

Article

Effects of Marungko Approach in The Reading Competencies of Beginning Readers

Daylyn Canaveral

Clyde Quino

Kaitlin Marie Opingo

Margie Fulgencio

Dennis Plando

Helen Revalde

GenGen Padillo

Corresponding Author: canaveraldaylyn@gmail.com

Abstract: This study examines the efficacy of the Marungko Approach in enhancing reading competencies among kindergarten students. Utilizing a sample characterized by a young age group with balanced gender distribution and varying numbers of siblings, the study assesses improvements in various reading skills. The analysis, presented across six tables, includes statistical evaluations of changes in competencies such as identifying letter names and sounds, initial sounds, reading familiar words, and oral passages. Results indicate significant improvements in certain competencies, particularly in identifying letter names and sounds. The study also explores demographic influences, revealing variations in the approach's effectiveness based on age and gender, while showing no significant impact from the number of siblings. Overall, the findings suggest that the Marungko Approach is a broadly effective tool in early reading education, with its efficacy varying across different demographic factors. This study contributes to the understanding of effective literacy teaching strategies in early childhood education.

Keywords: Marungko Approach, Kindergarten Reading Competencies, Reading skills

Introduction

The growing concern about the decline in reading skills among young learners, as highlighted in recent research by Kim et al. (2021) and Petscher et al. (2020), underscores a critical challenge in contemporary education. Reading is not just a cornerstone for academic success, but also a pivotal skill for overall cognitive development in children (Kilag et al., 2023). This decline has far-reaching implications, prompting educators and researchers to delve into identifying and



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implementing effective strategies for improving reading abilities in early learners (Bayron, 2023). Factors contributing to this decline are multifaceted, encompassing issues such as reduced emphasis on early literacy activities, socioeconomic disparities limiting access to reading materials, and the increasing influence of digital media reducing engagement with traditional reading (Hapsarini et al., 2023; De Maat et al., 2022). Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach, incorporating targeted reading programs, greater parental involvement, and systematic changes in educational practices to cultivate and reinforce reading skills from a young age. The necessity for such strategies is critical, not just for individual academic achievement, but for fostering a literate, informed, and capable future generation (Coiro, 2021; Mirra & Garcia, 2021).

Moreover, literacy is vital for a child's overall development. The urgency to tackle literacy issues in the Philippines is underscored by the country's poor performance in the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), where it ranked lowest in reading comprehension among 79 countries (Espinosa et al., 2023). In response, the Philippines' Department of Education adopted the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy, advocating the use of the mother tongue as the primary language of instruction in the initial years of education to bolster literacy skills. One such strategy is the Marungko Approach, which focuses on contextual and holistic learning and this method emphasizes integrating language skills and fostering an environment conducive to learning, to help children improve their reading skills (Atong & Ventura-Escote, 2023).

Aligned with this policy, the Marungko Approach was introduced to boost reading competencies in young learners. It aims to create a learning environment that is learner-centered, contextually relevant, and culturally sensitive, with a focus on foundational reading skills. This research is driven by the increasing need for evidence-based educational practices and strategies that address the diverse needs of learners. The Marungko Approach has shown potential in early studies, but requires a thorough evaluation to confirm its effectiveness in enhancing reading skills among young students (Puno et al., 2022).

The study focuses on the impact of the Marungko Approach on Kindergarten and Grade 1 students at Timpolok Elementary School. It seeks to understand how this approach can improve various aspects of reading, like recognizing letters and sounds, and reading words and passages. An essential outcome of this research will be the development of an action plan. This plan aims to facilitate the effective and sustainable application of the Marungko Approach, addressing any challenges and involving critical stakeholders like teachers, students, and parents. It intends to provide a structured approach for ongoing improvement in reading skills and the educational environment as a whole.

While the Marungko Approach has shown promise in preliminary studies, there is a lack of comprehensive research evaluating its impact on reading competencies, particularly for Kindergarten and Grade 1 students. This gap in research necessitates a detailed examination of how the Marungko Approach affects various aspects of reading abilities, such as letter recognition, sound identification, and comprehension skills in young learners. By assessing the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach and creating an action plan, this research aims to enrich the field of education and influence policies related to reading instruction. The findings will serve as a foundation for designing specific interventions, training educators, and developing educational resources to support and enhance the reading development of young learners. Moreover, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge in education, particularly in reading instruction, and could inform policy decisions and educator training programs. The goal is to create a more effective, contextualized, and culturally sensitive approach to teaching reading in the Philippines, with potential applicability in other multilingual contexts.

