



Advancing Early Literacy Through the Impact of the Marungko Approach on Kindergarten Reading Proficiency

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not the Marungko Approach is beneficial in improving early reading skills among kindergarten pupils. In the beginning, the majority of the individuals had a low reading skill, with the majority of them scoring "Poor" or "Fair" across a variety of markers. Following the introduction of the Marungko Approach, a significant shift was noted, with the majority of pupils obtaining ratings of "Excellent" or "Very Good." This progress was not only observable in raw scores, but it was also statistically supported by t-tests, which confirmed that there were substantial improvements in all reading metrics. Based on these findings, the Marungko Approach is demonstrated to be an excellent educational tool for the development of early literacy, which suggests that it should be incorporated into the curriculum being taught in kindergarten. Learners' recognition of letter names, sounds, and starting sounds, as well as their ability to read familiar words and oral passages, are considerably improved as a result of this strategy, which lays a solid foundation for future academic achievement.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Kindergarten Reading Proficiency, Marungko Approach.

1. Introduction

Literacy is the foundation of all knowledge and education, enabling students to achieve academic success in tasks like understanding homework, solving math problems, and writing essays (Boris et al., 2018). For instance, For example, educators have recently been searching for effective interventions to enhance students' reading skills due to concerns about reading proficiency (Baten & Zanden, 2008). The Marungko Approach is one such pedagogical technique that emphasizes contextual and comprehensive learning (Balgua et al., 2022). It aims to help children develop and improve their reading skills by integrating language skills and creating a welcoming and engaging classroom environment (Balgua et al., 2022). Therefore, progress in the economy, as well as personal and communal prosperity, depends on people's ability to read and write (Goczek et al., 2021). Improving the literacy rate benefits our economy (Coulombe & Tremblay, 2006).

The Philippines' Department of Education implemented the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy to address these challenges. This policy promotes teaching in students' native languages during their early years of schooling to help develop their reading skills. In line with this philosophy, the Marungko Approach was developed as a reading intervention strategy to improve young students' reading abilities. The Marungko Approach focuses on reading readiness skills and aims to create an inclusive, student-centered

There is an increasing demand among educational stakeholders for more evidence-based approaches, necessitating the development of efficient and effective solutions to meet the diverse needs of students (Vettriselvan et al., 2025). Preliminary research suggests that the Marungko Approach could be an effective reading intervention. However, more thorough studies are needed to evaluate its impact on elementary school children's reading competence (Bustos-Orosa & Ferrer, 2013; Suson et al., 2020).

This study aimed to assess the Marungko Approach in kindergarten reading instruction at Panganihan Elementary School. The findings highlighted the potential benefits of using the Marungko Approach, particularly in enhancing students' reading skills in areas such as letter identification, letter sounds, initial sounds, reading familiar words, and oral passage reading. An essential deliverable is the creation of a strategy incorporating the study's conclusions and recommendations. Moreover, this study aimed to enhance educational knowledge and inform policy on reading instruction through evaluating the Marungko Approach's impact on student reading proficiency. It lays the groundwork for targeted interventions, educator training, and developing suitable learning

materials. However, the research identifies several areas requiring further investigation. Insights from a single educational setting might not fully represent the approach's effectiveness in diverse educational landscapes or cultural contexts.

The focus on primary literacy skills does not address long-term skill retention or the transition to more complex literacy competencies, such as comprehension and critical analysis. The depth of stakeholder engagement, encompassing teachers, parents, and students, needs more comprehensive exploration to fully understand their perspectives, challenges, and support needs. Additionally, the implications of implementing the Marungko Approach within a multilingual educational framework and its integration with digital literacy tools remain unexplored. Addressing these gaps will provide a more holistic understanding of the Marungko Approach, ensuring its effective and adaptable application in improving literacy education on a broader scale.

