critical thinking and interpretative skills.
3. School administrators should support the use of innovative teaching strategies by providing training, resources, and professional development opportunities for teachers.
4. The curriculum should incorporate activity-based and student-centered approaches that promote deeper understanding of literary texts.
5. Future studies may explore the effectiveness of Symbol Hunt activities in other grade levels, subjects, or literary texts, and may also consider using a control group for comparison.

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