

# The Effect of Parent-Involved Reading Activities On Primary School Students' Reading Comprehension Skills, Reading Motivation, and Attitudes Towards Reading\*

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of parent-involved reading activities on elementary fourth graders' reading comprehension skills, reading motivation, and attitudes towards reading. Employing a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design with a paired control group, data were collected from a total of 100 fourth graders studying in two different primary schools. The findings showed that there were significant differences between the experimental group and the control group, meaning that the parent-involved reading activities developed by the researchers had a positive effect on the students' reading comprehension, reading motivation, and attitudes towards reading. This research contributed to previous body of research regarding the impact of family involvement on academic achievement and affective factors. Various suggestions were offered to policymakers, researchers and practitioners.

## Keywords:

Parental Involvement, Parent-Involved Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Motivation, Attitudes Towards Reading.

## Introduction

It is widely accepted that parents have a significant role in their children's education and influence their learning and development (Froiland and Davison 2014; Piquart, 2015). Many studies have shown that parent involvement is related to children's academic success (McNeal, 2015; Wang and Sheikh-Khalil 2014), their attitudes and motivation towards school or lessons (Frenzel et al. 2010; Lipnevich et al. 2016; Simpkins et al., 2015; Spera, 2006) and desire for education (Jung and Zhang 2016, Leung et al. 2010). Considering that reading comprehension skills acquired in primary school years affect all learning experiences of individuals throughout their lives (Bradley, 2016), it can be argued that family involvement play an important role in the development of primary school students' reading comprehension skills.



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The academic achievement of primary school students with improved reading skills is higher than those with poor skills (Epçağan, 2018). The results obtained from studies that make statistical comparisons about reading comprehension on an international scale, such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), in which Turkey also participate, show that, like many countries, Turkish students do not have reading and comprehension skills at a desired level (Aslanoğlu and Kutlu, 2007; Özmusul and Kaya, 2014). Therefore, there is a need for practices to improve reading and comprehension. Reading comprehension, which is the focus of this study and the main purpose of reading in general is closely related to the concepts of motivation, attitude and social environment since it is a mental, psychological and sociological activity (Snow, 2002). Reading is not only related to the individual, but also the environment and family because it combines both physical and mental factors (Ünal, 2006). The social environment, including family members in particular, is a considerably effective factor in the development of reading comprehension skills. Considering this effect, some researchers have drawn attention to the concept of home literacy (Burgess et al., 2002; Hiğde et al., 2020; Senechal and LeFevre, 2002). With home literacy, it is expected that children will grow up in an environment familiar with books, leading to a culture of reading in individuals (Hiğde et al., 2020).

In the literature, valuable results have been obtained in different studies on the effect of parental involvement on reading. For example, parents' listening to their children's reading, reading together, and supporting them have been found to provide significant gains in their literacy, positively affecting variables such as reading speed, accuracy and fluency, as well as contributing to independent reading (Hindin and Paratore, 2007; Neuman and Celano, 2012; Senechal and Young, 2008; Steiner, 2014; Steiner et al., 2022). However, research on the relationship between motivation and attitude, two factors that affect reading comprehension, and parental involvement are relatively limited (Klauda, 2009; Baker, 2003; Senechal and Young, 2008; Loera et al., 2011; Pavalache-Ilie and Tirdia, 2015; Villiger et al., 2012; Yeo et al., 2014). These studies focused on the impact of family culture, home literacy environment and parental encouragement on preschoolers and students with reading difficulties, and the effect of various reading activities on children's reading achievement, the influence of immigrant parents on children's reading involvement and intrinsic motivation. Villiger et al. (2012) investigated the effect of a home-based intervention program on fourth-grade primary school students' reading comprehension and motivation. Despite the fact that families have a significant capacity to boost reading motivation (McElvany and Artelt, 2009), intervention programs that integrate the family and school environment are rare

(Villiger et al., 2012), indicating a research gap in this area. Considering the effect of parental involvement on the development of reading skills, it is important for schools and educators to determine how they can help parents who have difficulties in supporting their children in this regard (Lee and Bowen, 2006).

Although there are findings that point to an increase in student achievement by strengthening the relationship between school and parents, limited attention is given to how this school-parent cooperation or parent participation should be provided and developed. The present study aims to examine the effect of parent involvement through parent-involved reading activities on children's reading comprehension, reading motivation and attitudes towards reading. The research questions that are posed in the study are as follows:

1. What are elementary fourth graders' levels of reading comprehension, reading motivation, and attitudes towards reading before the experimental process?
2. Is there a significant difference between the experimental group in which parent-involved reading activities are applied and the control group in terms of posttest scores in reading comprehension, reading motivation, and attitudes towards reading?

#### *Theoretical Foundations*

Although different concepts emerge in the definitions related to reading, the concept of "comprehension" is mentioned in almost all definitions. For reading to have a value and for the realization of high-level mental processes such as interpretation and meaning construction, the act of reading must first result in comprehension. The reading activity has a "comprehension" goal at its core. A reading activity that does not result in comprehension cannot be considered to have achieved its real purpose. Comprehension is possible when the individual comprehends the meaning represented by printed symbols (Luma, 2002). Reading without comprehension is not reading, but merely vocalization (Yılmaz and Köksal, 2008). Akyol (2006) defines reading comprehension as forming a new thought because it involves comparing and synthesizing readers' prior knowledge with what they have learned from texts. In the context of primary school children, it can be concluded that they must encounter rich stimuli to increase their prior knowledge. Children who grow up in such an environment will have more background knowledge and will be more successful in reading comprehension than their peers. Snow (2002) states that the reading comprehension process consists of three basic elements: reader, text and the reading activity. Readers make sense of the text in a complex process involving their cognitive abilities (i.e., attention, memory, analytical thinking, inference, visualization),

motivation (ii., reading motivation, interest in content, self-efficacy), knowledge (i.e., vocabulary, content, grammar and discourse, comprehension strategies) and experience. These characteristics vary considerably among readers and cause differences in reading comprehension levels among individuals (Snow, 2002).