2. Methodology

The research design for this study employed a quasi-experimental design using a pretest/posttest method. The research focused on Kindergarten and Grade 1 learners at Panganihan Elementary School. In this design, Kindergarten and Grade 1 learners from Panganihan Elementary School were assessed on their reading competencies using a pretest administered using traditional reading assessment methods. This pretest provided baseline data on the students' reading abilities before introducing the Marungko Approach. Following the pretest, the Marungko Approach intervention was implemented for kindergarten learners. This research followed the Input-Process-Output continuum as a guide throughout the entire research process. The Input comprised profile of the learners and the effectiveness of marungko approach in early reading skills of the learners. The Process began with the approval of the transmittal letters, followed by preliminary procedures such as securing permissions and obtaining necessary approvals. The research output was developing an Action Plan for Enhancing Reading Competencies through the Marungko Approach. The research environment for this study was the Panganihan Elementary School, each offering a unique context and setting that could contribute valuable insights into the implementation and effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in enhancing reading competencies. The respondents of the study were learners of the identified schools. The research instrument utilized was the Department of Education (DepEd) Marungko Booklet. This tool was specifically designed to assess the reading competencies of beginning readers and to guide them through the process of learning to read using the Marungko Approach. The Marungko Booklet contains various reading activities and exercises that cater to the specific needs and learning styles of Kindergarten and Grade 1 learners, allowing for a more targeted and effective reading intervention. The booklet was employed as the primary instrument to evaluate the participants' reading abilities both before and after the intervention. The researchers administered pretests and posttests using the DepEd Marungko Booklet to measure the progress and effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in improving the reading competencies of the participating learners.

Table 1. Age and gender.

Age	M	F	f	%
7	2	2	4	7.84
6	16	10	26	50.98
5	8	12	20	39.22
Total	27	24	51	100

The table presents data on learners categorized by age and gender, with a total of 51 learners involved. Looking closely, the distribution of ages is between 5 and 7 years. The majority of the learners are 6 years old, comprising approximately 50.98% of the total, with 16 males and 10 females, summing up to 26 individuals. The 5-year-old group is the next largest, constituting about 39.22% of the total population, with 8 males and 12 females, totaling 20 learners. The smallest group is the 7-year-olds, making up about 7.84% of the overall count, evenly split between genders with 2 males and 2 females, totaling 4 learners. Overall, there are slightly more male learners (27) than female learners (24), representing a balanced gender distribution across the age groups.

Table 2. Siblings.

Siblings	Gender			Total
	M	F	f	%
7-10	2	0	2	3.92
4-6	8	7	15	29.41
1-3	14	12	26	50.98

The table outlines the distribution of learners based on the number of siblings they have, further categorized by gender, with a total population of 51 learners. The data is segmented into three groups according to the number of siblings: 7-10, 4-6, and 1-3. The group with the most siblings (7-10) is the smallest, comprising only 3.92% of the total. This group has 2 male learners and no females, making a total of 2 learners. The next category, learners with 4-6 siblings, represents 29.41% of the total. This group is more gender-balanced, with 8 males and 7 females, totaling 15 learners. The largest group is learners with 1-3 siblings, accounting for 50.98% of the total population. This group includes 14 males and 12 females, summing up to 26 learners. Overall, the data indicates that a majority of the learners have a smaller number of siblings (1-3), and as the number of siblings increases, the proportion of learners in each category decreases. The gender distribution across different sibling groups is relatively balanced, with a slightly higher number of male learners in each category.

The table illustrates the impact of using the Marungko approach on learners' ability to identify letter names, categorized into different proficiency levels based on raw scores. The data is presented before and after the use of the Marungko approach, with a total of 51 learners. Before implementing the Marungko approach, none of the

learners were categorized as 'Excellent' (24-28) or 'Very Good' (18-23). The majority were in the 'Fair' (6-11) category, making up 45.10% of the total, followed by those categorized as 'Good' (12-17), constituting 35.29%.

Table 3. Identifying letter names.

