Utilization of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) of Teachers and Academic Performance of Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the utilization of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) and its relationship to the academic performance among Grade 6 public elementary school teachers in a school division in the Negros Island Region during the school year 2025–2026. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. A total enumeration of Grade 6 teachers served as respondents, while the academic performance of their pupils was utilized as the basis for determining the relationship between MELCs utilization and learner achievement. Data were gathered using a standardized questionnaire adopted from Zalun (2023). Findings revealed that MELCs were utilized to a very high level across all dimensions, particularly in terms of learning resources content validity, appropriateness of learners' activities, lesson plan congruency, assessment alignment, and budget of time. Furthermore, students demonstrated an outstanding level of academic performance. A statistically significant positive relationship was established between the level of MELCs utilization and students' academic performance.

Keywords: Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), MELCs Utilization, Academic Performance, Grade 6 Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The educational landscape has undergone significant changes in recent years, particularly following the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As schools around the world adapted to new learning conditions, many education systems shifted toward curriculum prioritization to ensure that learners continued to acquire the most essential knowledge and skills despite limited instructional time. International organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the OECD recognized competency-based learning and curriculum streamlining as practical approaches to maintaining learning continuity and educational quality during periods of disruption (OECD et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2022). These global reforms highlighted the importance of focusing instruction on competencies that are fundamental to students' academic growth and lifelong learning.

In response to these international developments, the Philippine Department of Education introduced the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) to simplify the basic education curriculum and prioritize the learning outcomes considered most important for students. Crucially, the MELCs framework was designed to be flexibly utilized during emergencies and unexpected school suspensions through various Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs)—such as modular, online, and television or radio-based instruction—ensuring that teaching and learning continue seamlessly even when physical classrooms are inaccessible (DepEd, 2020). The implementation of MELCs enabled teachers to reorganize lesson planning, classroom instruction, and assessment around clearly defined competencies, making it easier to maximize available instructional time. Research has shown that the framework has contributed to more focused teaching and has supported learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development, although challenges such as teacher workload, limited learning resources, and varying levels of parental support continue to influence its implementation (Montebon, 2024; Zalun, 2023). These findings suggest that while MELCs provide a practical foundation for curriculum delivery, their effectiveness also depends on how they are applied in actual classroom settings.

Although several studies have examined teachers' experiences, instructional strategies, and the development of MELC-based learning materials, limited research has directly investigated the relationship between the utilization of MELCs and students' academic performance. Most existing studies have focused on curriculum implementation rather than measuring its impact on learners' achievement across different subjects and grade levels (Angay, 2023; Montebon, 2024; Zalun, 2023). This gap underscores the need for further investigation, particularly in public schools where instructional time and educational resources are often limited. By examining how teachers utilize MELCs in planning, instruction, and assessment and how these practices relate to students' academic outcomes, this study seeks to provide evidence that can guide curriculum implementation, strengthen instructional practices, and ultimately improve learners' academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive–correlational research design to determine the level of utilization of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) among Grade 6 public elementary school teachers and examine its relationship with the academic performance of their pupils. The respondents were the 120 Grade 6 public elementary school teachers in one of the Schools Divisions in the Negros Island Region who implemented the MELCs during School Year 2025–2026. The academic performance of the 120 Grade 6 pupils taught by the teacher respondents was utilized as the basis for determining the relationship between MELCs utilization and learner achievement. Since the population of Grade 6 teachers was manageable, total enumeration was employed, and all 120 eligible teachers were included as respondents; hence, no sample was drawn.

Data were gathered using a standardized questionnaire adopted from Zalun (2023), entitled The Teachers' Utilization of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCS) and its Relation to the Learning Development of Grade Six Pupils in a Public School in the Philippines: Basis for a Proposed Program. The instrument consisted of 50 items divided into five dimensions: learning resources content validity, appropriateness of learners' activities, congruency of the lesson plan, alignment of assessment, and budget of time. The items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with responses categorized as 5 – Highly Utilized, 4 – More Utilized, 3 – Utilized, 2 – Fairly Less Utilized, and 1 – Not Utilized. Since the instrument was adopted from an existing study with established validity and reliability, no further validation or reliability testing was conducted for the present study.

