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### The impact of the “I compete by reading” activity on the reading success & attitudes of middle school students\*

Fulya Topçuoğlu Ünal <sup>a 1</sup> , Serpil Uyar <sup>b</sup> 

<sup>a</sup> *Kütahya Dumlupınar University, Kütahya, Turkey*  
<sup>b</sup> *Kütahya Seyitömer Secondary School, Kütahya, Turkey*

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#### Abstract

The aim of this research is to develop a new practice to enhance the success and attitudes of the middle school students. With this in mind, the competition activity was designed by reading. The effect of this activity on secondary school students' reading comprehension success and attitudes towards reading was examined. In this research, quantitative methods and Quasi-experimental model is used. The research has been conducted with 5th grade students in a public middle school in the central district of Kütahya province, in 2018-2019 academic years. The implementation process of the research took 8 weeks. Lessons in the experimental group were taught using “I compete by reading” activity, and continued in the control group according to the Turkish lesson curriculum. Reading-Understanding Achievement Test and Reading Attitude Scale for middle school students were used as data collection tool in the research. In the analysis of the data, the Dependent and Independent Samples test was used. According to the findings obtained in the research, the experimental group, where the reading practice is carried out with the “I compete by reading” Activity, was more successful in understanding than the control group. Again, according to the research findings, it was observed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups from the posttest of the Reading Attitude Scale. As a result, with this research, “I compete by reading” activity has been revealed to be an application that can be used in reading education.

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**Keywords:** I compete by reading activity; reading ability; reading education; reading attitude; reading success

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author. Tel.: +0274 443 43 43-4505-4681  
E-mail address: [fulyatopcuoglu@gmail.com](mailto:fulyatopcuoglu@gmail.com)

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Literature review

Reading is an action that human continues throughout their lives. One gains personality by reading recognizes past civilizations and cultures; organizes his life by making use of their experience. Reading is an indispensable educational tool that is one of the important points in the development of individuals.

Read; it is important for language learning, building language awareness and successful acquisition of other skills. It is the primary means of receiving and sharing information among all educational disciplines from the first stage of education to the end of the university (Maden, 2012, 2).

Major advances in technology have made information and information processing more important. The first of the two elements that do not change despite all technological changes is the presentation of information with text and visual, the second is to read and understand the information presented with text and visual. For this reason, reading activity has been the main way of obtaining information from the beginning of the historical ages (Temizkan, 2009).

Reading is a skill, not a memorization. Therefore, teaching basic concepts should be based on practice and should be carried out through reading activities (Temizkan, 2011). Reading skill should be gained in a functional form since it is of great importance in individual and social life (Özbay, 2011).

The correct determination and use of the method and technique to be used in reading is necessary for the individual to gain reading skills. The individual should be given both theoretical knowledge and practical training, reading activities should be done with new methods, and it should be ensured that the individual enjoys these activities and has self-confidence (Gülerer & Batur, 2004). In order to educate global human, reading comprehension skill and reading habit should be gained in primary school age. Based on this imperative, “I compete by reading” activity has been prepared to give middle school students the habit to read, understand and enjoy reading.

In this study, the effect of “I compete by reading” activity on reading achievements and attitudes of middle school students was investigated. With this study, information about the effectiveness of this new activity applied on reading comprehension and reading success and information about students' reading success and attitudes were shared.

#### I compete by reading activity

“I compete by reading” activity is designed as a practice that can be used in the form of silent reading in reading education according to the constructivist approach. The most important reason for individuals to be away from reading is reluctance and incomplete motivation.

With this activity, it was aimed to give middle school students the pleasure and habit of reading and to increase their reading comprehension success. Reading needs to be planned in a process; students are guided about what to do before, during and after reading.

With these aspects, “I compete by reading” activity is thought to be applications that can help students make meaningful and enjoyable reading. “I compete by reading” activity is an application consisting of six steps. When the reading process is taken into account, the MOTIVE step is before reading; READ step while reading; UNDERSTAND - TELL step after reading; Steps COMPLETE APPRENTICESHIP, COMPLETE JOURNEYMAN, BE MASTER covers all three processes.

