

Awareness and Competencies of Teachers in the Utilization of Marungko Approach in Reading Performance of Learners

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to determine the level of awareness and competencies of teachers in the utilization of the Marungko Approach and its relationship to the reading performance of learners in one of the divisions in Negros Island Region during the school year 2025–2026. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study involved 140 Grades 1 to 3 teachers utilizing the Marungko Approach in reading instruction. Data were gathered through a researcher-made questionnaire. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a very high level of awareness and competencies in applying the Marungko Approach in beginning reading instruction. Learners were likewise classified as Grade Ready in terms of reading performance. Significant relationships were found between teachers' awareness and learners' reading performance, as well as between teachers' competencies and learners' reading performance, indicating that effective teacher preparation and instructional skills positively influence learners' literacy development.

Keywords: Marungko Approach, Teacher's Awareness, Teacher's Competencies, Reading Performance, Beginning Reading Instruction, Early Grade Reading, Phonics-Based Instruction.

INTRODUCTION

Reading literacy is widely recognized as a fundamental skill that influences learners' academic success, lifelong learning, and participation in society. Across many countries, phonics-based instruction has become an important strategy in early literacy education because of its effectiveness in developing decoding, phonemic awareness, and comprehension skills. Research shows that systematic phonics instruction strengthens learners' ability to recognize letter-sound relationships and decode unfamiliar words independently, leading to improved reading competence during the early stages of literacy development (Ehri, 2020). At the same time, teachers play a vital role in literacy instruction, as their pedagogical knowledge, instructional skills, and confidence greatly affect learners' reading outcomes (König et al., 2022). Structured phonics-based approaches such as the Marungko Approach have gained recognition for improving foundational reading skills because they focus on phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and gradual word recognition (Repaso & Macalisang, 2024). Studies further reveal that learners exposed to the Marungko Approach demonstrate improvements in reading fluency, decoding ability, and comprehension, highlighting its effectiveness in literacy development (Bernabe, 2024).

In the Philippine educational context, improving learners' reading performance remains a major concern, particularly in the early grades where foundational literacy skills are developed. Despite the implementation of various reading programs, many Filipino learners continue to experience difficulties in decoding, fluency, and comprehension. As a response, the Marungko Approach has been widely utilized in elementary schools because of its systematic focus on phonics instruction and decoding skills. Research conducted in Philippine classrooms revealed that learners taught through the Marungko Approach showed significant improvements in word recognition, oral reading fluency, and comprehension (Bernabe, 2024; Repaso & Macalisang, 2024). However, the effectiveness of the approach is strongly influenced by teachers' pedagogical competence, preparedness, and ability to provide appropriate reading interventions (Catarman & Liquido, 2024; Estrella, 2022). At the local level, schools still encounter challenges such as limited instructional materials, diverse learner needs, and

insufficient teacher training, which affect the consistent implementation of the approach and the overall quality of reading instruction (Austero et al., 2025; Aguilin, 2025).

Despite the growing body of research on the Marungko Approach and structured reading instruction, there remains a significant gap concerning teachers' awareness and competencies in effectively implementing these methods and how such competencies influence learners' reading outcomes. Most studies focus mainly on the effectiveness of the approach in improving reading performance, while limited research examines teachers' preparedness, self-efficacy, and instructional decision-making in diverse classroom settings (Bernabe, 2024; Tamba & Garcés, 2024). International and local studies consistently emphasize the importance of teacher knowledge and pedagogical skills in literacy instruction (König et al., 2022), yet there is still insufficient empirical evidence directly linking teachers' competencies in utilizing the Marungko Approach with learners' reading achievement. Thus, this study aims to assess teachers' awareness and competencies in utilizing the Marungko Approach and determine its influence on learners' reading performance. The findings of this study may contribute to improving teacher training programs, strengthening literacy instruction practices, and addressing persistent reading difficulties among learners in support of national and global goals for foundational literacy development (UNESCO, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive–correlational research design to determine the relationship between teachers' awareness and competencies in utilizing the Marungko Approach and the reading performance of learners. The respondents were all 104 Grades 1–3 public elementary school teachers in a Schools Division in Negros Island Region who utilized the Marungko Approach during the School Year 2025–2026 and the learners whose reading performance served as a source of data. Since the population was manageable, all eligible teachers were included in the study; hence, no sample was drawn.

Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire composed of two main parts: Part I is the awareness of teachers in the utilization of the Marungko approach, with 15 items, and Part II is the competencies of teachers in the utilization of the Marungko approach, with 15 items, both measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The questionnaire underwent content validation by a panel of five educational experts, yielding a Content Validity Ratio (CVR) of 1.00 based on Lawshe's formula, indicating excellent validity. Reliability was established through a pilot test with 30 non-sample Grades 1–3 teachers, obtaining Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.976 for awareness and 0.978 for competencies, demonstrating high internal consistency.

For data collection, the researcher first obtained a letter of approval from the Superintendent to distribute the questionnaire to all teachers in one of the Schools Divisions in the Negros Island Region. With the support of the school administration, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires and collected them immediately after completion. To promote accurate and reflective responses, the purpose and significance of the study were clearly explained to all respondents. The study was conducted in a manner that did not interfere with or disrupt regular class sessions.

After collection, the completed questionnaires were securely stored by the researcher in a locked cabinet, while the electronic data were kept on a password-protected computer accessible only to the researcher. The data were used solely for the purposes of the study and were treated with strict confidentiality. Upon completion of the study, the research data were retained for the period required by institutional policy and were thereafter permanently discarded through the secure disposal of printed questionnaires and the permanent deletion of electronic files in accordance with ethical research standards.

The collected data were systematically organized, tabulated, and analyzed to answer the research questions of the study. Mean and standard deviation were utilized to determine the levels of teachers' awareness, competencies, and learners' reading performance. Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient was employed to determine the significant relationship between teachers' level of awareness and learners' reading performance, as well as between teachers' level of competencies and learners' reading performance. The findings served as the basis for evaluating instructional practices and supporting early grade reading initiatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Awareness of Teachers in the

Utilization of the Marungko Approach

Table 1. Level of Awareness of Teachers in the Utilization of the Marungko Approach.

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1. I am familiar with the basic principles of the Marungko Approach in teaching beginning reading.	4.92	0.27	Very High
2. I understand that the Marungko Approach focuses on teaching letter sounds before letter names.	4.92	0.27	Very High
3. I am aware that the Marungko Approach follows a specific sequence in introducing letter sounds.	4.89	0.31	Very High
4. I know that this approach emphasizes phonemic awareness as a foundation for reading.	4.90	0.30	Very High
5. I am aware that the Marungko Approach helps learners develop decoding skills.	4.95	0.21	Very High
6. I understand the importance of using repetitive practice when applying the Marungko Approach.	4.95	0.21	Very High
7. I am aware that the Marungko Approach supports the development of reading fluency among learners.	4.96	0.19	Very High
Table 1 continuation...			
8. I know that the Marungko Approach is commonly used in teaching early grade learners.	4.95	0.21	Very High
9. I am aware that this approach can help struggling readers improve their reading skills.	4.97	0.17	Very High
10. I understand that the Marungko Approach encourages the use of simple and meaningful words.	4.96	0.19	Very High
11. I am aware that proper pronunciation of letter sounds is essential in this approach.	4.97	0.17	Very High
12. I know that the Marungko Approach can be integrated into daily reading instruction.	4.97	0.17	Very High
13. I am aware that this approach promotes gradual progression from sounds to words and sentences.	4.96	0.19	Very High
14. I understand the role of the teacher in guiding learners using the Marungko Approach.	4.97	0.17	Very High
15. I am aware of the benefits of using the Marungko Approach in improving learners' reading ability.	4.97	0.17	Very High
Overall Mean_Awareness in Utilization of Marungko Approach	4.95	0.18	Very High
Legend: (4.21-5.00)-Very High; (3.41-4.20)-High; (2.61-3.40)-Moderate; (1.81-2.60)-Low; (1.00-1.80)-Very Low			