For data collection, the researcher first obtained a letter of approval from the Schools Division Superintendent to administer the questionnaire to the Grade 6 teachers utilizing the MELCs in one of the Schools Divisions in the Negros Island Region. With the assistance of the school administration, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the teacher respondents and collected them after completion. Before the administration of the instrument, the purpose and significance of the study were clearly explained to the respondents to encourage accurate and thoughtful responses. The data gathered were treated with confidentiality and used solely for the purposes of the study. After collection, the completed questionnaires were systematically organized, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical tools in accordance with the research questions. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, number of years in service, and teaching position. Mean and standard deviation were employed to determine the overall level of MELCs utilization and its dimensions in terms of learning resources content validity, appropriateness of learners' activities, congruency of the lesson plan, alignment of assessment, and budget of time. Mean and standard deviation were likewise used to determine the level of pupils' academic performance, which was interpreted based on the grading guidelines of the Department of Education under DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015. Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient was employed to determine whether a significant relationship existed between the level of MELCs utilization and pupils' academic performance. Frequency and percentage were also used to describe how teachers integrated the MELCs into their lesson plans and daily classroom activities and to determine the ways in which the use of MELCs influenced pupils' understanding, engagement, and overall academic performance across various subjects. The results served as the basis for understanding the role of MELCs utilization in supporting effective curriculum implementation and learner achievement among Grade 6 pupils.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Frequency and Percent Distribution of the Demographic Profile of Teachers

Table 1. Frequency and Percent Distribution of the Demographic Profile of Teachers.

Profile	Category	f	%
Age			
	21-30 years old	15	12.50
	31-40 years old	60	50.00
	41-50 years old	18	15.00
	51-60 years old	24	20.00
	61 years old and above	3	2.50
	Total	120	100.00
Sex			
	Male	27	22.50
	Female	93	77.50
	Total	120	100.00
Highest Educational Attainment			
	Bachelor's degree	21	17.50
	Bachelor's degree with MA/MS Units	69	57.50
	MA/MS Degree	27	22.50
	MA/MS Degree with PhD/EdD Units	0	0.00
	PhD/EdD Degree	3	2.50
	Total	120	100.00
Number of Years in Service			
	5 years and below	36	30.00
	5-10 years	27	22.50
	11-15 years	21	17.50
	16-20 years	15	12.50
	21 years and above	21	17.50

	Total	120	100.00
Teaching Position			
	Teacher I	51	42.50
	Teacher II	21	17.50
	Teacher III	45	37.50
	Master Teacher I	3	2.50
	Master Teacher II	0	0.00
	Master Teacher III	0	0.00
	Total	120	100.00

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 120 teacher-respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, number of years in service, and teaching position.

In terms of age, the largest group of respondents belongs to the 31–40 years old category, with 60 respondents (f = 60, 50.00%). This is followed by teachers aged 51–60 years old with 24 respondents (f = 24, 20.00%), 41–50 years old with 18 respondents (f = 18, 15.00%), and 21–30 years old with 15 respondents (f = 15, 12.50%). Only 3 respondents (f = 3, 2.50%) are 61 years old and above. The findings indicate that the teaching workforce is largely composed of teachers in their early and middle stages of their careers. This age group is generally characterized by a balance of teaching experience, professional maturity, and adaptability to curriculum reforms and instructional innovations. As such, they are likely to contribute positively to the implementation of educational programs while continuously enhancing their instructional practices.

Recent studies indicate that teachers in their early and middle adulthood often demonstrate greater professional engagement and adaptability in responding to changing instructional demands because they have already developed substantial classroom experience while remaining open to innovation (Topchyan & Woehler, 2021).

In terms of sex, the majority of the respondents are female, accounting for 93 respondents (f = 93, 77.50%), while 27 respondents (f = 27, 22.50%) are male. This indicates that female teachers continue to dominate the teaching profession in elementary schools. The result reflects the long-standing trend of greater female participation in the education sector, particularly in basic education, where women comprise a significant portion of the teaching workforce. This demographic characteristic may also influence collaborative practices, instructional approaches, and learner support within schools.

The predominance of female teachers is consistent with recent educational research, which found that women continue to comprise the majority of the teaching workforce and generally report higher levels of engagement with students than their male counterparts (Topchyan & Woehler, 2021).