Motivation, the second key concept in the present study, is the force that pushes a person to be involved in any activity (Kreitner, 1995). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) define reading motivation as individuals' goals, values, and beliefs about the subject, process and reading outcomes. Reading motivation can be quite effective in directing individuals to read and help them comprehend what they read, and therefore more emphasis should be placed on this concept. Motivated readers spend more energy and time in reading than in other activities (Wigfield and Tonks, 2004). This power can be internal (eg interest and curiosity) or external (eg reward, family, friends, school, etc.). (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). Students who are intrinsically motivated are more inclined to explore the world of reading, find various topics that interest them, enjoy reading, have difficulty coping with the difficulties they encounter, and improve their reading skills (Hidi, 2000).

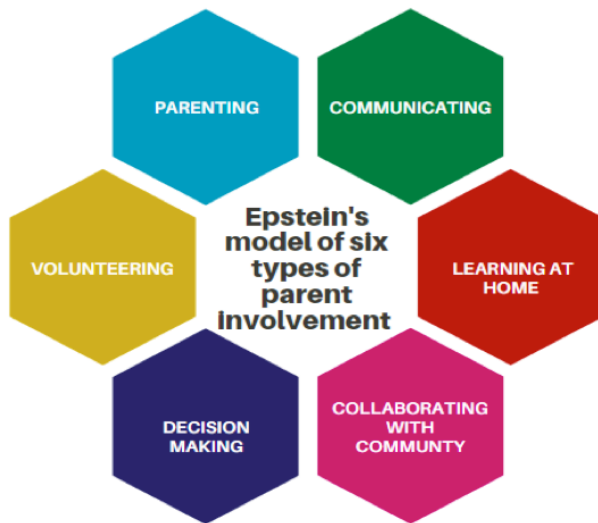
Attitudes towards reading, the third key concept of this paper, are individuals' feelings towards reading and determine how often children read (Partin and Hendricks, 2002). To provide the expected personal and social benefits in reading, individuals should love reading and should not avoid it (Akkaya and Özdemir, 2013). Students' attitudes towards reading affect their motivation to reading (McGeown et al., 2015). In this regard, positive attitudes towards reading can also play an important role in time that individuals spend for reading and the strategy they use to comprehend what is read. Accordingly, many studies have shown that positive attitudes towards reading have an impact on reading instruction (Gibbons 2003; Forman et al., 1998; Marshal, 1992; McKenna et al., 1995; McKenna and Kear 1990; Smith, 1992). Consequently, students with positive attitudes tend to be successful readers.

When empirical studies on family involvement are examined, it has been observed that researchers tend to use some theories and models to explain the family-school partnership and frame their studies (Yamauchi et al., 2017). Social Learning Theory, Sociocultural Learning Theory, Social Capital Theory, Ecological Systems Theory, and Epstein's Parental Involvement Model can be given as examples. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behavior. The theory focuses on the significance of observing, modeling,

and imitating the behaviors of other individuals (Bandura, 1977). In this vein, individuals, especially children, observe many people such as their parents, elder siblings, friends, and teachers around them and might see them as role models. Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizes the role that social interaction plays in psychological development. He proposes that learning is largely a social process and that our cognitive functions are based on our interactions with the "more gifted" people around us. With the concept of the Zone of Proximal Developmental (ZPD), Vygotsky states that children can generally expand their developmental areas by observing more developed individuals (Vygotsky, 1978). The environment in the family is considered the first and most influential factor for children. This is because parents can monitor their children's potential more closely. Parents also provide valuable assistance to educators on how to develop this potential. Parents form the closest social environment where schools communicate with students and are primarily responsible for their activities outside of school. Therefore, it would be a big mistake for parents not to be involved in the learning process as they are their children's first teachers. Social Capital Theory claims that social relationships are resources that can lead to the development and accumulation of human capital (Bourdieu, 1986). For example, a stable family environment can support educational success. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Systems Theory views child development as a complex system of relationships influenced by various levels of the surrounding environment, from family and school settings to broad cultural values, laws, and customs. Thus, to examine a child's development, one must look not only at the child and his immediate environment, but also at the interaction of the wider environment. Bronfenbrenner divided the person's environment into five different systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The microsystem is the most influential level of the theory. This system includes closest environments such as school and family in which children are involved.

Epstein (1995) developed a framework that describes six different types of parent involvement (See. Figure 1.). The types of family involvement included in his model constitute the most popular framework researchers use to conceptualize the family-school partnership. Epstein argues that schools often have better outcomes when parents are involved because students are influenced by the coherent message that home and school create about the importance of education (Epstein and Sanders, 2000). The theoretical framework of this study was also built on Epstein's six types of parent involvement.

**Figure 1.**  
Epstein's model of six types of parent involvement



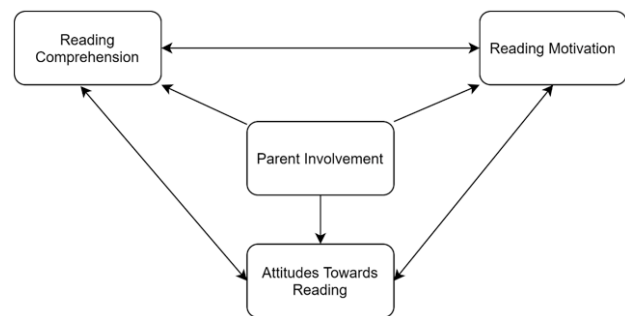
Epstein (2018) states that parent involvement can be provided in six different ways in the parent involvement model, which includes some suggestions to improve school-family cooperation. These include parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with the community.