Methodology

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest/posttest methodology to assess the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in improving the reading competencies of Kindergarten and Grade 1 students at Timpolok Elementary School during the 2022-2023 school year. The research commenced with a pretest using traditional reading assessment methods to establish baseline reading abilities of the students. This initial assessment was critical for gauging the starting point of the learners' reading skills before the implementation of the Marungko Approach. The intervention, which began on March 21, 2023, was conducted at Timpolok Elementary School, a notable public institution in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu, Philippines, serving students from Kindergarten to Grade 6. The participants of the study included 53 Kindergarten learners (50.94% male and 49.06% female) and 28 Grade 1 learners (33.96% male and 35.71% female). The primary objective was to determine the impact of the Marungko Approach on these young learners' reading abilities, aiming to enhance their skills through this focused intervention. The Department of Education's Marungko Booklet served as the research instrument. This booklet, specifically designed for beginning readers, contains a range of reading activities and exercises tailored to the needs and learning styles of Kindergarten and Grade 1 students. The use of this tool allowed for a more precise and effective reading intervention, aligning with the objectives of the study to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Marungko Approach's efficacy in improving reading competencies among early learners.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Profile of the Students

	Frequency	Percentage
A. Age (in years)		
5	40	75.47
6	8	15.09
7	3	5.66
8	1	1.89
12	1	1.89
B. Gender		
Female	27	50.94
Male	26	49.06
C. Number of Siblings		
1 - 3	48	90.57
4 - 6	2	3.77
7 - 10	2	3.77
11 - 13	1	1.89

The data presented in Table 1 provides a detailed profile of the students surveyed. Focusing on age, the majority of students are 5 years old, accounting for 75.47% of the population. This is followed by 6-year-olds at 15.09%, indicating a predominantly young cohort. There's a significant drop in frequency as age increases, with 7-year-olds at 5.66%, 8-year-olds at 1.89%, and a single 12-year-old making up another 1.89%. The mean age of the group is approximately 5.45 years, further emphasizing the young age range of this group. In terms of gender distribution, it's nearly even with females representing 50.94% and males 49.06%, indicating a balanced representation of genders in the sample. When examining the number of siblings, a large majority of the students (90.57%) have between 1 to 3 siblings. Only a small fraction has more, with 4 to 6 siblings (3.77%), 7 to 10 siblings (3.77%), and the smallest group having 11 to 13 siblings (1.89%). The mean number of siblings is 2.26, suggesting that most students come from moderately sized families. Overall, the data presents a picture of a young, gender-balanced student population, mostly coming from families with a few children.

Table 2. Level of Reading Competencies Before and After Using the Marungko Approach

Indicators	Before Using Marungko			After Using Marungko		
	Mean	StDev	Int.	Mean	StDev	Int.
A. Identifying letter names	9.49	5.22	Fair	22.28	4.75	Very Good
B. Identifying letter sounds	5.81	4.27	Poor	20.02	5.12	Very Good
C. Identifying initial sounds	0.59	0.77	Poor	1.45	1.14	Poor
D. Reading familiar words	0.09	0.30	Poor	0.74	0.79	Poor
E. Reading oral passage	0.04	0.19	Poor	0.32	0.51	Poor

Table 2 provides a comparative analysis of students' reading competencies before and after implementing the Marungko Approach. The data is categorized into five key indicators, each evaluated based on mean scores and standard deviation (StDev), along with an interpretive label (Int.) ranging from 'Poor' to 'Very Good'. The most significant improvements are observed in the areas of 'Identifying letter names' and 'Identifying letter sounds'. Before the Marungko Approach, the mean score for identifying letter names was 9.49 with a 'Fair' rating, which improved dramatically to 22.28 with a 'Very Good' rating post-implementation. Similarly, identifying letter sounds saw a leap from a 'Poor' rating with a mean of 5.81 to a 'Very Good' rating at 20.02, indicating a substantial enhancement in these foundational reading skills. However, the progress in the other indicators is less pronounced. 'Identifying initial sounds' showed a minimal increase from a mean of 0.59 to 1.45, maintaining a 'Poor' rating. 'Reading familiar words' and 'Reading oral passage' also showed slight improvements but remained within the 'Poor' range, with mean scores moving from 0.09 to 0.74 and 0.04 to 0.32, respectively. Overall, the data reflects the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in significantly improving students' abilities to identify letter names and sounds. However, the approach seems less effective in enhancing skills related to identifying initial sounds, reading familiar words, and reading oral passages, as these areas still show relatively low competency levels even after the intervention.