Table 1 presents the highest-rated items include awareness that the approach can help struggling readers improve their reading skills ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.17$), proper pronunciation of letter sounds is essential ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.17$), integration into daily reading instruction ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.17$), understanding the teacher's guiding role

($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.17$), and awareness of its benefits in improving reading ability ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.17$). The consistently low standard deviations indicate a strong consensus among teachers, suggesting that awareness is not only high but also stable and uniform across respondents.

Meanwhile, slightly lower but still very high means were observed in familiarity with the basic principles ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 0.27$), understanding that letter sounds are taught before letter names ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 0.27$), and awareness of the sequential nature of sound introduction ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 0.31$). The slightly higher standard deviations in these items suggest minor differences in depth of understanding, which may be influenced by variations in training exposure, teaching experience, or frequency of application in actual classroom practice. Despite these variations, the results clearly indicate that teachers possess a strong and well-developed awareness of the Marungko Approach.

Overall, the level of awareness of teachers in the utilization of the Marungko Approach in beginning reading instruction. The overall ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 0.18$), interpreted as very high, indicates that teachers demonstrate an extensive and highly consistent level of awareness regarding the principles, processes, and instructional value of the Marungko Approach. The very small standard deviation further suggests that responses are closely clustered, reflecting a shared understanding among teachers with minimal variation in their perceptions. This implies that the Marungko Approach is widely recognized and clearly understood as an effective phonics-based strategy for early reading development.

These findings are consistent with recent literature emphasizing that teacher mastery of structured phonics instruction is essential in developing early literacy skills. Systematic and explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and letter-sound relationships has been shown to significantly improve learners' decoding and reading fluency skills (Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2023). Likewise, UNESCO (2022) emphasizes that foundational reading success is strongly dependent on teachers' knowledge of structured literacy approaches, particularly in early grade instruction.

Level of Competencies of Teachers in the

Utilization of the Marungko Approach

Table 2. Level of Competencies of Teachers in the Utilization of the Marungko Approach.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I can confidently teach letter sounds using the Marungko Approach.	4.89	0.31	Very High
2. I am able to follow the correct sequence in introducing letter sounds.	4.92	0.27	Very High
3. I can effectively demonstrate proper pronunciation of letter sounds to my learners.	4.94	0.23	Very High
4. I am capable of guiding learners in blending sounds to form words.	4.95	0.21	Very High
5. I can use appropriate instructional materials when applying the Marungko Approach.	4.92	0.27	Very High
6. I am able to design activities that support learners' phonemic awareness.	4.87	0.39	Very High
7. I can adjust my teaching strategies to meet the needs of different learners.	4.94	0.31	Very High
8. I am able to monitor learners' progress in reading using this approach.	4.89	0.37	Very High
9. I can provide clear instructions when teaching reading using the Marungko Approach.	4.93	0.25	Very High
10. I am capable of helping struggling readers improve using this approach.	4.90	0.36	Very High

11. I can create a supportive learning environment for teaching beginning reading.	4.90	0.36	Very High
12. I am able to use different techniques to make Marungko lessons engaging.	4.88	0.38	Very High
13. I can assess learners' reading skills effectively when using the Marungko Approach.	4.90	0.36	Very High
14. I am confident in integrating the Marungko Approach into my daily reading instruction.	4.90	0.36	Very High
15. I am capable of applying the Marungko Approach consistently in my teaching practice.	4.90	0.36	Very High
Overall Mean Competencies in Utilization of Marungko Approach	4.91	0.29	Very High
Legend: (4.21-5.00)-Very High; (3.41-4.20)-High; (2.61-3.40)-Moderate; (1.81-2.60)-Low; (1.00-1.80)-Very Low			

The Table 2 presents the highest-rated competencies was the ability to guide learners in blending sounds to form words ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 0.21$), followed by effective demonstration of proper pronunciation of letter sounds ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 0.23$) and adjustment of teaching strategies to meet learner needs ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 0.31$). These results suggest that teachers are highly competent in core instructional practices essential to phonics-based reading instruction, particularly in sound blending and oral language modeling.