The first type of participation is through primary parenting. Basic parenting means meeting the basic needs of parents, including issues related to health, shelter, safety, and nutrition. It also includes all the activities done to help parents support the learning environment at home. The second type of parent involvement is communication that occurs when effective mutual communication is established between school and family about children's education and development. Communication can take various forms such as phone calls, notes and meetings. The third type, volunteering, occurs when parents take time out to help the school system or participate in school activities. Volunteering refers to voluntary families who contribute to the education of their children. It can be in the form of parents coming to school to help students and teachers traditionally. The fourth type of participation, home learning, includes all activities for helping the child with homework or other lesson-related tasks. Parents can talk to their children about school at home, help them with homework, and help them develop necessary skills. The fifth type, decision making, focuses on the representation of parents in the school system and their formal participation in decisions. By taking part in school-parent unions, families can have a say in the policy and management of the school. The last type, cooperation with the community, refers to the cooperation of parents with the school and society to strengthen school programs and contribute to student learning (Epstein, 1995; 2018).

**Conceptual Framework**

In this study, a conceptual framework was developed based on the theoretical basis outlined above (Figure 2). Reading activities with parental participation were created under the learning-at-home dimension to examine its effect on reading comprehension, reading motivation and attitudes towards reading.

**Figure 2.**  
The conceptual framework of the structural relationship between parent involvement, reading comprehension, reading motivation and attitude towards reading.



Based on theory and research summarized above, parental involvement can be argued to have a strong relationship with reading comprehension, reading motivation and attitude towards reading. By means of this study, it is aimed to provide the literature valuable evidence that parent involvement can have a role in different aspects of reading comprehension skills.

**Research Method**

In this study, a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design with a paired control group was used to investigate the effect of parent involvement on reading comprehension, reading motivation and attitudes towards reading. Experimental studies are attempts to test the effect of differences created by the researcher on a dependent variable (Büyükoztürk et al., 2012). Quantitative data obtained through scales in the experimental process contain closed-ended information and are analyzed employing statistical methods (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

The pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design with a paired control group aims to match the groups based on certain variables. No random assignments are done in this design. However, it is a good alternative in cases where random assignment is not possible (Büyükoztürk et al., 2012). A non-significant difference between the groups in the pretest scores is important in terms of equivalence. At the end of the process, the data are compared to see whether there is a significant difference between the experimental and the control group based on the posttest scores (Bulduk, 2003). The model of the experimental design followed in the present study is represented in Figure 3.

The participants in both groups were tested concerning the dependent variable before and after the experimental procedure. The scores obtained from the reading comprehension achievement test, reading attitude scale, and reading motivation scale constituted the dependent variable of the study. The experimental and control groups were formed through pairing after the pretest. Parent-involved reading activities developed by the researchers were regarded as the independent variable. In this context, it was examined whether the independent variable influenced the dependent variables.

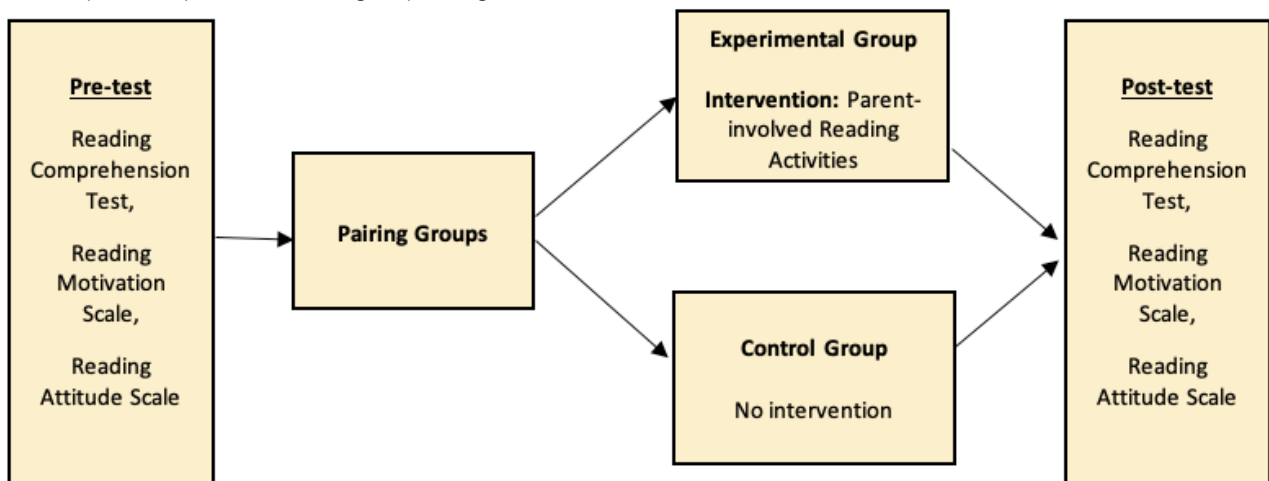
**Implementation Process**

Development of parent-involved reading activities: In the experimental process, parent-involved reading activities were done by the students and their parents. The process in which the reading activities were developed is represented in Figure 4.

