



The Unwritten Endings: A Deep Dive into the Story Completion Method in Management Research

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Research Article

History

Received: 11/09/2024

Accepted: 05/11/2024

JEL Codes: M1, M12, M19

ABSTRACT

Story completion is a novel and intriguing methodological approach that generates a wealth of insightful and broader knowledge about individuals' perceptions and understanding for researchers across disciplines. However, this method remains underexplored within the management research. To address this gap, this article focuses on the conceptual and methodological origins of the story completion method and provides a synthesis of story completion research in management literature. Our review of findings from seven studies shows that story completion-based research has focused on understanding the perception of menopausal women at work, teachers' teaching approach, and family life during the COVID-19 pandemic within the context of healthcare professionals, social workers, and teachers. Besides, these studies also concentrated on sensitive work-related research topics (discriminatory abuse, gender stereotypes etc.). The sample size and number of stories ranged from 21 to 62 participants. Considering story design, 86% of studies used third-person perspectives. Also, these studies used a comparative design based on gender (male and female manager), personal characteristics (race, mental health etc.), socioeconomic status (low and middle), and different aspects of family life (household tasks, childcare, working from home, etc.). As an analysis method, 43% of studies used reflexive thematic analysis as a data analysis method. Finally, story completion was used as the sole method in the story completion research in management literature.

Keywords: Story completion, Qualitative research, Study design, Management research

Yazılmamış Sonlar: Yönetim Araştırmalarında Hikaye Tamamlama Yöntemine Derinlemesine Bir Bakış

Süreç

Geliş: 11/09/2024

Kabul: 05/11/2024

Jel Kodları: M1, M12, M19

Öz

Hikaye tamamlama, bireylerin algıları ve anlayışları hakkında zengin ve daha geniş bilgi üretmesi dolayısıyla farklı disiplinlerden araştırmacılar için yeni ve ilgi çekici bir metodolojik yaklaşımdır. Ancak bu yöntem, yönetim araştırmalarında yeterince kullanılmamıştır. Literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurmak için bu makale, hikaye tamamlama yönteminin kavramsal ve metodolojik temellerine odaklanmakta ve yönetim literatüründeki hikaye tamamlama araştırmalarının bir sentezini sunmaktadır. Yedi çalışmadan elde edilen bulgulara ilişkin incelememiz, hikaye tamamlama temelli araştırmaların sağlık çalışanları, sosyal hizmet uzmanları ve öğretmenler bağlamında menoz dönemindeki kadınlara dair iş yerindeki algı, öğretmenlerinin öğretim yaklaşımı ve COVID-19 salgını sırasında aile yaşamını anlamaya odaklandığını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, bu çalışmalar işle ilgili hassas araştırma konularına da (ayrımcı istismar, toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargıları vb.) odaklanmıştır. Örneklem büyüklüğü ve elde edilen hikaye sayısı 21 ile 62 arasında değişmektedir. Hikaye tasarımı açısından değerlendirildiğinde, çalışmaların %86'sında üçüncü şahıs perspektifi kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca, bu çalışmalarda cinsiyet (kadın ve erkek yönetici), kişisel özellikler (ırk, mental sağlık vb.), sosyo-ekonomik durum (düşük ve orta), aile yaşamının farklı yönlerine (ev işleri, çocuk bakımı, evden çalışma vb.) dayalı karşılaştırmalı tasarım kullanılmıştır. Analiz yöntemi olarak, çalışmaların %43'ünde veri analiz yöntemi olarak refleksif tematik analiz kullanılmıştır. Son olarak öykü tamamlama, yönetim literatüründeki öykü tamamlama araştırmalarında tek yöntem olarak kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hikaye tamamlama, Nitel araştırma, Çalışma tasarımı, Yönetim araştırması

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How to Cite: Tatar B (2025) The Unwritten Endings: A Deep Dive into the Story Completion Method in Management Research, Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences, 26(1): 65-76, DOI: 10.37880/cumuiibf.1548341

Introduction

Story completion is a novel, intriguing, and fruitful methodology to generate comprehensive, rich, and in-depth insights in qualitative research. The story completion method offers a variety of opportunities for scholars by enabling access to sensitive, ethically and morally complex research topics, offering resource and time-saving, enhancing participants' creativity, and allowing for comparative design in the generating and analyzing data (Clarke et al., 2017; Braun et al., 2018; Clarke et al., 2019).