Meanwhile, slightly lower but still very high ratings were observed in designing phonemic awareness activities ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 0.39$), confidently teaching letter sounds ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 0.31$), and monitoring learners' reading progress ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 0.37$). The relatively higher standard deviations in these areas indicate some variability in classroom practice, suggesting that while teachers are competent overall, differences exist in the consistency of activity design, monitoring strategies, and instructional creativity. This may reflect variations in training exposure, teaching experience, or availability of instructional resources.

Overall, the level of competencies of teachers in the utilization of the Marungko Approach in teaching begin reading. The overall ($M=4.91$, $SD = 0.29$), interpreted as very high, indicates that teachers demonstrate a strong and well-developed level of competencies in applying the Marungko Approach in actual classroom instruction. The relatively small standard deviation suggests a generally consistent level of competencies among respondents, although the slightly wider variation compared to awareness implies minor differences in the extent of application and classroom execution of specific skills.

These findings align with research emphasizing that teacher competencies in structured literacy instruction plays a critical role in improving learners' reading outcomes. Effective phonics instruction, including blending, decoding, and explicit modeling, has been shown to significantly enhance early reading development (Ehri, 2020). Likewise, OECD (2023) highlights that teacher effectiveness in delivering structured reading programs is strongly associated with improved literacy performance, particularly when teachers can adapt instruction and provide continuous learner support.

Level of Reading Performance of Learners

Table 3. Level of Reading Performance of Learners.

Level of Academic Performance	f	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Grade Ready	104	28.13	0.56	Grade Ready
Light Refresher	0			
Moderate Refresher	0			
Full Refresher	0			
Total	104			

Legend: (27-30)-Grade Ready; (17-26)-Light Refresher; (11-16)-Moderate Refresher; (0-10)-Full Refresher

Table 3 presents the level of reading performance of learners. The results reveal that all 104 learners were classified under the Grade Ready level, with a ($M = 28.13$, $SD = 0.56$), interpreted as Grade Ready. This indicates that the learners generally achieved the expected reading competencies appropriate for their grade level. The absence of learners under the Light Refresher, Moderate Refresher, and Full Refresher categories further suggests that the respondents possess satisfactory reading skills and demonstrate readiness to engage in grade-level learning tasks. The relatively small standard deviation indicates that the learners' reading performance scores were closely grouped around the mean, reflecting consistency in reading achievement among the respondents. This suggests that most learners performed at a similar level, with only minimal variation in their reading abilities. Such findings imply that the learners have developed adequate foundational reading skills, including word recognition, pronunciation, comprehension, and fluency, which are essential for effective classroom learning and academic participation.

These findings may also reflect the effectiveness of reading interventions and instructional approaches used by teachers, particularly the utilization of structured literacy strategies such as the Marungko Approach. Research has shown that systematic phonics instruction and explicit teaching of letter–sound relationships significantly contribute to improved reading readiness and literacy development among beginning readers (Ehri, 2020). Similarly, UNESCO (2022) emphasized that strong foundational literacy instruction enhances learners' academic preparedness and supports long-term educational success.

Level Relationship between the Level of Awareness

in the Utilization of Marungko Approach and the

Level of Reading Performance of Learners

Table 4. Relationship between the Level of Awareness in Utilization of Marungko Approach and the Level of Reading Performance of Learners.