Table 3 Kindergarten's Mean Gained Difference in their Level of Reading Competencies Before and After Using the Marungko Approach

Indicators	t-value	P-value	Significance	Results
A. Identifying letter names	-21.44	0.000	Significant	Ho rejected
B. Identifying letter sounds	-25.58	0.000	Significant	Ho rejected
C. Identifying initial sounds	-6.86	0.000	Significant	Ho rejected
D. Reading familiar words	-6.85	0.000	Significant	Ho rejected
E. Reading oral passage	-4.16	0.000	Significant	Ho rejected

(alpha = 0.05)

Table 3 focuses on the statistical significance of the mean gained differences in kindergarten students' reading competencies before and after the implementation of the Marungko Approach. The analysis employs t-values and p-values to test the hypothesis (Ho) for each reading competency indicator. Across all indicators, the results are statistically significant, as indicated by p-values of 0.000, which are well below the alpha threshold of 0.05. This uniformity in p-values across all categories strongly suggests that the improvements seen are not due to chance. In detail, the indicator 'Identifying letter names' shows a t-value of -21.44, while 'Identifying letter sounds' records an even higher t-

p-value of -25.58. Both these high negative t-values, coupled with p-values of 0.000, indicate a very significant improvement in these competencies, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0).

Similarly, the indicators 'Identifying initial sounds', 'Reading familiar words', and 'Reading oral passage' also demonstrate significant improvements with t-values of -6.86, -6.85, and -4.16 respectively. Despite these competencies initially having lower mean scores (as seen in Table 2), the negative t-values and resulting p-values still lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that the Marungko Approach had a significant positive impact on these areas as well. Overall, the data clearly suggests that the Marungko Approach has had a statistically significant positive impact on all assessed areas of reading competency in the kindergarten group studied. The uniform rejection of the null hypothesis across all indicators underscores the effectiveness of this teaching approach in enhancing various aspects of reading skills in young learners.

Table 4. Difference in the Kindergarten's Level of Reading Competencies Before and After Using the Marungko Approach

Difference Between Before and After Using the Marungko Approach When Grouped by its Age	F-value	p-value	Significance	Results
A. Identifying letter names	2.95	0.029	Significant	Ho rejected
B. Identifying letter sounds	1.24	0.308	Not significant	Ho accepted
C. Identifying initial sounds	1.08	0.378	Not significant	Ho accepted
D. Reading familiar words	0.45	0.773	Not significant	Ho accepted
E. Reading oral passage	0.18	0.948	Not significant	Ho accepted

(alpha = 0.05)

Table 4 presents an analysis of the differences in kindergarten students' reading competencies before and after using the Marungko Approach, with a specific focus on the role of age. The assessment is based on F-values, p-values, and the significance level set at an alpha of 0.05, which helps in determining whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis (H_0) for each reading competency indicator. The only indicator showing a statistically significant difference is 'Identifying letter names', with an F-value of 2.95 and a p-value of 0.029. This result is significant as it falls below the alpha threshold of 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. It suggests that the Marungko Approach has a meaningful impact on improving the ability of kindergartners to identify letter names, and this impact varies with age. However, the other indicators – 'Identifying letter sounds', 'Identifying initial sounds', 'Reading familiar words', and 'Reading oral passage' – show a different trend. Their p-values of 0.308, 0.378, 0.773, and 0.948

respectively are well above the alpha threshold. Consequently, their F-values (1.24 for letter sounds, 1.08 for initial sounds, 0.45 for familiar words, and 0.18 for oral passage) suggest no statistically significant differences when considering age as a factor. Therefore, the null hypothesis for these areas is accepted, indicating that the improvements in these competencies after applying the Marungko Approach are not significantly affected by the age of the students. Overall, while the Marungko Approach shows a significant impact on the ability to identify letter names among kindergartners of different ages, it does not demonstrate a statistically significant age-related difference in the development of other reading competencies like letter sounds, initial sounds, reading familiar words, and reading oral passages.