However, story completion has been neglected and underutilized in the literature. In recent years, the story completion method has been widely used primarily in different fields including education (Gravett, 2019), nursing (Diniz et al., 2020), counselling psychology (Moller & Tischner, 2019), sport and exercise (Williams et al., 2022), and health (Tischner, 2019), and research areas, including weight-loss motivation (Tischner, 2019), socially stigmatization of therapists in the context of counselling (Moller & Tischner, 2019).

The story completion method has also attracted less attention from scholars from management literature. Specifically, existing studies investigated practitioners' thoughts on discriminatory abuse (Mason, 2024), perception of others for menopausal women at work (Daly et al., 2024), healthcare professionals' responses to experiencing chest pain in a period of stress (Vries & Flurey, 2024), higher education teachers' teaching approach (Káplár-Kodácsy & Dorner, 2024), navigation of Australian caregivers' family life during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hunter et al., 2023), gender stereotypes of physical education teachers and their impact on perceived roles and practices (Preece & Bullingham, 2022), class-based dehumanization inferences on female chronic pain patients within the context of work lives (Diniz et al., 2020).

These studies using the story completion method have concentrated indirectly on working life and generally examined certain professional groups from social, health, family life, and stereotypes-related perspectives. Therefore, there are no examples of studies conducted in the context of specific concepts and work-related topics in the fields of management, organization, and organizational psychology.

In this context, the aim of this study was two-fold. First, this study aims to broadly investigate the story completion method in terms of study design (sample size, preparing stories, introducing the research process by instruction for the completion of stories) and analyzing the data of story completion method for providing a comprehensive and holistic review for rigorously designing, conducting, analyzing and reporting story completion method in management research. Second, this study aims to synthesize the existing story completion research in management literature. Hence, this study examined (i) the conceptual development of the story completion method, (ii) the methodological perspective

of the story completion method, and (iii) the review of story completion research in management literature. Therefore, this study contributes to management literature by theoretically expanding the comprehension of work-related topics in general and sensitive, ethically, and morally complex research topics in particular through discovering hidden meanings, feelings, and motivations in story completion research. In this study, we also broaden our understanding of variations of social groups based on social categories such as gender, race/ethnicity, or sexuality within the context of work life by comprehensively investigating the story completion approach.

Literature Review

Story Completion Method

Story completion is "a method of data collection, where participants are given the start of a story and asked to complete (or continue) it" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 337). The story completion method is mainly based on creating the story stem or cue through opening sentences and, hence, asking participants to complete the story based on their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences (Braun, et al., 2018).

The story completion method originated from developmental psychology and psychotherapy is used as a form of projective assessment technique for assessing individuals' personality and psychopathology (Clarke et al., 2017). For example, the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) developed by Henry Murray is based on showing individuals certain pictures and asking them to complete the stories. Projective tests enable the psychological mechanisms in the inner world of people to be revealed and manifested for clinical assessment (Moller et al., 2021). This method is used to investigate the inner world and personality traits of individuals (Clarke et al., 2019). From this perspective, story completion facilitates the understanding of personality, needs, and life experiences for discovering hidden meanings, feelings, and motivations (Gravett, 2019). In a related vein, rather than investigating experiences, story completion is mainly suited to research subjects concentrating on people's perceptions and comprehension based on social constructions around research topics (Braun et al., 2018). Hence, broad and open-ended research topics explore what and how perspectives of specific concepts can be investigated by the story completion method (Clarke et al., 2017).

More recently, story completion has been used as a qualitative research tool and reconceptualized as a tool for discovering social discourses in addition to psychological meanings (Kitzinger & Powell, 1995). The study conducted by Kitzinger and Powell (1995) showed that the story completion method can be used not only to assess individuals' imagination or creative thinking abilities but also to conduct in-depth psychological and social analyses. Hence, story completion has been used as an important qualitative research method in social

sciences (Clarke et al., 2019). Contrary to traditional qualitative research investigating participant's experiences, story completion has a different approach to writing stories about hypothetical scenarios (Clarke et al., 2019). This method allows researchers to understand an individual's mindset, emotional state, problem-solving ability, and creative thinking skills (Braun et al., 2019).

Story completion offers a variety of benefits to researchers. First, it allows researchers to access a variety of responses and experiences (Braun et al., 2019). Specifically, self-report research has social desirability problems in terms of masking exact experiences, opinions, and behaviors (Clarke et al., 2017). The story completion method is based on providing a hypothetical situation. Hence, participants tend to share their own experiences through the given story due to providing a comfort zone and relaxing their guard relative to directly sharing their opinions and experiences (Braun et al., 2019). Parallel to this view, story completion provides an opportunity to explore sensitive, ethically and morally complex research topics (Clarke et al., 2019). Also, researchers can use a comparative study design (Braun et al., 2019). Story completion is useful for investigating the difference between participants and different versions of the specific story (Clarke et al., 2017). Hence, it enables researchers to investigate the variations of social groups based on social categories such as gender, race/ethnicity, or sexuality.