Raw scores	Description	Before using Marungko		After using Marungko	
		f	%	f	%
24 - 28	Excellent	0	0	32	62.75
18 - 23	Very Good	0	0	19	37.25
12 - 17	Good	18	35.29	0	0
6 - 11	Fair	23	45.10	0	0
0 - 5	Poor	10	19.61	0	0

A smaller percentage, 19.61%, were categorized as 'Poor' (0-5). After the Marungko approach was used, there was a remarkable improvement. A significant 62.75% of the learners were rated as 'Excellent', and an additional 37.25% were rated as 'Very Good'. This data suggests that the Marungko approach had a substantial positive effect on the learners' ability to identify letter names, with all learners achieving scores in the top two categories ('Excellent' and 'Very Good') after its implementation. The absence of learners in the lower three categories post-Marungko underscores the effectiveness of this instructional method in enhancing literacy skills among the learners.

Table 4. Identifying letter sounds.

Raw scores	Description	Before using Marungko		After using Marungko	
		f	%	f	%
24 - 28	Excellent	0	0	40	78.43
18 - 23	Very Good	0	0	11	21.57
12 - 17	Good	6	11.76	0	0
6 - 11	Fair	9	17.65	0	0
0 - 5	Poor	37	72.55	0	0

The table presents the effectiveness of the Marungko approach in enhancing learners' proficiency in identifying letter sounds, categorized by raw scores before and after implementing the method. The data encompasses 51 learners and shows a significant transformation in skill levels post-intervention. Initially, before using the Marungko approach, none of the learners were classified as 'Excellent' (24-28) or 'Very Good' (18-23). A small fraction, 11.76%, were rated 'Good' (12-17), and an even smaller group, 17.65%, were considered 'Fair' (6-11). The majority, however, 72.55%, fell into the 'Poor' (0-5) category, indicating a substantial need for improvement in identifying letter sounds. The impact of the Marungko approach is starkly evident after its application. A drastic shift occurs, with a substantial 78.43% of learners achieving an 'Excellent' rating and an additional 21.57% rated as 'Very Good'. This stark contrast highlights the Marungko approach's effectiveness in significantly improving learners' abilities to identify letter sounds. The complete absence of learners in the lower three proficiency levels after the intervention underlines the method's success in elevating all learners to the top two performance categories.

Table 5 showcases the transformative effects of the Marungko approach on learners' proficiency in identifying initial sounds, delineated by raw scores before and after the implementation of the teaching method, involving a total of 51 learners. Prior to the intervention, the proficiency levels of the learners were notably low. None of the learners were categorized as 'Excellent' (8-10), 'Very Good' (6-7), or 'Good' (4-5).

Table 5. Identifying initial sounds.

Raw scores	Description	Before using Marungko		After using Marungko	
		f	%	f	%
8 - 10	Excellent	0	0	38	74.51
6 - 7	Very Good	0	0	10	19.61
4 - 5	Good	0	0	3	5.88
2 - 3	Fair	6	11.76	0	0
0 - 1	Poor	45	88.24	0	0

A small portion, 11.76%, were rated as 'Fair' (2-3), while the overwhelming majority, 88.24%, were categorized as 'Poor' (0-1), indicating significant room for improvement in their ability to identify initial sounds. Post-intervention, the impact of the Marungko approach is dramatically evident. A major leap in proficiency is observed, with a striking 74.51% of learners rated as 'Excellent' and an additional 19.61% as 'Very Good'. A smaller fraction, 5.88%, are rated as 'Good'. Notably, following the intervention, there are no learners remaining in the 'Fair' or 'Poor' categories. This data vividly underscores the efficacy of the Marungko approach in enhancing the learners' ability to identify initial sounds. The shift from no learners achieving above 'Fair' before the intervention to the majority being rated as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' afterwards highlights the significant improvement in the learners' proficiency, attributing a clear, positive impact to the Marungko teaching method.

Table 6. Reading familiar words.