Regarding highest educational attainment, the majority of respondents have a Bachelor's degree with MA/MS units, comprising 69 respondents (f = 69, 57.50%). This is followed by 27 respondents (f = 27, 22.50%) who have completed an MA/MS degree, while 21 respondents (f = 21, 17.50%) hold only a Bachelor's degree. Only 3 respondents (f = 3, 2.50%) have earned a PhD/EdD degree, and none reported having an MA/MS degree with PhD/EdD units. The findings suggest that most teachers are actively pursuing graduate studies to enhance their professional qualifications and meet promotion requirements. This reflects their commitment to continuous professional development and lifelong learning, which may contribute to improved instructional competence and classroom effectiveness.

The finding that most teachers are pursuing graduate studies reflects their commitment to professional growth. This supports the study of Salubayba (2022), which found that teachers pursue graduate education to strengthen their professional competence, improve instructional practices, and advance their careers despite the challenges of balancing work and study.

With respect to the number of years in service, the highest proportion of respondents have 5 years and below of teaching experience, representing 36 respondents (f = 36, 30.00%). This is followed by those with 5–10 years of service (27 respondents, f = 27, 22.50%). Teachers with 11–15 years and 21 years and above each account for 21 respondents (f = 21, 17.50%), while 15 respondents (f = 15, 12.50%) have 16–20 years of teaching experience. The distribution indicates a relatively young teaching workforce with a considerable number of early-career educators. This may suggest the need for continuous mentoring, professional development, and instructional support to further strengthen their teaching competencies while benefiting from the guidance of more experienced colleagues.

The large proportion of teachers with relatively few years of service suggests the importance of providing continuous professional development and mentoring opportunities. This is supported by Quilapio and Callo (2022), who reported that participation in professional development activities significantly improves teachers' pedagogical competencies and professional growth regardless of teaching experience.

In terms of teaching position, the largest group of respondents consists of Teacher I, with 51 respondents (f = 51, 42.50%), followed closely by Teacher III with 45 respondents (f = 45, 37.50%). Teacher II accounts for 21 respondents (f = 21, 17.50%), while only 3 respondents (f = 3, 2.50%) hold the position of Master Teacher I. No respondents occupy the positions of Master Teacher II or Master Teacher III. These findings indicate that most respondents are classroom teachers who are still progressing through the teaching career ladder. The limited number of master teachers suggests opportunities for further professional advancement through graduate education, leadership development, and consistent demonstration of instructional excellence.

The finding that most respondents occupy Teacher I and Teacher III positions indicates that many are still progressing in their teaching careers. Recent research likewise found that most public elementary teachers are in Teacher I–III positions and actively pursue graduate education and professional engagement to support career advancement and improve work performance (Banaag et al., 2025).

Level of Utilization of Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCS)

Table 2. Level of Utilization of Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCS) when taken As a Whole and in terms of Learning Resources Content Validity, Appropriateness of Learners' Activities, Congruency of the Lesson Plan, Alignment of Assessment, and Budget of Time.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Learning Resources Content Validity	**4.71**	**0.46**	**Very High**
1. Aligns lesson to content-area standards stated in MELC	4.65	0.62	Very High
2. Helps increase the learning engagement and motivation of pupils	4.75	0.54	Very High
3. Assists pupils in the differentiation of instructions prescribed in MELCs, such as giving specified guidelines that respond to individual pupils' needs	4.70	0.51	Very High
4. Provides knowledge to practice a new skill gained in class through the MELC	4.65	0.57	Very High
5. Allows learners to further improve the level of their performance independently	4.65	0.57	Very High
6. Acts as a guide for both the teacher and the learner	4.65	0.53	Very High