Besides, story completion is based on the participant-driven process through the control of them in the research. Participants trying to develop different perspectives to complete the given story use their creative and critical skills (Clarke et al., 2017). This method helps individuals to think of different solutions to a situation they face and to choose the most appropriate one among these solutions. In addition, the results produced by combining the parts of the story to understand cases logically help individuals for developing their problem-solving skills (Braun et al., 2019). Story completion also allows individuals to explore people's emotional and social situations by trying to understand the feelings and motivations of the characters. In a similar vein, story completion allows individuals to reflect on their feelings, thoughts, and beliefs. Hence, this supports the processes of self-awareness and self-understanding.

Finally, story completion is a time and resource-saving method for the research. Particularly, it enables gathering data from a large group of participants in a relatively short time (Clarke et al., 2017). Concordantly, the advantage of the method is enabling the inclusion of a larger sample relative to other qualitative research methods (Braun et al., 2019).

On the other hand, story completion methods have some pitfalls. First, participants' motivation, attention, and interest in completing the story may vary and affect the consistency and validity of the results (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Also, data are based on the assumption of participants rather than their exact experience or ideas. Hence, the story completion method may have limitations when focusing directly on understanding participant experiences (Braun et al., 2019).

Study Design for Story Completion Method

In the story completion method, there are four essential stages in the research design, including (i) determining sample size, (ii) preparing stories, (iii) introducing the research process by instruction for the completion of stories, and (iv) selecting the method for analyzing the data of story completion method.

Sample size of story completion study

Sample size is determined based on (i) the complexity of study design (more participants have been used in the presence of more stories), (ii) the richness of stories (fewer participants share richer stories, and (iii) the purposes of research. In this regard, Clarke et al. (2017) highlighted that 20–40 participants are sufficient for small student projects based on one-stem and non-comparison-based design. For comparison-based study design, researchers need to recruit at least ten participants for each story stem (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Preparing stories

Preparing stories is another important tenet of the study design of the story completion method. In line with the aim of the research, a hypothetical scenario is developed by using brief story stems, which are written in the first or third-person perspectives (Gravett, 2019). Besides, researchers need to provide brief and sufficient details about stories, be neutral in terms of gender or culture, be non-leading to specific perspectives, and provide a set of completion instructions for participants (Meadows & Reaney, 2024). Hence, pseudonyms were used to eliminate the tendency for gender norms to affect participants' gendering of characters (Urry et al., 2023). To eliminate this bias, researchers allow participants to create their own character names to minimize the effect of perception of names and recall the names in multiple characters-based story design (Urry et al., 2023).

Story completion is a flexible and experimental method in terms of the development of the story stems. For instance, (Gravett & Winstone, 2021) used two story stems focusing on undergraduate students' experiences of transitions into and through higher education through fictional characters, as follows:

"Alice is a new undergraduate student in her first year of university. She has been struggling to get to grips with university life. Lots of aspects of studying are not as she expected they would be and are different to what she had previously been used to at college. Her personal tutor asks her how she is getting on and she tries to explain how she is feeling."

"Adam is a new undergraduate student coming toward the end of his first year of university. He looks back on his last year. What do you think he might have done or might have happened to him? How do you think he feels about learning and studying at university? One of Adam's friends asks him how his first year has been. Please complete the story explaining what happens next."

In terms of designing a story stem, researchers need to consider six points, including length of the story stem, authentic and engaging scenarios and characters, amount of detail, use of deliberate ambiguity, first or third person, and comparative design (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

First, in terms of length, a story stem is the start of a story consisting of a sentence or paragraph. The length of the story depends on the concept of the research. Specifically, participants may need more information about concepts that they are not familiar with, and hence, researchers need to provide more information and increase the length of the study (Braun et al., 2018).

Authenticity and engagement with scenarios and characters are also important issues for the story completion method (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Using authentic character names and scenarios increases the richness and complexity of the story and thus elevates participants' imagination ability (Braun et al., 2019).

The amount of detail is important to study design aspects of the story completion study. Providing excessive details and obvious or clear ending limit the variation and richness of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Limited details prevent the exact by making it difficult for participants to understand the story and create bias in terms of the relevance of data within the context of the research (Clarke et al., 2017). In this vein, researchers need to provide adequate directions and enough details about the characters within the context of the story and research (Braun et al., 2018).