1. First Step
COMPLETE APPRENTICESHIP
2. Second Step
COMPLETE JOURNEYMAN
3. Third Step
BE MASTER, TAKE YOUR DEGREE
4. Fourth Step
MOTIVATE
5. Fifth Step
READ
6. Sixth Step
UNDERSTAND - TELL

**Figure1.** Competing by reading process.

## 1.2. Research questions

The aim of this research is to develop a new practice to enhance the success and attitudes of the middle school students. Following questions were answered in line with the purpose of this study:

1. Is there a significant difference between the average scores of the experimental group students' Reading Attitude Scale according to the pretest and posttest results?
2. According to the pretest and posttest results, is there a significant difference between the average scores of the control group students' Reading Attitude Scale?
3. According to the posttest results, is there a significant difference between the average scores of the experiment and control group students' Reading Attitude Scale?
4. According to the pretest and posttest results, is there a significant difference between the average scores of the experimental group students' Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test for Secondary School Students?
5. According to the pretest and posttest results, is there a significant difference between the average scores of the control group students' Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test for Secondary School Students?
6. According to the results of the posttest, is there a significant difference between the average scores of the experimental and control group students' Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test for Secondary School Students?

## 2. Method

In this research, “unequal control group model from Quasi-experimental research methods” was used to determine the effect of Competing by Reading, which is aimed to improve reading love and success, on middle school students' reading attitude and success. To determine the cause-effect relationship of the data to be observed in the control of the researcher is called trial models (Karasar, 2008, 87).

### 2.1. Participants

The study group of the research consists of 38 fifth grade students who continue their education in a public middle school in Kütahya in the second semester of the 2018-2019 academic years.

The 5-B class students of the school were randomly determined as the experimental group and the 5-A class students as the control group. There are 19 students in the experimental group and 19 students in the control group.

### 2.2. Instrument(s)

The data of the research was obtained by using the Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test for Middle-School Students created by the researchers in 2018 and the Reading Attitude Scale developed by Çakıroğlu and Palancı (2015).

25 multiple-choice questions were initially prepared for the Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test for Middle School Students. The test was piloted by taking the opinions of two Turkish teachers doing master's degree and two academicians providing education in Turkish education.

The pilot application was carried out on 41 students who continue their education in 5th and 6th grades in another public middle school in Kütahya province. In accordance with validity and reliability analysis, items 3, 10, 18 and 19 with substance differentiation 0.20 were excluded from the test. At the end of expert opinion and factor analysis, the validity of the success, which was reduced to 21 items, was found to be high.

The validity and reliability study of the “attitude towards reading scale” (ATRS) adapted to Turkey, developed by Mckenna and Kear (1990) was conducted by Çakıroğlu and Palancı (2015). The reliability of the scale was calculated by internal consistency method. The overall internal consistency coefficient of the scale was 0.84 and the reliability coefficient was 0.78. In this way, the scale was determined to be suitable, valid and reliable for use (Çakıroğlu and Palancı, 2015).

### 2.3. Data collection procedures

It is aimed to give middle school students the pleasure and habit of reading through the I compete by reading activity. In class, students are motivated to read by the announcement that medals will be awarded to those who reach the target number of pages first. Flexibility is provided in the choice of material to be read, and they are asked to read any publication that appeal to their taste. This prevents them from being bored and reluctant. In order to follow up the readings, a summary and an outline of the work is required, so that writing skills can also be developed. Achievement Medals are awarded to the first three students whose goal is to reach the number of pages (1000) previously determined by expert opinions within the specified period of time.

The experiment process took eight weeks. The process is limited to eight weeks in order for students not to lose motivation to read, to taste success recently, and to get results more quickly.

Within the scope of the application studies, the lessons in the experimental group were taught within the framework of the lesson plan prepared for reading with the “I compete by reading” activity. In the control group, the classes continued according to the MEB 2017 Turkish lesson curriculum.

#### 2.4. Data analysis

In the study, data from the reading attitude scale and the reading-comprehension achievement test for Middle School students were analyzed using the SPSS 17.0 program. The suitability of variables to normal distribution between measurements was examined with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. As a result of the analysis, Independent Samples t Test, which did not show normal distribution, was applied in dependent groups (Paired samples t-test) where the data showed normal distribution.

In order to determine the difference between the total mean scores of the test group on the reading attitude scale, the t-test was performed on independent samples to determine whether there was a difference between the mean scores of the test group on the pre-test and posttest.

According to the Reading Attitude Scale of the control group, the Independent Samples T-test was conducted to determine whether there is a difference between the total mean scores obtained from the pretest and posttest.

According to the Reading Attitude Scale of the experimental and control groups, the Related Samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between the mean scores for each item of the posttest.

According to the Reading-Understanding Achievement Test for the Middle School Students of the control group, the Unrelated Samples t-test was performed to determine whether there is a difference between the total mean scores received from the pretest and posttest.

In order to determine the difference between the mean scores from pre-and post-test according to the reading-comprehension achievement test for Middle School students of the experimental group, the T-test was performed on unrelated samples.