7. Provides quality teaching and learning.	4.80	0.46	Very High
8. Aids in the learning process by allowing the pupils to explore the knowledge independently	4.67	0.52	Very High
9. Provides learning skills to teach and learn by learners.	4.73	0.50	Very High
10. Adds additional learning in line with MELCs' competencies and skills	4.80	0.51	Very High
Appropriateness of Learners Activities	**4.64**	**0.47**	**Very High**
1. Provides flexible activities for all learning areas as to its MELC.	4.68	0.52	Very High
2. Produces access to an array of quality learning activities.	4.65	0.53	Very High
3. Examines pupils' limitations in learning	4.58	0.59	Very High
4. Considers the strengths and weaknesses of the learners in answering learning activities.	4.60	0.54	Very High
Table 2 continuation…			
5. Plans for proper construction of the learning materials.	4.60	0.54	Very High
6. Applies evaluation and reflection on the results of the assessment of the answered activities.	4.70	0.51	Very High
7. Issues follow-up learning activities based on the least mastered skills of the learners.	4.73	0.50	Very High
8. Endorses educational pursuits to be in line with the MELC	4.73	0.50	Very High
9. Organizes tasks based on the subject matter or content and activities	4.60	0.54	Very High
10. Caters to a suitable project for proper learning.	4.58	0.63	Very High
Congruency of the Lesson Plan	**4.64**	**0.49**	**Very High**
1. Teaches in connection to realistic situations related to the lessons prescribed in MELC	4.73	0.55	Very High
2. Keeps the learners motivated and engaged inside the classroom through the lessons focusing on MELC	4.63	0.54	Very High
3. Helps the students to remember the content of the lesson	4.65	0.57	Very High
4. Makes learning relevant to the needed skills by the learners.	4.65	0.53	Very High
5. Engages and motivates learners with learning difficulties	4.63	0.58	Very High
6. Increases learner enthusiasm in learning through the lessons enhancing the MELC of pupils.	4.68	0.52	Very High
7. Enhances the lesson through its alignment with the needed skills of the learners.	4.67	0.52	Very High
8. Uses strategies in delivering the lesson to the pupils that will develop their skills.	4.60	0.54	Very High
9. Links the learning skills to the academic content of the lesson.	4.58	0.59	Very High
10. Focuses on the applications of the specific context that is to develop the skills of the learners.	4.63	0.58	Very High

Alignment of Assessment	**4.57**	**0.55**	**Very High**
Table 2 continuation…			
1. Manipulates activities for the pupils that are attainable to help in giving assessment	4.68	0.52	Very High
2. Uses a favorable evaluation tools	4.63	0.54	Very High
3. Delivers test questions with a table of specifications based on MELCs	4.55	0.59	Very High
4. Makes use of examinations that provide real-time feedback and analysis	4.55	0.55	Very High
5. Provides timely response to learners, so they can find the answers and acquire a sense of achievement in the lessons	4.65	0.57	Very High
6. Supplies various mechanisms in retrieval and checking of the answered materials	4.55	0.59	Very High
7. Reviews pupils' progress in each subject and draft individual comments for report cards	4.60	0.59	Very High
8. Implements internal consultation and meaning construction by reflection on the learning results and learning process.	4.50	0.81	Very High
9. Utilizes learning assessment in creating necessary interventions for pupils.	4.50	0.81	Very High
10. Conducts remedial to develop skills based on the results of the assessment	4.53	0.81	Very High
Budget of Time	**4.43**	**0.76**	**Very High**
1. Follows the time allotted for each lesson specified in MELC.	4.48	0.84	Very High
2. Spends more time in preparing instructional materials.	4.48	0.84	Very High
3. Helps pupils to review corrected learning materials for mastery or improvement.	4.55	0.74	Very High
4. Increases planning time for additional significant learning activities for students.	4.48	0.84	Very High
5. Makes a schedule to help students reach their potential.	4.53	0.78	Very High
6. Organizes timetable for review of lessons	4.35	0.86	Very High
Table 2 continuation…			
7. Plans a learning process that focuses on student learning	4.32	0.88	Very High
8. Pays more attention to supporting the daily lesson and outcome	4.45	0.78	Very High
9. Provides hour to identify problems in class discussions	4.35	0.83	Very High
10. Allows planning ahead based on the outcome of the lesson.	4.35	0.83	Very High
Overall Mean	**4.60**	**0.51**	**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 2 presents the level of utilization of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) as a whole and in terms of learning resources content validity, appropriateness of learners' activities, congruency of the lesson plan, alignment of assessment, and budget of time.

In terms of learning resources content validity, the overall mean of 4.71 (SD = 0.46) indicates a very high level of MELCs utilization. Among the indicators, providing quality teaching and learning (M = 4.80, SD = 0.46) and adding additional learning in line with MELCs' competencies and skills (M = 4.80, SD = 0.51) obtained the highest ratings. These were followed by helping increase learners' engagement and motivation (M = 4.75, SD = 0.54) and providing learning skills for learners (M = 4.73, SD = 0.50). The findings suggest that teachers effectively use learning resources that are aligned with the MELCs and support meaningful learning experiences. The results imply that using valid and competency-based learning materials strengthens lesson delivery, enhances learner engagement, and promotes the development of essential skills.