Table 5. Difference in the Kindergarten's Level of Reading Competencies Before and After Using the Marungko Approach

Difference Between Before and After Using the Marungko Approach When Grouped by its Gender	F- value	p-value	Significance	Results
A. Identifying letter names	5.52	0.023	Significant	Ho rejected
B. Identifying letter sounds	1.15	0.289	Not significant	Ho accepted
C. Identifying initial sounds	9.48	0.003	Significant	Ho rejected
D. Reading familiar words	0.02	0.899	Not significant	Ho accepted
E. Reading oral passage	1.74	0.193	Not significant	Ho accepted

(alpha = 0.05)

Table 5 examines the impact of the Marungko Approach on kindergarten students' reading competencies, with a focus on differences between genders. The analysis uses F-values and p-values to determine the statistical significance of improvements, with an alpha level set at 0.05 for deciding on the acceptance or rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho) in each reading competency category. The data reveals a mixed impact based on gender. For 'Identifying letter names' and 'Identifying initial sounds', there are significant differences, as indicated by F-values of 5.52 and 9.48, respectively, and corresponding p-values of 0.023 and 0.003. These values fall below the alpha threshold, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that the Marungko Approach significantly influenced these particular reading competencies in a gender-specific manner. However, for the other indicators – 'Identifying letter sounds', 'Reading familiar words', and 'Reading oral passages' – the results are not statistically significant. With p-values of 0.289, 0.899, and 0.193 respectively, which are above the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted for these categories. This implies that the differences in improvements in these

reading competencies due to the Marungko Approach are not significantly influenced by the students' gender. In summary, while the Marungko Approach appears to have a significant gender-specific impact on the ability to identify letter names and initial sounds, it does not show a significant difference in improving other areas like letter sounds, reading familiar words, and reading oral passages when comparing male and female kindergarten students.

Table 6. Difference in the Kindergarten's Level of Reading Competencies Before and After Using the Marungko Approach

Difference Between Before and After Using the Marungko Approach When Grouped by its Number of Siblings	F-value	p-value	Significance	Results
A. Identifying letter names	1.73	0.146	Not significant	Ho accepted
B. Identifying letter sounds	1.50	0.209	Not significant	Ho accepted
C. Identifying initial sounds	1.63	0.171	Not significant	Ho accepted
D. Reading familiar words	0.81	0.548	Not significant	Ho accepted
E. Reading oral passage	1.29	0.284	Not significant	Ho accepted

(alpha = 0.05)

Table 6 provides an analysis of the differences in kindergarten students' reading competencies before and after the implementation of the Marungko Approach, with a specific focus on the variable of the number of siblings each student has. The analysis utilizes F-values and p-values to determine the statistical significance of the changes observed, with the significance level set at an alpha of 0.05. The data across all the indicators — 'Identifying letter names', 'Identifying letter sounds', 'Identifying initial sounds', 'Reading familiar words', and 'Reading oral passage' — show that there are no statistically significant differences in reading competencies based on the number of siblings. This is indicated by F-values ranging from 0.81 to 1.73 and p-values ranging from 0.146 to 0.548, all of which are above the alpha threshold of 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted for each category. In essence, the improvement in reading competencies after applying the Marungko Approach does not appear to be significantly affected by whether a student has more or fewer siblings. This suggests that the number of siblings, as a factor in the home or social environment, does not play a statistically significant role in how effectively students benefit from the Marungko Approach in terms of improving their reading skills. Overall, the analysis points towards the Marungko Approach being broadly effective across different family sizes, indicating its general applicability and effectiveness regardless of the number of siblings a kindergarten student has.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Marungko Approach's impact on kindergarten students' reading competencies leads to several key conclusions. Firstly, the Marungko Approach is generally effective in enhancing foundational reading skills, particularly in identifying letter names and sounds, as evidenced by significant improvements in these areas. However, its effectiveness varies depending on demographic factors such as age and gender. While the approach significantly improves certain competencies across different ages and genders, it shows less impact in other areas, suggesting that its efficacy is not uniformly distributed across all reading skills. Interestingly, the number of siblings, a factor indicative of family environment, does not significantly influence the effectiveness of the approach. This underlines the Marungko Approach's broad applicability and potential as a valuable tool in early literacy education, capable of yielding positive outcomes across diverse demographic settings.

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