The T-test was performed to determine whether there was a difference between the total mean scores of the test and control groups from the posttest according to the reading-comprehension achievement test for Middle School students.

The first type of error was kept constant at the 5% level ( $p < .05$ ).

### 3. Results

General Results about Scale of Reading Behavior

Reading Manner Scale pretest-posttest results of students in the experimental group

**Table 1.** Reading Manner Scale Pretest-Posttest Results of Students In The Experimental Group.

	Total Participant (N)	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard deviation (Sd)	Number of Respondents (df)	t	Significance Level (p/sig)
<b>Pretest</b>	19	2.64	.42	19	-3.69	.002
<b>Posttest</b>	19	3.09	.49			

According to Table 1, there is a significant difference between the total mean scores they got from the pretest and posttest according to the Reading Attitude Scale of the experimental group students. (Sig=.002,  $p < .05$ ). Accordingly, the posttest point mean ( $\bar{X} = 3, 09$ ) is higher than the pretest point mean ( $\bar{X} = 2, 64$ ).

Reading Attitude Scale pretest-posttest results of students in the control group

**Table 2.** Reading Attitude Scale Pretest-Posttest Results of Students in the Control Group

	Total Participant (N)	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard deviation (Sd)	Number of Respondents (df)	t	Significance Level (p/sig)
Pretest	19	2.65	.45	.19	-.363	.721
Posttest	19	2.71	.56			

**Table 3.** Reading Attitude Scale Posttest Results of Students in the Experimental and Control Groups

Groups	Total Participant (N)	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard deviation (Sd)	Number of Respondents (df)	t	Significance Level (p/sig)
Experimental Group	19	3.09	.49	19	2.89	.010
Control Group	19	2.71	.56			

When the findings in Table 3 are analysed, it is seen that the mean of the scores of the experimental group students' Reading Attitude Scale is 3.09, while the mean of the students in the control group is 2.71. It is seen that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the Reading Attitude Scale. (Sig=.010,  $p < .05$ ).

General Results Related to the Reading-Comprehension Success Test for Middle School Students

Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test pretest-posttest results for students in the experimental group.

**Table 4.** Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test Pretest-Posttest Results for Students in the Experimental Group

Experimental Group	Total Participant (N)	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Median	Standard deviation (Sd)
Pretest	19	30	90	64.73	70	18.36
Posttest	19	40	100	81.84	90	17.33

**Table 5.** The Level of Significance Between the Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of the Reading-Understanding Achievement Test for the Middle School Students of the Experimental Group

Experimental Group	Total Participant (N)	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard deviation (Sd)	Number of Respondents	t	Level of Significance (p/sig)
Pretest	19	64.73	18.36	19	-3.21	.005
Posttest	19	81.84	17.33	19		

When we look at Tables 4 and 5, it is seen that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the experimental group from reading comprehension test. (sig=.005, p<.05).

Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test Pretest-Posttest Results for the Middle School Students of the control group

**Table 6.** Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test Pretest-Posttest Results for the Middle School Students of the Control Group

Control Group	Total Participant (N)	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Median	Standard deviation (Sd)
Pretest	19	30	100	62.89	60	21.49
Posttest	19	45	100	67.63	70	19.02

**Table 7.** The Level of Significance between the Reading Comprehension Test Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of the Students in the Control Group

Control Group	Total Participant (N)	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard deviation (Sd)	Number of Respondents	t	Level of Significance (p/sig)
Pretest	19	62.89	21.49	19	-.920	.370
Posttest	19	67.63	19.02	19		

When we look at Tables 6 and 7, it is seen that there is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the control group from reading comprehension test. (Sig=.370, p>.05).

Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test posttest results of students in the experimental and control groups for Middle School Students.

**Table 8.** Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test Posttest Results of Students in the Experimental and Control Groups for Middle School Students

Groups	Total Participant (N)	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Median	Standard deviation (Sd)
Experimental Group	19	40	100	81.84	90	21.49
Control Group	19	45	100	67.63	70	17.33

**Table 9.** The Level of Significance among the Posttest Mean Scores of the Students in the Experiment and Control Groups for the Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test for Middle School Students

Groups	Total Participant (N)	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard deviation (Sd)	Number of Respondents	t	Level of Significance (p/sig)
Experimental Group	19	81.84	21.49	19	1.96	.066
Control Group	19	67.63	17.33	19		

Tables 8 and 9, it is seen that there is no significant difference between the posttest mean scores of the experimental and control groups from the reading comprehension test. (Sig=.066,  $p>.05$ ). However, the mean score (81.84) of the posttest in the experimental group in which I compete by reading activity is applied is higher than the mean score (67.63) of the posttest in the control group.