This finding is consistent with the study of Trinidad (2020), which emphasized that learning resources aligned with curriculum competencies improve instructional effectiveness and learners' academic engagement.

With regard to the appropriateness of learners' activities, the overall mean of 4.64 (SD = 0.47) was interpreted as very high. The highest-rated indicators were issuing follow-up learning activities based on learners' least mastered skills (M = 4.73, SD = 0.50) and endorsing educational pursuits aligned with the MELCs (M = 4.73, SD = 0.50). Likewise, applying evaluation and reflection based on assessment results (M = 4.70, SD = 0.51) and providing flexible learning activities (M = 4.68, SD = 0.52) also received very high ratings. These findings indicate that teachers carefully design learning activities that address learners' needs and competencies while ensuring alignment with the MELCs. The results further imply that appropriate learning activities encourage learner participation, address learning gaps, and provide opportunities for continuous improvement.

This supports the findings of Toquero (2021), who reported that well-designed and learner-centered activities contribute significantly to meaningful learning and competency development.

In terms of congruency of the lesson plan, the overall mean of 4.64 (SD = 0.49) indicates a very high level of MELCs utilization. The highest-rated indicator was teaching lessons connected to realistic situations related to the MELCs (M = 4.73, SD = 0.55), followed by increasing learner enthusiasm through MELC-based lessons (M = 4.68, SD = 0.52) and enhancing lessons through alignment with learners' needed skills (M = 4.67, SD = 0.52). The findings suggest that teachers consistently prepare lesson plans that are aligned with the prescribed competencies and contextualized to learners' real-life experiences. This implies that well-aligned lesson plans make instruction more meaningful, relevant, and responsive to learners' needs while ensuring that the intended learning competencies are achieved. This finding agrees with the study of Ancho and Arrieta (2021), which found that curriculum alignment and contextualized lesson planning enhance teaching effectiveness and learner achievement.

Regarding the alignment of assessment, the overall mean of 4.57 (SD = 0.55) was interpreted as very high. The highest-rated indicator was manipulating attainable activities to support assessment (M = 4.68, SD = 0.52), followed by providing timely responses to learners (M = 4.65, SD = 0.57) and using appropriate evaluation tools (M = 4.63, SD = 0.54). Although the indicators on reflection based on learning results (M = 4.50, SD = 0.81) and utilizing assessment to create interventions (M = 4.50, SD = 0.81) received comparatively lower means, they were still interpreted as very high. These findings indicate that teachers ensure that assessment practices remain aligned with the competencies prescribed in the MELCs and use assessment results to monitor learners' progress. The results imply that competency-based assessment allows teachers to identify learners' strengths and areas needing improvement, making instruction and interventions more responsive to learners' needs.

This finding is supported by the study of Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021), which emphasized that assessment aligned with learning competencies improves instructional decision-making and enhances student learning outcomes.

With respect to the budget of time, the overall mean of 4.43 (SD = 0.76) indicates a very high level of MELCs utilization. The highest-rated indicator was helping pupils review corrected learning materials for mastery or improvement (M = 4.55, SD = 0.74), followed by making schedules to help students reach their potential (M =

4.53, SD = 0.78). Meanwhile, organizing timetables for lesson reviews (M = 4.35, SD = 0.86), providing time to identify problems during class discussions (M = 4.35, SD = 0.83), and allowing planning ahead based on lesson outcomes (M = 4.35, SD = 0.83) obtained the lowest, yet still very high, ratings. These findings suggest that teachers effectively manage instructional time while ensuring that learners are provided with adequate opportunities to review lessons and improve mastery of competencies. The results imply that effective time management enables teachers to accomplish curriculum requirements while providing sufficient opportunities for reinforcement, remediation, and enrichment activities.

This finding supports the study of König et al. (2020), which highlighted that effective instructional planning and time management contribute significantly to quality teaching and improved learner performance.

Overall, the utilization of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) obtained a mean of 4.60 (SD = 0.51), interpreted as very high. This indicates that teachers consistently utilize the MELCs in planning instruction, preparing learning resources, designing learner activities, developing lesson plans, conducting assessments, and managing instructional time. The consistently high ratings across all dimensions suggest that teachers have successfully integrated the MELCs into their classroom practices to support competency-based teaching and learning. The findings imply that the effective utilization of the MELCs promotes curriculum alignment, enhances instructional quality, and supports learners in achieving the expected learning competencies.