The use of deliberate ambiguity leads to the exploration of rich, underlying assumptions about research topics (Braun et al., 2018). This can often be achieved by leaving ambiguous points outside the main focus of the story and providing the opportunity to fill the gap and ambiguity by the assumptions and ideas of the participants about the elements of the story (i.e., gender, race, or age) (Braun et al., 2019).

First- or third-person perspectives in developing a story are crucial in terms of the standpoint of participants. Specifically, using specific characters with first-person perspectives enables gathering information through empathizing with one particular character (Clarke et al., 2017). However, this approach tends to heighten the probability of the more socially desirable responses (Braun et al., 2019). On the other hand, using third-person perspectives provides broader and richer information, including socially undesirable responses (Braun et al., 2018).

Story stem 1. First-person

Lots of people are nervous of going hypo while out alone. Their reasons may be different. Imagine that you were going out alone today. Explain how this makes you feel and why.

Story stem 2. Third-person

A friend of yours has diabetes and feels nervous of going hypo when out alone. Lots of people with diabetes are nervous of going hypo while out alone. Imagine that your friend's diabetes nurse asked them about how they feel going out alone. Please complete the story explaining what happens next.

Using comparative design is the final consideration of the design of the story completion study. Comparison of certain groups (i.e., genders, generations, or educational

backgrounds) or scenarios facilitate the comparison of generated ideas and experiences (Braun et al., 2019). Nevertheless, comparative design increases the complexity (Clarke et al., 2017). In this regard, determining a sufficient number of stories, which is defined as two to six stories, and a sufficient number of participants for each comparison group is essential for effectively managing the story completion research (Braun et al., 2018).

Introducing the research process

Following the preparation of the stories, researchers need to develop instructions for the completion of stories. Here, researchers explain the aim of stories and expectations from participants and provide guidelines to collect useful data (Gravett, 2019). For instance, Clarke (2014) developed instruction as follows:

You are invited to complete a story – this means that you read the opening sentences of a story and then write what happens next. There is no right or wrong way to complete the story, and you can be as creative as you like in completing the story! I am interested in the range of different stories that people tell. Don't spend too long thinking about what might happen next – just write about whatever first comes to mind. Because collecting detailed stories is important for my research, you are asked to WRITE A STORY THAT IS AT LEAST 10 LINES/200 WORDS LONG. Some details of the opening sentence of the story are deliberately vague; it's up to you to be creative and 'fill in the blanks'!

Participants mainly read and complete the story or write about 'what happens next'. Also, researchers provide instruction for the length of the story and a specific period (i.e., 15 minutes) for completing the story (Braun et al., 2018).

After designing a story completion study and developing instruction, piloting the story stems and instruction is crucial for gathering rich and accurate data. Here, Braun et al. (2018) recommended that a greater diversity of participants requires a greater pilot sample, and the pilot sample should consist of 10–20% of the final sample of the study (Clarke et al., 2017).

Analyzing the data of the story completion method

Story completion data is analyzed by exploring two different things as follows: (i) horizontal patterning across particular aspects of stories and particular responses to research questions and (ii) vertical patterning based on examining how stories are formed from start to final points of story completion (Clarke et al., 2019). In this regard, Researchers analyze story completion data to investigate the patterns in stories.

In terms of analysis of data, existing research has mainly used narrative analysis, thematic analysis, and story maps. First, narrative analysis can be used for analyzing the data of story completion research. In this regard, narrative analysis provides the opportunity to determine narrative types, forms, and metaphors in the stories (Braun et al., 2018). Besides, thematic analysis has been used for identifying the patterns in the story completion studies. Finally, story maps are the method for identifying horizontal patterning in story completion study. In this method, researchers analyze the

data in terms of the beginning, middle, and end of stories (Clarke et al., 2017). For instance, Braun & Clarke (2013) shared an example for the story map related to a student project focusing on a young woman sharing her nonheterosexuality with her parents. Hence, researchers identified patterns in terms of the beginning (initial reaction of her family), middle (development of the stories), and end of the story (Clarke et al., 2017). Following the initial reaction of shocks, Sarah's family showed either positive or negative reactions in the completed stories. Negative reactions resulted in positive, negative, or ambiguous, whereas positive reactions ended positively (Clarke et al., 2017).