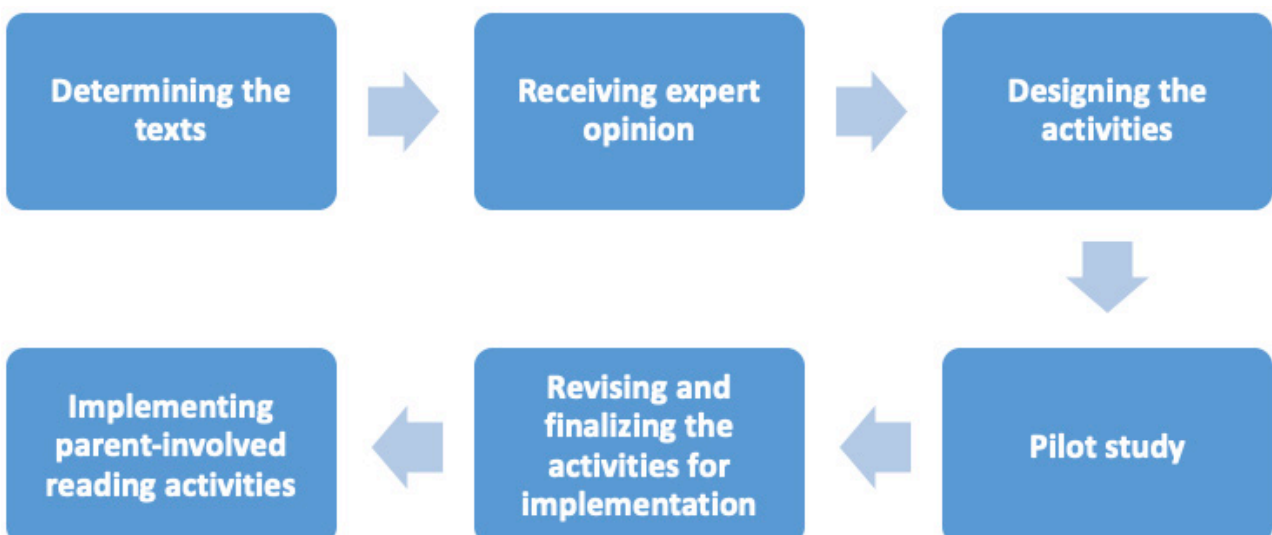
**Determining the texts:** Parent-involved reading activities are a set of materials consisting of reading comprehension activities related to narrative and informative texts. The development of these activities started first by determining the narrative and informative texts suitable for the fourth graders. A pool of 24 texts comprising 12 narrative texts and 12 informative texts, selected from books approved by the Ministry of National Education and suitable for the level of fourth-graders, was created as a result of a review lasting approximately three months.

**Receiving expert opinion:** An expert opinion form was prepared to determine which texts were suitable for use in the reading activities. The texts were sent to 10 experts, three Turkish language teacher trainers and three primary school teacher trainers working at the Faculty of Education, Muş Alparslan University, Turkey, and four primary school teachers teaching fourth graders. In this form, they were asked to evaluate the

**Figure 3.**  
Pretest-posttest paired control group design.



**Figure 4.**  
Process of developing the reading activities



texts as appropriate, somewhat appropriate, and not appropriate, writing additional comments when necessary. As a result of the experts' evaluation, eight texts with the lowest score were eliminated, and the remaining 16 texts were deemed appropriate to be used in the reading activities.

**Designing the activities:** A wide range of texts and relevant activities are included in coursebooks to equip students with reading comprehension skills as part of the objectives for Turkish language education in Turkey. Akyol (2006) indicated that it is necessary to follow certain steps to reach the meaning in reading, and systematically describes these steps to be taken before, during, and after reading. Therefore, the activities that can be done before reading as scanning, setting goals for reading, recalling the background knowledge to the reading environment, and making guesses were designed in this direction. As for the during-reading activities, reading fluently, checking comprehension, and using helpful strategies can be considered as appropriate for this study. While preparing the reading activities with parent participation in the present study, these steps were taken into consideration, and the activities were categorized as pre-, during- and post-reading activities. Following the determination of the reading texts, the reading comprehension activities for each text were designed by considering the reading comprehension outcomes set in the Turkish language course curriculum. Expert opinion was also received concerning the designed activities. The experts were two Turkish language teacher trainers and three primary school teacher trainers. The activities were organized in line with the feedback received from the experts and were finalized for use in practice.

**Pilot study:** Before proceeding with the implementation, pilot sessions including three weeks of the reading activities with parent involvement were conducted with four parents.

**Revising and finalizing the activities for implementation:** The activities were revised based on the feedback received from two Turkish language teacher trainers and finalized for implementation.

**Implementing parent-involved reading activities:** Before the implementation process, training in which the activities were developed by the researchers was given to the parents. The parents who attended the training were informed about their children's performance and how to implement the reading activities at home and provided with a guide brochure. The training was held in two sessions for a total of six hours. It consisted of 16 activities, eight of which are related to narrative texts and the remaining about informative texts. These activities (i.e., two activities a week; a narrative and an informative text and relevant activities) were given to the experimental

group students every Monday, and the ones that had been completed were gathered the same day of the following week. At the end of each activity, parents were asked to sign the pack and write their opinions and thoughts about the activities to monitor whether the tasks were implemented. The process started with 50 parents and their children, and the activity packs were examined weekly, the mistakes made in the activities were noted and shared with the parents by the researchers. A file was kept for the activities of each student, home visits were conducted, and the general evaluation of all activities was done with the parents. Four students and their parents who did not complete the activities and abandoned the process were not evaluated in the final tests. During the implementation of the activities, the researchers visited the parents at home and had the opportunity to observe their efforts on site and intervened when necessary. At the end of the process, a library trip was organized by researcher with the students and their parents, they registered for the library membership, and the students have presented a book as a gift to ensure the continuity of the study.

For pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading stages, varieties of parent-involved reading activities were implemented. For pre-reading, certain activities on mentally preparing learners and directing their attention and interest to the text were applied. For during-reading, the participating parents read aloud the text and the learners listened to them while paying attention to intonation and body movements. In this way, the learners were advised to picture what they hear in their minds so that interactive reading could be achieved. Then the learners read the text aloud and by themselves. Activities on evaluating and analyzing the text were used for post-reading. In one of the activities regarding post-reading, an activity called "Face of a Story" was used. In this activity, a visual map of the story is created. The learners visualized the characters, the plot, and events in the form of a map. In this way, they summarized the story that they have read in an analytical way.

### Participants

The group of participants was composed of fourth-graders studying in two different primary schools in the central district of Muş province in Eastern Turkey. According to the data published by the Turkish Statistical Institute, one of these schools were in a neighborhood with low socioeconomic status, while the other schools were in a neighborhood with high socioeconomic status. These schools were selected to ensure maximum diversity, allowing the sample to better reflect the general student and parent population.

A total of 245 primary school fourth-graders were pre-tested to select the participants. In the light of the

data obtained from the pre-test, the individuals who were selected included a total of 115 students whose scores were lower than the mean score and were close to each other in the reading comprehension achievement test. A letter was sent to the parents of 115 students to inform them about the purpose and process of the study and invited them to participate in this endeavor. The parents who wanted to participate in the study were told that a training session for them would be held by the researchers. 60 parents said they wanted to participate. The contact information of these parents was received, and the day and time of the training were scheduled. A total of 50 parents participated in the training. Thus, the experimental group of the study consisted of the parents and their children who declared that they wanted to participate in the study voluntarily and attended the training for parents. Some demographic data about parents are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
*Demographic Characteristics of the Experimental Group Students' Parents*

Variable	f	%
Age	22-31	9 18
	32-42	33 66
	42 and above	8 16
Relationship	Mother	24 48
	Father	23 46
	Brother	1 2
	Other	2 4
Profession	Housewife	20 40
	Employee	7 14
	Small business owner	9 18
	Public servant	14 28
Educational Level	Primary school graduate	21 42
	Secondary school graduate	6 12
	High school graduate	8 16
	Faculty / College graduate	9 18
	Master/Doctoral graduate	6 12
Income status	0-1600 ₺	18 36
	1601-2600 ₺	8 16
	2601-3600 ₺	13 26
	3600+ ₺	11 22
Number of Children	1	3 6
	2-3	26 52
	4-5	14 28
	5+	7 14
	Total	50 100

In Table 1, demographic characteristics of the parents of the students in the experimental group are given. According to the table, 66% of the parents are in the age range of 32-42, while 18% are over the age of 22-31, and 16% are over the age of 42. Regarding the relationship, 24 mothers, 23 fathers, one brother, one aunt, and one uncle participated in the study

as parents. When the profession of the parents is examined, it is seen that 40% are housewives, 28% are public servants, 18% are small business owners, and 14% are employed in any workplace. When the educational levels of the parents are examined, 42% of the parents are primary school graduates, 18% are faculty or college graduates, 16% are high school graduates, and 12% are graduate students. The income status of the families is as follows: 36% of the parents are in the income range of 0-1600₺, 26% of them are in the range of 2601-3600 ₺, 22% of them are in the income range of 3600₺ and above, and 16% of them are in the income range of 1601-2600₺. It is seen in the table that 52% of the families consist of 2-3 children, 28% of them consists of 4-5 children, 14% of them consists of more than 5 children, while only 3 (6%) families have a single child.

On the other hand, the control group was formed as a result of pairing with the students in the same class who got scores close to the average scores of the students in the experimental group in the pre-test. This pairing aimed to keep the factors that may affect the research result under control and to ensure that the experimental and control groups were as equivalent as possible. Table 2 shows the distribution of the students in the experiment and control groups by gender.

**Table 2.**  
*Distribution of the Students in the Experimental and Control Groups by Gender*

Groups	Gender	N	%
Experimental Group	Male	20	40
	Female	30	60
	Total	50	100
Control Group	Male	25	50
	Female	25	50
	Total	50	100

### Data Collection Tools

**Reading motivation scale:** This scale was developed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) to measure children's reading motivation and adapted to Turkish by Yıldız (2010). Yıldız (2010) re-modeled the scale with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) as part of an adaptation study and yielded a valid scale structure consisting of internal and external dimensions of motivation. As a result of his reliability analysis, he reported the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient as .84 for the whole scale, while it was found as .81 in the present study.

**Reading attitude scale:** This scale was developed by McKenna and Kear (1990) and adapted to Turkish by Kocaarslan (2016). It has a four-point Likert type rating and consists of 20 items in total. The scale has two

factors: reading for pleasure and academic reading. The first ten items of the scale measure the attitude towards reading for pleasure, while the last ten items are related to the attitudes towards academic reading. Four Garfield visuals are used in the grading, ranging between "Happiest Garfield", "Slightly Smiling Garfield", "Mildly Upset Garfield" and "Very Upset Garfield". Kocaarslan (2016) calculated the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale as .88, while it was found as .78 in this study.

**Reading comprehension test:** The test was developed by Yildiz (2010) and consists of 28 multiple choice questions about an informative text and a narrative text. Accordingly, narrative and informative texts were also used in parent-involved reading activities. Yildiz (2010) reported the reliability coefficients of the test as .71 for the narrative part and .77 for the informative part. In this study, the reliability coefficients were found as .70 and .73, respectively.

### Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS 23.0 Package program. In the analysis, it was first checked whether the data were parametric or non-parametric. Analyses of skewness, kurtosis and histogram graph were performed to see the distribution. When the parametric conditions were met, the Independent Samples t-Test was used to examine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups.

### Findings

In this section, the pre-test and post-test scores of experimental and control group students in reading comprehension achievement, reading motivation and reading attitude scales were analyzed. To test whether the difference between the sample means is significant, independent samples T-test is used when the groups are normally distributed, while Man Whitney U test is used when it does not show a normal distribution. The T-test assumptions were checked to decide which test to use. In this context,

a pre-test was administered to both groups and the groups were independent of each other. To examine the distribution of normality, skewness and kurtosis coefficients and histogram graph of the distribution were examined. The calculated skewness and kurtosis indices close to 0 within the limits of  $\pm 2$  are considered as evidence of the presence of the normal distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013).

### Findings on Pre-test Scores

As is seen in Table 3, the values of skewness and kurtosis coefficients vary between +1 and -1 in both sub-dimensions and scale totals, which shows that the distribution is normal. According to the histogram graphs, the distribution of the scores in the sub-dimensions and the scale total scores is normal. Accordingly, the above assumptions are confirmed, and a t-test can be applied in the analysis of the scales.

As is seen in Table 4, there was no significant difference between the scores of the experimental and control groups in the reading motivation scale ( $t(98) = .710, p > 0.05$ ), neither were there any significant differences between the groups in the sub-dimensions "intrinsic motivation" ( $t(87.75) = .472, p > 0.05$ ) and "external motivation" ( $t(81,40) = .339, p > 0.05$ ). As for the scores in the reading attitude scale, the groups did not differ significantly in the whole scale ( $t(98) = .499, p > 0.05$ ), and in the sub-dimensions "reading for pleasure" ( $t(96,30) = .955, p > 0.05$ ) and "reading for academic purposes" ( $t(98) = .220, p > 0.05$ ). Lastly, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the reading comprehension achievement test ( $t(98) = .946, p > 0.05$ ), and in its sections related to a narrative text ( $t(98) = .871, p > 0.05$ ) and an informative text ( $t(98) = .971, p > 0.05$ ). The pre-test results showed that the reading motivation, reading attitudes, and reading comprehension achievement of the groups were equal or close to each other before the experimental process.

**Table 3.**  
Results of the Normality Distribution Analysis Based on the Pre-test

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis	Standard Deviation	Average
Intrinsic Motivation	.150	-.273	.359	2.15
Extrinsic Motivation	.201	.176	.301	2.13
Reading Motivation Total	.203	-.011	.288	2.14
Reading for Pleasure	-.771	.045	.246	2.31
Reading for Academic Purposes	-.705	.753	.279	2.20
Reading Attitude Total	-.744	.524	.24	2.26
Narrative text	.077	.141	2.44	7.62
Informative text	.673	-.339	2.76	5.77
Reading Comprehension Total	.404	-.513	4.39	13.39



### Findings on Post-test Scores

Similar to the analysis of the pre-test instruments, the assumptions were firstly checked in the post-test results. Skewness-kurtosis, standard deviation and mean scores obtained from the post-test are given in the Table 5.

The skewness and kurtosis coefficients presented show that the values in both sub-dimensions and scale-totals vary between +1 and -1, which indicates that the distribution is normal. According to the histogram graphs examined, it is possible to say that the distribution of the scores obtained from the scales and their sub-dimensions does not show serious deviations and is normally distributed. Accordingly, the assumptions are confirmed, and a t-test can be applied in the analysis of the scales.

As is seen in Table 6, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental ( $\bar{X} = 3.31$ ) and the control group ( $\bar{X} = 2.53$ ) in the reading motivation scale in favor of the experimental group ( $t(90) = .000, p < 0.05$ ). In the intrinsic motivation sub-dimension of the scale, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental ( $\bar{X} = 3.21$ ) and the control group ( $\bar{X} = 2.47$ ), and this difference was also in favor of the experimental group ( $t(90) = .000, p < 0.05$ ). As for the external motivation sub-dimension, a significant difference was observed between the experimental ( $\bar{X} = 3.35$ ) and the control group ( $\bar{X} = 2.56$ ) with the experimental group students outperforming the control group ( $t(90) = .000, p < 0.05$ ). The  $\eta^2$  value calculated for the whole scale was found as .42, which indicates a large effect size.

**Table 4.**  
T-Test Results of Pre-Test Scores

Dimensions	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	SE	t	p
Intrinsic Motivation	Experimental	50	2.18	.417	-.722	.472
	Control	50	2.13	.292		
Extrinsic Motivation	Experimental	50	2.15	.362	.962	.339
	Control	50	2.09	.223		
Reading Motivation Total	Experimental	50	2.14	.347	.373	.710
	Control	50	2.12	.216		
Reading for Pleasure	Experimental	50	2.31	.263	-.057	.955
	Control	50	2.31	.230		
Reading for Academic Purposes	Experimental	50	2.23	.307	1.23	.220
	Control	50	2.16	.245		
Reading Attitude Total	Experimental	50	2.27	.267	.678	.499
	Control	50	2.24	.209		
Narrative text	Experimental	50	7.66	2.42	.163	.871
	Control	50	7.58	2.49		
Informative text	Experimental	50	5.76	2.67	.036	.971
	Control	50	5.78	2.88		
Reading Comprehension Total	Experimental	50	13.42	4.71	.068	.946
	Control	50	13.36	4.10		