Raw scores	Description	Before using Marungko		After using Marungko	
		f	%	f	%
8 - 10	Excellent	0	0.00	35	68.63
6 - 7	Very Good	0	0.00	16	31.37
4 - 5	Good	0	0	0	0.00
2 - 3	Fair	10	19.61	0	0.00
0 - 1	Poor	41	80.39	0	0.00

Table 6 illustrates the impact of the Marungko approach on learners' ability to read familiar words, categorized by raw scores before and after the implementation of the method, involving a cohort of 51 learners. Before applying the Marungko approach, the proficiency levels in reading familiar words were critically low. Not a single learner fell into the 'Excellent' (8-10), 'Very Good' (6-7), or 'Good' (4-5) categories. A minority, 19.61%, were classified as 'Fair' (2-3), while the vast majority, 80.39%, were rated as 'Poor' (0-1), indicating a significant need for enhancement in reading skills. After the Marungko approach was utilized, there was a remarkable improvement in the learners' reading abilities. A substantial 68.63% of learners were rated as 'Excellent', and an additional 31.37% were rated as 'Very Good'. Impressively, there were no learners left in the 'Good', 'Fair', or 'Poor' categories post-intervention. This data strikingly highlights the Marungko approach's efficacy in dramatically improving learners' ability to read familiar words. The shift from no learners being above 'Fair' before the intervention to all learners being classified as either 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' afterwards is a testament to the significant enhancement in reading proficiency, showcasing the positive and transformative impact of the Marungko teaching method.

Table 7. Reading Oral Passage.

Raw scores	Description	Before using Marungko		After using Marungko	
		f	%	f	%
6	Excellent	0	0.00	43	84.31
5	Very Good	0	0.00	8	15.69
4	Good	6	11.76	0	0.00
2 - 3	Fair	3	5.88	0	0.00
0 - 1	Poor	42	82.35	0	0.00

Table 7 presents the progression in learners' abilities to read oral passages, as measured by raw scores before and after implementing the Marungko approach, with a total of 51 learners participating. Initially, before the application of the Marungko approach, the proficiency in reading oral passages was notably low among the learners. None were categorized as 'Excellent' (6) or 'Very Good' (5). A small fraction, 11.76%, were rated as 'Good' (4), and an even smaller percentage, 5.88%, were considered 'Fair' (2-3). The majority, however, accounting for 82.35%, fell into the 'Poor' (0-1) category, indicating a substantial need for improvement in their oral reading skills. After the introduction of the Marungko approach, there was a significant improvement in the learners' reading skills. A dominant 84.31% of the learners were rated as 'Excellent', and an additional 15.69% were rated as 'Very Good'. Notably, after the intervention, there were no learners remaining in the 'Good', 'Fair', or 'Poor' categories. This data clearly underscores the effectiveness of the Marungko approach in enhancing learners' oral reading abilities. The transition from no learners achieving above 'Fair' before the intervention to a majority being rated as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' afterward highlights the dramatic improvement in reading proficiency. The complete absence of learners in the lower three proficiency levels post-Marungko emphasizes the substantial positive impact of this instructional method on the learners' reading skills.

Table 8. Mean difference before and after using the marungko approach (Alpha = 0.05).

Indicators	t-value	p-value	Significance	Results
A. Identifying letter names	-4.61	0.025	Significant	Ho rejected
B. Identifying letter sounds	-7.25	0.048	Significant	Ho rejected
C. Identifying initial sounds	-5.12	0.016	Significant	Ho rejected
D. Reading familiar words	-7.21	0.041	Significant	Ho rejected
E. Reading oral passage	-6.20	0.025	Significant	Ho rejected

Table 8 displays the mean difference in various literacy indicators before and after implementing the Marungko approach, using statistical measures to determine significance. The analysis is performed at a 0.05 alpha level, focusing on five key literacy indicators. For 'Identifying letter names', the t-value is -4.61, with a p-value of 0.025. This result is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho). Similarly, 'Identifying letter sounds' shows a t-value of -7.25 and a p-value of 0.048, also indicating a significant result and leading to the rejection of Ho. 'Identifying initial sounds' follows this trend with a t-value of -5.12 and a p-value of 0.016, further supporting the significance of the Marungko approach and the rejection of Ho. The impact of the Marungko approach extends to 'Reading familiar words', which presents a t-value of -7.21 and a p-value of 0.041, and 'Reading oral passage', with a t-value of -6.20 and a p-value of 0.025. Both indicators show statistically significant improvements, leading to the rejection of Ho in both cases. Across all indicators identifying letter names, letter sounds, initial sounds, reading familiar words, and reading oral passages the Marungko approach has demonstrated statistically significant improvements. The negative t-values and p-values below the alpha level of 0.05 consistently lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis, underscoring the effectiveness of the Marungko approach in enhancing various literacy skills. The consistent pattern of significance across these literacy indicators suggests that the Marungko approach has a comprehensive positive impact on learners' literacy development.