On the other hand, researchers should avoid using some methodological analysis approach in analyzing data of story completion method. Therefore, interpretative phenomenological analysis is not suitable for story completion research due to the focus on the participants' lived experiences (Clarke et al., 2017). Also, grounded theory is used for generation theory and investigating the process of specific phenomena (Braun et al., 2018), which is not suitable for the analysis of story completion data.

Methodology

The current study aims to investigate the use of the story completion method in management research. In this context, we searched the Web of Science database using the keyword "story completion" to determine high-quality research based on the story completion method until August 2024. As a result, 301 records were identified through a search of the Web of Science. Studies were excluded based on criteria, including non-article (book chapters, conference proceedings, and editorial) and languages other than English. Therefore, 68 records were extracted from the study. In the screening stage, 233 records were assessed for eligibility, and 226 records were excluded as a result of the review of the title and abstract in terms of determining irrelevant context and non-management research. Finally, seven studies were included in the current study.

Story completion studies in management literature were investigated in terms of (1) research objectives, (2) number of samples, (3) number of stories, (4) number of story stems, (5) comparison based on story stems, (6) example of story stems, (7) 1st or 3rd person perspectives, (8) analysis method, and (9) key findings (themes).

Findings

In terms of research context, the majority of research based on the story completion method has focused on social workers, healthcare professionals, and teachers. These studies concentrated on understanding discriminatory abuse, perception of others for menopausal women at work, responses to experiencing chest pain in a period of stress, higher education teachers' teaching approach, navigation of family life during the COVID-19 pandemic, gender stereotypes and their impact on perceived roles and practices, class-based dehumanization inferences on female chronic pain patients within the context of work lives.

The sample size ranged from 21 to 62 participants, which is in line with the Clarke et al. (2017) suggestion for using 20–40 participants for story completion research. Considering the number of stories obtained, it was observed that one story was obtained from each participant, consistent with the sample size, and the number of stories ranged from 21 to 62.

Braun et al. (2018) stated that researchers need to use two to six stories for comparison of groups to manage the story completion research effectively. Of these studies, 43% of studies used three-story stems, 43% of studies used two-story stems, and 14% used one-story stems. Specifically, story completion research in management literature used comparative design in study design mainly based on gender (i.e., male manager and female manager), personal characteristics (transgender identity, race, and mental ill-health), socio-economic status (low and middle), different aspects of family life (household tasks, childcare, and working from home).

First- or third-person perspectives in developing a story are another consideration in the assessment of story completion studies in management literature. Hence, 86% of studies used third-person perspectives. On the other hand, 86% of studies shared the example of story stems. In terms of story stems based on third-person perspectives, Preece and Bullingham (2022) used story stems to assess gender stereotypes of in-service physical education teachers, as follows:

It was a chilly Wednesday morning as Alex cautiously approached the P.E. teacher during break time. The teacher quickly realized that Alex was upset and asks what is wrong. 'I don't want to play football anymore, I really wish I could dance instead' says Alex...

Concerning first-person perspectives, Vries and Flurey (2024) used story stems to assess the responses of healthcare professionals experiencing chest pain during a period of stress, as follows:

You have recently accepted a promotion in your field and as a result have been under a great deal of stress at work, working much longer hours. Recently you have begun to experience intense chest pain, which is gradually becoming more and more painful. What do you think you would do next in this story?

Considering the analysis method, 43% of studies used reflexive thematic analysis, 14% used narrative analysis, 14% used content analysis, 14% used thematic analysis, and 14% used mixed method (thematic analysis and discourse analysis) as a data analysis method. Finally, these studies produced 2 to 4 themes as a result of analysis.

Discussion

This study has investigated the story completion method within the context of study design and analysis of the data in the literature. Specifically, the story completion method provides the opportunity to understand sensitive, socially undesirable research topics, provides control and enhances participants' creativity, offers resource and time-saving, and implements comparative study design for the research (Clarke et al., 2017; Braun et al., 2018; Clarke et al., 2019). In this vein, story completion is an innovative research method, allowing broader interpretations, rich understanding, and deeper insights into the research from a variety of disciplines.

This study has also synthesized the story completion method in management literature. Specifically, past studies investigated the use of the story completion method in health research (Meadows & Reaney, 2024; Pong et al., 2024; Urry et al., 2023) and counselling psychology research (Moller et al., 2021). Here, the current study contributes to the literature by synthesizing the story completion story in management literature. Specifically, as the knowledge, experience, and attitudes of the participants are indirectly asked through stories, it provides comfort to the participants especially when sharing sensitive issues. From the perspective of management literature, the story completion method is also a method that can make significant contributions to obtaining in-depth and rich information and insights on sensitive, ethically and morally complex research topics (Clarke et al., 2019), including gender inequality, psychological harassment, abusive leadership in management literature.