**Table 5.**  
Results of the Normality Distribution Analysis Based on the Post-test

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis	Standard Deviation	Average
Intrinsic Motivation	-.071	-.772	.679	2.84
Extrinsic Motivation	-.074	-.808	.626	2.96
Reading Motivation Total	-.051	-.800	.602	2.92
Reading for Pleasure	-.003	-.794	.511	3.06
Reading for Academic Purposes	.013	-.575	.574	2.94
Reading Attitude Total	.088	-.762	.514	3.00
Narrative text	-.314	-.317	2.80	9.05
Informative text	.149	-.920	3.14	7.78
Reading Comprehension Total	.013	-.641	7.43	16.84

In the attitudes towards reading, there was a significant difference in favor of the experimental group when compared to the control group in their mean scores,  $\bar{X} = 3.38$  and  $\bar{X} = 2.61$ , respectively, ( $t(90) = .000, p < 0.05$ ). Regarding the sub-dimension "reading for pleasure", there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental ( $\bar{X}=3.41$ ) and the control group score ( $\bar{X} = 2.70$ ) in favor of the experimental group ( $t(90) = .000, p < 0.05$ ). Concerning the sub-dimension "reading for academic purposes", a significant difference was observed between the mean scores of the experimental ( $\bar{X} = 3.35$ ) and the control group ( $\bar{X} = 2.53$ ), which was also in favor of the experimental group ( $t(90) = .000, p < 0.05$ ). The  $\eta^2$  value calculated for the whole scale was found as .56, which indicates a large effect size.

In reading comprehension, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental ( $\bar{X} = 18.73$ ) and the control group ( $\bar{X} = 14.93$ ) in which the experimental group students performed better ( $t(90) = .000, p < 0.05$ ). In the section about the narrative text, there was also a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental ( $\bar{X} = 9.89$ ) and the control group ( $\bar{X} = 8.21$ ) in favor of the experimental group ( $t(90) = .004, p < 0.05$ ). As for the section about the informative text, a significant difference was also observed in the mean scores of the experimental ( $\bar{X} = 8.84$ ) and the control group ( $\bar{X} = 2.53$ ) in favor of the experimental group ( $t(90) = .001, p < 0.05$ ). The  $\eta^2$  value calculated for the whole test was found to be .13, indicating a moderate effect size.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to examine the effects of parent-involved reading activities on primary school fourth-grade students' reading comprehension skills, reading motivation and attitudes towards reading. In this section, the findings on the effect of family involvement on students' reading comprehension, reading motivation and attitude towards reading are summarized and discussed.

### *Positive Effect of Parent-Involved Reading Activities on Students' Reading Comprehension Levels.*

The first research question was whether the difference between the reading comprehension post-test scores of the experimental and control group students was statistically significant. As a result of the analysis, it was seen that reading activities with parental participation had a positive effect on students' reading comprehension levels.

In the literature, there is evidence of a positive correlation between the level of parental involvement and reading comprehension. For example, Bond (2011) examined the relationship between family involvement and reading comprehension achievement, motivation and attitudes on primary school second and third-graders, reporting a positive effect of parental involvement on reading achievement, attitudes and motivation. York (2006), in his study investigating the effect of parental involvement on reading achievement, concluded that as the level of parental involvement

**Table 6.**  
*T-Test Results of Post-Test Scores*

Dimensions	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	SE	t	p
Intrinsic Motivation	Experimental	46	3.21	.603	6.28	.000
	Control	46	2.47	.533		
Extrinsic Motivation	Experimental	46	3.35	.530	7.90	.000
	Control	46	2.56	.431		
Reading Motivation Total	Experimental	46	3.31	.499	8.12	.000
	Control	46	2.53	.415		
Reading for Pleasure	Experimental	46	3.41	.413	9.27	.000
	Control	46	2.70	.314		
Reading for Academic Purposes	Experimental	46	3.35	.410	9.91	.000
	Control	46	2.53	.387		
Reading Attitude Total	Experimental	46	3.38	.367	10.77	.000
	Control	46	2.61	.313		
Narrative text	Experimental	46	9.89	2.66	2.98	.004
	Control	46	8.21	2.70		
Informative text	Experimental	46	8.84	3.01	3.43	.001
	Control	46	6.71	2.93		
Reading Comprehension Total	Experimental	46	18.73	4.87	3.69	.000
	Control	46	14.93	4.99		

increased, the level of reading achievement also increased. Moreover, in some studies in the literature, it is stated that parental participation contributes to the academic achievement and course performance of students in general (Bailey, 2017; Topor et al., 2010). In this context, positive results have been obtained in studies on parental involvement conducted at home and at school to improve reading and reading comprehension as an academic skill (Epstein, 2001; Baker, 2003; Mraz and Rasinski, 2007; Tonn and Wailheiser, 2007). However, in several studies, a positive relationship was not found between parental involvement and academic achievement (Okpala et al., 2001), whereas few studies reported a negative relationship (Hill and Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2005). The discrepancies in research findings may be because parents are not adequately trained to teach certain concepts or they are not familiar with the teaching methods in the studies concerned. However, instead of focusing on the relationship between the level of parental involvement and any academic skill without an intervention, the effects of practices in which parents regularly worked with their children through parent-involved reading activities were investigated in the present study. Therefore, in addition to the potentially positive relationship between parental involvement and reading comprehension, intervention programs aiming to enhance the level of participation can yield fruitful results. In this regard, communication channels between parents and school need to be further strengthened to enable the participation of parents.