This result is consistent with the study of Ancho and Arrieta (2021), which concluded that the implementation of the MELCs enabled teachers to focus instruction on essential competencies while improving the efficiency and effectiveness of classroom teaching.

Level of Academic Performance of Students

Table 3 below shows the level of academic performance of students.

Table 3. Level of Academic Performance of Students.

Level of Academic Performance	f	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Outstanding	76	90.13	3.22	Outstanding
Very Satisfactory	41			
Satisfactory	3			
Fairly Satisfactory	0			
Did Not Meet Expectations	0			
Total	120			

Legend: (90 – 100)-Outstanding; (85 – 89)-Very Satisfactory; (80 – 84)-Satisfactory; (75 – 79)-Fairly Satisfactory; (Below 75)-Did Not Meet Expectations

Table 3 presents the level of academic performance of the students. The findings reveal that the majority of the students achieved an Outstanding level of academic performance, with 76 students. This is followed by 41 students who attained a Very Satisfactory level, while only 3 students obtained a Satisfactory rating. None of the students were classified under the Fairly Satisfactory or Did Not Meet Expectations categories. Overall, the students obtained a mean academic performance of 90.13 (SD = 3.22), which is interpreted as Outstanding.

The findings indicate that the students generally performed exceptionally well in their academic requirements. The predominance of students in the Outstanding and Very Satisfactory categories suggests that they have

successfully attained the expected learning competencies and demonstrated a high level of mastery of the prescribed curriculum. This result may also reflect the effective implementation of classroom instruction, appropriate learning activities, and assessment practices that support learners' academic achievement. Furthermore, the absence of students in the lower performance categories implies that the instructional strategies employed by teachers, together with the utilization of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), have contributed positively to students' learning outcomes.

The findings further imply that sustaining quality instruction, competency-based learning, and continuous assessment can help maintain or even improve students' academic performance. Schools should continue strengthening instructional support, monitoring learner progress, and providing timely interventions to ensure that all students consistently achieve the desired learning competencies.

This finding is consistent with the study of Moralista and Oducado (2020), which reported that effective teaching strategies, learner engagement, and well-planned instructional practices significantly contribute to higher academic performance among students. Similarly, Toquero (2021) emphasized that despite changes in curriculum delivery, learners demonstrate better academic achievement when instruction, learning activities, and assessment are aligned with clearly defined learning competencies.

Relationship between the Level of Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCS) and the Level of Academic Performance

Table 4 on the next page shows the relationship between the level of Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCS) and the level of academic performance.

Table 4. Relationship between the Level of Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCS) and the Level of Academic Performance.

Variable	Test Statistics (r_s)	p-value	Decision for H_o	Interpretation
Most Essential Learning Competencies vs. Academic Performance	0.176*	0.046	Reject H_o	Significant

Table 4 presents the results of the Spearman rank-order correlation analysis examining the relationship between the level of utilization of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) and the academic performance of students. The analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of (r_s = 0.176) with a p-value of 0.046. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between the utilization of the MELCs and students' academic performance.

The result implies a positive but very low correlation between the two variables. This means that as the level of MELCs utilization increases, students' academic performance also tends to slightly improve. In practical terms, when teachers consistently apply the MELCs in lesson planning, learning resource development, instructional delivery, assessment, and time management, students are more likely to achieve better academic outcomes. However, the weak strength of the relationship suggests that the effect of MELCs utilization on academic performance is limited and may not be immediately strong or direct.

This finding also implies that while MELCs play an important role in guiding instruction, students' academic performance is still influenced by several other factors such as learners' study habits, home support, motivation, learning environment, and access to learning resources. Thus, MELCs utilization alone cannot fully account for variations in academic achievement, but it contributes as one of the supporting instructional factors that enhance learning outcomes.

This result is supported by the study of Trinidad (2020), which emphasized that curriculum alignment and instructional resources positively influence learner achievement, but their impact is often strengthened when combined with other contextual and learner-related factors. Similarly, König et al. (2020) found that instructional

quality and curriculum implementation contribute to student learning outcomes, although their effects may vary depending on learners' engagement and learning conditions.

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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