Therefore, the current study investigated seven studies based on story completion, which are related to working life and specific work groups (i.e., nurses, health care professionals, and teachers) in management literature. Story completion mainly concentrated on understanding how practitioners thought a social worker might engage with discriminatory abuse (Mason, 2024), perception of others for menopausal women at work (Daly et al., 2024), healthcare professionals' responses to experiencing chest pain in a period of stress (Vries & Flurey, 2024), higher education teachers' teaching approach (Káplár-Kodácsy & Dörner, 2024), navigation of Australian caregivers' family life during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hunter et al., 2023), gender stereotypes of physical education teachers and their impact on perceived roles and practices (Preece & Bullingham, 2022), class-based dehumanization inferences on female chronic pain patients within the context of work lives (Diniz et al., 2020).

Additionally, the size of the sample varied from 21 to 62 participants, which is in line with the Clarke et al. (2017) suggestion for using 20–40 participants for story completion research. Considering the number of stories obtained, it was observed that one story was obtained from each participant. Also, 43% of studies used three-story stems, 43% of studies used two-story stems, and 14% used one-story stems. The results of this study comport with the suggestion of Braun et al. (2018), demonstrating the need to use two to six stories for comparison of groups for effectively managing the story completion research.

About comparative design, past studies used story stems based on gender (i.e., male manager and female manager) (Daly et al., 2024; Preece & Bullingham, 2022), personal characteristics (transgender identity, race, and mental ill-health) (Mason, 2024), socio-economic status (low and middle) (Diniz et al., 2020), aspects of teaching perspective (Student motivation, plagiarism and fraud, and student work assessment) (Káplár-Kodácsy & Dörner, 2024), and different aspects of family life (household tasks, childcare, and working from home) (Hunter et al., 2023) in management literature. Also, Braun and Clarke (2013) suggested recruiting at least ten participants for each story stem (Braun & Clarke, 2013). From these perspectives, all research met this requirement for studies using multiple stories.

Story completion studies mainly used third-person perspectives in developing a story in management literature. Third-person perspectives lead to gathering information about socially undesirable responses and broader and richer information (Braun et al., 2018). This information enables more comprehensive and richer inferences about employee experience and working life.

Regarding the method of analysis, past studies used reflexive thematic analysis (Daly et al., 2024; Preece & Bullingham, 2022; Vries & Flurey, 2024), narrative analysis (Mason, 2024), content analysis (Hunter et al., 2023), thematic analysis (Diniz et al., 2020), and mixed methodology (Káplár-Kodácsy & Dörner, 2024). This finding aligns with the recommendation to utilize narrative analysis and thematic analysis for examining data collected through the story completion method (Clarke et al., 2017; Braun et al., 2018). On the other hand, the story maps method for identifying patterns in story completion data (Clarke et al., 2017) was not used in any of the analyzed studies.

Finally, the current study provides avenues for future research. First, based on the review of story completion research, past studies solely used the story completion method in management literature. Specifically, story completion is mainly concentrated on investigating individuals' assumptions, perceptions, and comprehension through the story stems (Braun et al., 2018). Hence, through hypothetical scenarios, using the story completion method will contribute to understanding real experiences, opinions, and behaviors without masking these issues in the context of the workplace (Clarke et al., 2017).

The story completion method also allows researchers to investigate individuals' imagination, mindset, emotional state, problem-solving ability, and creative thinking skills (Braun et al., 2019). Hence, management scholars may benefit from story completion as a novel and intriguing method for assessing employee creativity, innovative thinking, problem-solving ability, and proactive work behaviors.

Additionally, management scholars may assess sensitive, ethically, and morally complex research topics, including abusive behaviors, mobbing behaviors, glass ceiling, counterproductive work behaviors, time theft, and idea theft by using the story completion method. Concordantly, researchers may investigate differences between social groups and categories such as gender, race/ethnicity, age, religion, or sexuality in terms of workplace diversity, stereotyping, and inequality in management literature.

Also, existing studies using the story completion method are based on nurses, healthcare professionals, and teachers in the education and health sectors. Future research may investigate service, manufacturing, tourism, or information and technology sectors. It was observed that the story map method was not used in the analysis of the data obtained with the story completion method. Since it is a method developed by Braun and Clarke (2013), who have made significant contributions to the conceptual and methodological development of the story completion method, the use of the story map method as an analysis method in future research will allow more comprehensive, rich, and in-depth inferences about the story completion data in management literature.