3. Discussion

The data presents a comprehensive overview of the kindergarten learners at San Nicolas Elementary School, focusing on demographics related to age, gender, and the number of siblings. The school enrolls a total of 51 learners, fairly distributed across genders with 27 males and 24 females. Age-wise, the majority of the students are 6 years old, comprising approximately 51% (26 learners) of the total population. This is followed by 5-year-olds, who make up about 39.22% (20 students), and lastly, 7-year-olds, who constitute the smallest group with 7.84% (4 students). In terms of siblings, a significant portion of the students, precisely 50.98% (26 students), have 1 to 3 siblings, highlighting that smaller family sizes are prevalent in this sample. The next substantial group, representing 29.41% (15 students), consists of children with 4 to 6 siblings. Only a minimal 3.92% (2 students) of the student population have a larger number of siblings ranging from 7 to 10. This data not only sheds light on the demographic distribution in terms of age and gender but also provides insights into the familial contexts of the students, reflecting a predominance of smaller to medium-sized families among the kindergarten cohort at San Nicolas Elementary School. The findings showed a compelling evaluation of the Marungko Approach's effectiveness in enhancing early reading skills among kindergarten learners. The approach's impact is assessed across five key literacy indicators: Identifying Letter Names, Identifying Letter Sounds, Identifying Initial Sounds, Reading Familiar Words, and Reading Oral Passage. Prior to the implementation of the Marungko Approach, the learners displayed limited proficiency across all indicators, with a significant number scoring in the 'Poor' and 'Fair' categories. Notably, in 'Identifying Letter Sounds' and 'Identifying Initial Sounds', 72.55% and 88.24% of the learners, respectively, were in the 'Poor' category, indicating a substantial need for intervention. After the intervention, there was a complete transformation in the learners' proficiency, with the majority now scoring in the 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' categories. Specifically, 62.75% excelled in 'Identifying Letter Names', and a remarkable 78.43% and 74.51% achieved excellence in 'Identifying Letter Sounds' and 'Identifying Initial Sounds', respectively. Similarly, in 'Reading Familiar Words' and 'Reading Oral Passage', 68.63% and 84.31% of learners respectively scored in the 'Excellent' category, showcasing substantial progress in reading skills. Statistical analysis reinforces these observations, with significant t-values and p-values less than the alpha level of 0.05 for all indicators. This indicates that the improvements in the learners' reading skills post-implementation of the Marungko Approach are statistically significant. The null hypotheses for all indicators are rejected, firmly establishing the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in enhancing early reading skills among kindergarten learners in a statistically significant manner.

4. Conclusion

The data conclusively demonstrates the significant efficacy of the Marungko Approach in improving early reading skills among kindergarten learners. Before the intervention, the majority of students exhibited limited proficiency in reading, as reflected by the high percentages in the 'Poor' and 'Fair' categories across all evaluated indicators. However, post-implementation, there was a remarkable transformation, with an overwhelming majority of students achieving 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' scores. This dramatic improvement is not only evident in the raw scores but is also statistically validated through t-tests, with p-values indicating significant enhancements across all reading indicators. These results underscore the Marungko Approach as a highly effective pedagogical strategy for fostering early literacy, thereby highlighting its potential as a valuable asset in kindergarten education curricula. The approach not only significantly elevates learners' abilities to identify letter names, sounds, and initial sounds but also markedly improves their capacity to read familiar words and oral passages, setting a robust foundation for their future academic endeavors.

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