#### ***Increased Reading Motivation Through Parent-Involved Reading Activities***

The second research question of the study was whether the difference between the reading motivation post-test scores of the experimental and control group students was statistically significant. For this purpose, a reading motivation scale was applied to the students before and after the experimental process. As a result of the analyses, it was seen that the students in the experimental group obtained statistically significantly higher motivation scores than the students in the control group.

Although many dimensions have been proposed regarding the reasons or incentives that lead to reading, reading motivation is generally categorized as intrinsic and extrinsic (Unrau and Schlackman, 2006; Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). Therefore, the data obtained from this study were examined in internal and external dimensions. Intrinsically motivated individuals read to explore the world of reading, find various topics that interest them, enjoy reading, struggle to cope with the difficulties they encounter, and improve their reading skills. Extrinsically motivated individuals are controlled by social needs, demands, or rewards. In this context,

the family makes the most important social impact on children's motivation to read (Hughes-Hassell and Lutz, 2006; Millard, 1997). Previous studies have provided some evidence that parental involvement in reading activities and parents' beliefs about reading both have a causal effect on children's reading motivation and achievement and have correlation (Baker et al., 1997; Baker, 2003; Senechal and Young, 2008). For example, Capotosto et al. (2017) state that in their study examining the effect of family support on the reading skills, motivation and habits of third-graders, students who receive family support make progress in these aspects. Pavalache-Ilie and Ţirdia (2015), on the other hand, reported that school performance was significantly related to parental involvement and intrinsic motivation in their study examining the relationship between parent involvement, school performance and intrinsic motivation of primary school third and fourth-graders. The results of the present study also show that parental involvement is related to student motivation. The fact that reading activities with parental participation increase students' reading motivation confirms the findings in the literature. However, in this paper, there was structured parental involvement and support present through activities at home with an experimental approach. In this respect, the present study is believed to provide stronger evidence in the literature. In addition, different results have been reported from the studies conducted on different age groups and grade levels in the literature. For instance, Coleman and McNeese (2009) examined the relationship between parent involvement, student motivation and academic achievement and found a positive relationship between student motivation and academic achievement, and a negative relationship between parent involvement and motivation. This can be explained by the age and maturity level of the students. Some students enter puberty at this age and tend to be more and more independent. Children may have wanted less involvement from their parents, wanting to be less dependent on them. In this context, it can be said that parental involvement can be more effective in pre-school and primary school periods.

#### ***Improved Attitudes Towards Reading Through Parent-Involved Reading Activities***

The third research question of the study was whether the difference between the experimental and control group students' reading attitude post-test scores was statistically significant. For this purpose, an attitude scale towards reading was applied to the students before and after the experimental process. As a result of the findings, it was seen that reading activities with parental involvement had a positive effect on students' reading attitudes.

The attitudes towards any object or situation can be affected by the socialization process, the

characteristics of the group to which one is a member, or the social class, in addition to the individual's genetic factors, physiological conditions, personality, beliefs or a direct experience (Baysal, 1981; Vaughan and Hogg, 2005). In short, your attitude towards something is a plural conceptualization that changes in the context of culture, environment, and purpose (Aizen and Fishbein, 2005). Here comes the importance of family because the family is the most important environment in which the child's personality and emotions develop. The results regarding the effect of parents on reading habits and attitudes in the literature confirm the findings of the present study. Özbay (2006) asserts that the attitudes of family members are quite important in reading education, and the family's attitudes towards books at home and their activities to make the child love reading positively affect the child's attitudes towards reading. Kaldan Sabak (2007) argues that the environment in which the individual lives affect his or her acquisition of a reading habit. Topçuoğlu Ünal and Yiğit (2014) found that the family plays an important role in the formation of a reading culture in children. Durualp and Çiçekoğlu (2013) reported that parents' reading books had positive effects on increasing children's reading attitudes. In this context, it can be said that the positive emotional and behavioral tendency of the family towards reading activities also affects the child's attitude positively. During the experimental process of the present study, children read together with their parents for eight weeks, answered questions about the texts, and completed various activities within parent-involved reading activities. The parents provided direct support to the children in the implementation of the activities. It can be stated that reading comprehension activities in which the parents participate and take responsibility has the potential to create positive changes in children's attitudes towards reading.

### Suggestions

In this section, suggestions are offered taking into account the results and limitations of the present study:

- Within the scope of this study, the effects of parent-involved reading activities on students' reading comprehension skills, reading motivation and attitudes towards reading were tested, and positive results were yielded. In further studies, researchers can also develop parent-involved activities for different courses and skills and examine their impact at primary school level.
- In this study, the effects of parent-involved reading activities on reading comprehension skills, reading motivation and attitudes towards reading are limited to fourth graders and their families. The impact of these activities can be reconstructed for different grade levels and examined with a larger sample.
- Teachers can plan activities to enable parent-involved reading at home and school and organize home visits, and parents can be encouraged to take part in committees such as school-parent unions.
- Within the scope of this study, training was given to the parents to ensure their participation and to inform them about the nature of the reading activities. To enhance parental involvement, similar educational seminars can be organized for parents, and they can be informed about how they can support their children.
- This study is limited to an implementation period of eight weeks. Through a longitudinal study on this issue, effects can be examined over a longer period.
- In this study, the reading activities with parental involvement were to strengthen family participation at home. Studies can also be conducted to enable this participation at school.
- Studies with comparative analyses can be conducted to evaluate results from families with different socioeconomic levels.
- In this study, the effect of reading activities with parental involvement was analyzed using an experimental design, and employing a reading comprehension achievement test, reading motivation scale, reading attitude scale. Studies that provide more detailed data on this subject can be conducted using different methods (e.g. action research) and scales.

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