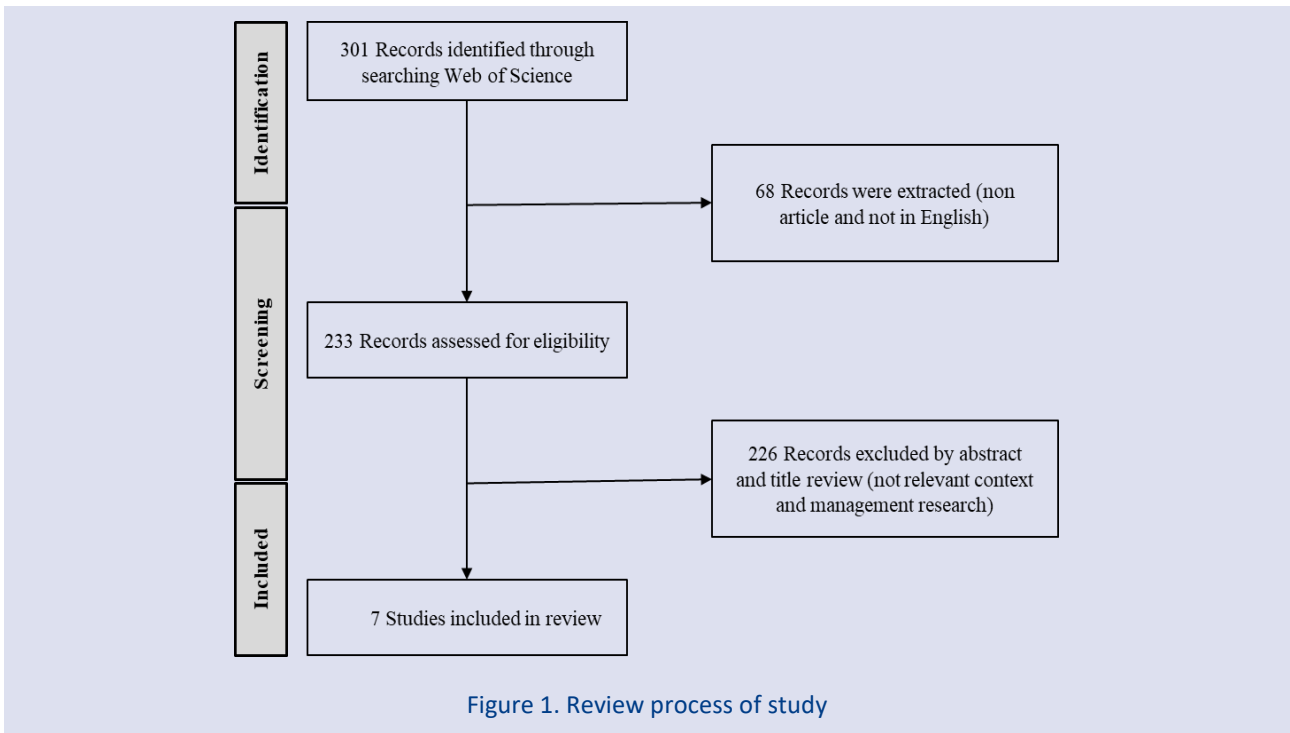


Figure 1. Review process of study

Table 1. Story Completion Research in Management Literature

Author(s) & Year	Research Objective	# Of sample	# Of stories	# Of stems	Comparison	Example of story stems	Person perspectives	Analysis method	Key Findings (Themes)
Mason (2024)	Understanding how practitioners thought a social worker might engage with discriminatory abuse	56 social workers	56	3	(1) Transgender identity, (2) race, (3) mental ill-health	Pat is undertaking a social work assessment with Nicky who <insert protected characteristi c> and has care and support needs. Nicky tells Pat they have experienced name-calling and rough treatment in the community but moves on to talk about their care needs. It is not clear if this relates to Nicky's <insert protected characteristi	Third-person hypothetical scenario	Narrative analysis	(1) Anxious allies, (2) affirmative advocates, (3) administrative assessors