Variable	Test Statistics (r_s)	p-value	Decision for H_0	Interpretation
Awareness in Utilization of the Marungko Approach vs.	0.598	0.043	Reject H_0	Significant
Reading Performance				

Table 4 presents the relationship between the level of awareness in the utilization of the Marungko Approach and the reading performance of learners. The relationship was examined using Spearman's rho correlation, which yielded a correlation coefficient of ($r_s = 0.598$) and a corresponding p-value of 0.043. Since the p-value was lower than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates a statistically significant positive relationship between teachers' level of awareness in utilizing the Marungko Approach and learners' reading performance.

The findings suggest that teachers with higher levels of awareness of the Marungko Approach tend to have learners with better reading performance. However, although the relationship was statistically significant, awareness alone does not fully explain learners' reading outcomes. Reading performance is influenced by multiple factors, including teachers' instructional competence, learner readiness, parental support, availability of instructional materials, school learning environment, and opportunities for reading practice. Thus, increasing teachers' awareness of the Marungko Approach should be complemented by continuous professional development, adequate instructional resources, and collaborative literacy interventions to achieve greater improvements in learners' reading performance.

These findings are supported by recent studies emphasizing the importance of teacher knowledge and literacy instruction in improving reading achievement. According to Ehri (2020), teachers who possess strong knowledge of phonics-based instruction are more effective in helping learners develop decoding and word recognition skills necessary for reading success. Similarly, Castles et al. (2023) emphasized that systematic and explicit phonics instruction contributes significantly to learners' reading fluency and comprehension, particularly in early-grade

education. Furthermore, UNESCO (2022) stressed that teacher preparedness and understanding of structured literacy approaches are essential in strengthening foundational literacy outcomes among young learners.

Level Relationship between the Level of Competencies

in the Utilization of Marungko Approach and the

Level of Reading Performance of Learners

Table 5. Relationship between the Level of Competencies in Utilization of Marungko Approach and the Level of Reading Performance of Learners.

Variable	Test Statistics (r_s)	p-value	Decision for H_0	Interpretation
Competencies in Utilization of the Marungko Approach vs. Reading Performance	0.168	0.037	Reject H_0	Significant

Table 5 presents the relationship between the level of competencies in the utilization of the Marungko Approach and the reading performance of learners. Using Spearman's rho correlation, the results revealed a correlation coefficient of ($r_s = 0.168$) with a corresponding p-value of 0.037. Since the p-value was lower than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates a statistically significant but weak positive relationship between teachers' competencies in utilizing the Marungko Approach and learners' reading performance.

The findings suggest that while teachers' competencies in implementing the Marungko Approach is associated with better reading performance, its practical influence is relatively small. This implies that competencies alone is not sufficient to produce substantial improvements in learners' reading outcomes. Reading performance is a multifaceted construct influenced by various learner-, teacher-, home-, and school-related factors, such as learner motivation, parental involvement, instructional resources, class size, and opportunities for reading practice. Nevertheless, the significant relationship indicates that strengthening teachers' competencies remains an important component of literacy improvement efforts. Continuous professional development, coaching, and classroom support can enhance teachers' instructional practices and, when combined with other literacy interventions, may contribute to better reading achievement among learners.

These findings are consistent with studies emphasizing the role of teacher competencies in literacy instruction. According to Ehri (2020), teachers who effectively apply systematic phonics instruction contribute significantly to the development of learners' foundational reading skills. Similarly, Castles et al. (2023) noted that teacher competencies in explicit and structured reading instruction positively affects learners' reading achievement, particularly in early-grade education. Furthermore, OECD (2023) highlighted that teacher quality and instructional effectiveness are among the strongest school-related factors influencing student academic performance and literacy development.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were formulated:

Teachers have a strong and consistent understanding of its principles and its role in beginning reading instruction.

Teachers are particularly strong in guiding learners in blending sounds, demonstrating correct pronunciation, and adjusting instruction based on learners' needs.

The learners have achieved the expected reading competencies for their grade level.

Teachers' awareness in utilizing the Marungko Approach was linked to better reading performance among learners.

Teachers' competencies in utilizing the Marungko Approach contributed to learners' reading outcomes.

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