Káplár-Kodácsy & Dorner (2024)	Understanding higher education teachers' teaching approach	62 higher education teachers	62	3	(1) Student motivation, (2) plagiarism and fraud, and (3) student work assessment	c>. Pat thinks it is important to return to this comment.... Ildikó/István (teacher) steps out of the university gate, turns right, then starts off on the street slowly while contemplating. (S)he arrived in the classroom at 10:05 for today's lecture. According to the timetable, the lecture starts at 10:00 every Thursday, however, just like last week, 6 out of 35 students showed up today. Now, she is looking for reasons.	Third-person hypothetical scenario	Thematic analysis and discourse analysis	(1) Normative and individualized approaches to teaching, (2) Classroom instruction and disciplinary approaches
Vries & Flurey (2024)	Healthcare professionals' anticipated responses to experiencing chest pain in a period of stress	44 healthcare professionals	44	1	N.A.	You have recently accepted a promotion in your field and as a result have been under a great deal of stress at work, working much longer hours. Recently you have begun to experience intense chest	First-person hypothetical scenario	Reflexive thematic analysis	(1) 'Do I cry or just carry on': a culture of suffering in silence, (2) 'Me? have a panic attack?': psychosomatic shame; and 'we definitely don't take care of ourselves', (3) prioritizing pressures of multiple responsibilities over self-care

Daly et al. (2024)	Exploring how menopausal women are perceived at work	44 employees	44	2	(1) Male manager and (2) female manager	<p>pain, which is gradually becoming more and more painful. What do you think you would do next in this story?</p> <p>N.A.</p>	Third-person hypothetical scenario	Reflexive thematic analysis	(1) The burden of menopause, (2) managing menopause at work, (3) menopause as not belonging in the workplace, (4) menopause as unlocking new life potential?
Káplár-Kodácsy & Dorner (2024)	Understanding higher education teachers' teaching approach	62 higher education teachers	62	3	(1) Student motivation, (2) plagiarism and fraud, and (3) student work assessment	<p>Ildikó/István (teacher) steps out of the university gate, turns right, then starts off on the street slowly while contemplating. (S)he arrived in the classroom at 10:05 for today's lecture. According to the timetable, the lecture starts at 10:00 every Thursday, however, just like last week, 6 out of 35 students showed up today. Now, she is looking for reasons.</p>	Third-person hypothetical scenario	Thematic analysis and discourse analysis	(1) Normative and individualized approaches to teaching, (2) Classroom instruction and disciplinary approaches

Hunter et al. (2023)	Comprehension of how Australian caregivers navigated family life during the COVID-19	24 caregivers	24	3	Aspects: (1) household tasks, (2) childcare, (3) working from home	Sam experienced many changes due to COVID-19 restrictions (lockdown). Sam and the rest of their family spent a lot more time at home than what they usually would.	Third-person hypothetical scenario	Content analysis	(1) Time, (2) household practices, (3) family relationships
Preece & Bullingham (2022)	Exploring gender stereotypes and their impact upon perceived roles and practice of in-service physical education teachers	21 in-service physical education teachers	21	2	(1) Male and (2) female characters	It was a chilly Wednesday morning as Alex cautiously approached the P.E. teacher during break time. The teacher quickly realized that Alex was upset and asks what is wrong. 'I don't want to play football anymore, I really wish I could dance instead' says Alex...	Third-person hypothetical scenario	Reflexive thematic analysis	(1) Perceptive conformity to gender stereotypes, (2) negative external pressures, (3) positive teacher encouragement
Diniz et al. (2020)	Understanding dehumanization inferences of nurses on female chronic pain patients	50 female nurses	50	2	White women of low and middle socio-economic status	Writing down a brief story to describe 'the woman's pain and how it affects her life', recommending also a treatment based on visual stories in videos	Third-person hypothetical scenario	Thematic analysis	(1) Pain and the future, (2) dealing with pain, (3) treatment recommendations

Contribution Rates and Conflicts of Interest

Etik Beyan	Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.	Ethical Statement	It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.
Yazar Katkıları	Çalışmanın Tasarlanması: BT (%100) Veri Toplanması: BT (%100) Veri Analizi: BT (%100) Makalenin Yazımı: BT (%100) Makale Gönderimi ve Revizyonu: BT (%100)	Author Contributions	Research Design: BT (%100) Data Collection: BT (%100) Data Analysis: BT (%100) Writing the Article: BT (%100) Article Submission and Revision: BT (%100)
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Finansman	Bu araştırmayı desteklemek için dış fon kullanılmamıştır.	Grant Support	The author(s) acknowledge that they received no external funding in support of this research.
Telif Hakkı & Lisans	Yazarlar dergide yayınlanan çalışmalarının telif hakkına sahiptirler ve çalışmaları CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı altında yayımlanmaktadır.	Copyright & License	Authors publishing with the journal retain the copyright to their work licensed under the CC BY-NC 4.0
Etik Kurul	Etik kurul iznine ihtiyaç bulunmamaktadır.	Ethics Committee	Ethics committee approval is not required.

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