#### 4. Discussion

In his study, Temizkan (2007) examined the impact of reading strategies on reading comprehension; he concluded that reading strategies are more effective than traditional teaching in increasing the level of reading comprehension of students. In this study, which examined the effect of “I compete by reading” activity on reading comprehension success and reading attitude, the process of reading with activity and competition was applied rather than traditional teaching, and similar to Temizkan's (2007) study, the level of reading comprehension of the experimental group was increased further.

As a result of Tuna's (2016) study, which investigates the effects of reading strategies on 7th grade students' reading habit, reading attitude and reading comprehension skills, using reading strategies is an effective method in students' reading attitude, reading comprehension skills and gaining reading habit. In this study, the effect of “I compete by reading” activity on reading comprehension success and reading attitude was investigated and students' reading comprehension success increased and there was a positive improvement in book reading attitudes. The study is similar to the research results of Tuna (2016).

Gungor and Un Acıkgoz (2006) collaborative reading found that the method used on the experimental group was more effective than traditional methods in terms of increasing students' reading attitudes as a result of their studies on the use of cooperative learning method and their understanding of reading comprehension strategies and their effects on reading attitude. In this study, which investigated the effect of “I compete by reading” activity on reading comprehension success and reading attitude, a significant difference was found between the pre-test and final Test means of the experimental group in attitude scale analyses. As such, Guthrie, Wigfield & VonSecker (2000) compared students who received a teaching intervention designed to increase intrinsic motivation in their work titled the effects of integrated instruction on motivation and strategy use in reading. The results show that classroom contexts can be constructed to influence motivational outcomes positively.

#### 5. Conclusion

In this research, significant differences were found in favor of the experimental group in terms of success in reading comprehension and book reading attitude among the control group who read as stated in the curriculum for six weeks, and the experimental group students who read in line with the “I compete



by reading” activity for six weeks. Based on the findings obtained as a result of the research, the conclusions reached are as follows:

A significant difference was found between the total mean scores of the experimental group students' Reading Attitude Scale from the pretest and posttest. ( $\text{sig}=.002, p<.05$ ). Based on this finding, using the “I compete by reading” activity, the reading education applied in the experimental group has increased the reading attitude of the students.

There was no significant difference between the total mean scores of the control group students' Scale of Reading Attitude from the pretest and posttest. Based on this finding, it can be said that the ordinary reading education applied in the control group does not significantly increase the reading attitude of the students without using the “I compete by reading” activity.

In the obtained findings, it was determined that the mean of the scores of the experimental group students from the Scale of Reading Attitude was 3.09, while the mean of the students in the control group was 2.71. However, it was seen that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the Scale of Reading Attitude ( $\text{sig}=.010, p<.05$ ). According to this, it can be said that reading education in which using the “I compete by reading” activity is used increases the students' attitudes towards reading positively compared to reading education in which the activity is not used.

It was seen that there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the experimental group from the Reading-Comprehension Achievement Test for Middle School Students ( $\text{sig}=.005, p<.05$ ). Accordingly, it can be said that reading education, where using the “I compete by reading” activity” is used, increases the success of students in reading comprehension.

It was seen that there was no significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the control group from the Reading Comprehension Achievement Test for Middle School Students ( $\text{sig}=.370, p>.05$ ). Accordingly, it can be said that reading education, where the “I compete by reading” activity is not used, does not significantly increase students' reading comprehension achievements.

There was no significant difference between the test and control group's posttest score means on the reading-comprehension achievement test for Middle School students. ( $\text{Sig}=.066, p>.05$ ). However, the mean score (81.84) of the posttest in the experimental group where the reading activity is performed is higher than the mean score (67.63) of the posttest in the control group. Accordingly, it can be said that reading education, where the “I compete by reading” activity is used, increases students' reading comprehension achievements compared to reading education, where the “I compete by reading” activity is not used.

### *5.1. Suggestions*

1. The study was applied on middle school students. The “I compete by reading” activity can also be tested at other levels of instruction.

2. “I compete by reading” activity can be used by Turkish teachers to improve students' reading skills and to positively improve their attitudes towards reading.

3. The experiment carried out within this study involves a small group of 19 students in a middle school who were selected as pilot school in a limited time. This research can be applied on a extensive group of experiments.

## 6. Ethics Committee Approval

The author(s) confirm(s) that ethical approval was obtained from Kütahya Dumlupınar University (Approval Date: 13/03/2019).

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## “Okuyarak yarışıyorum etkinliğinin” ortaokul öğrencilerinin okuma başarılarına ve tutumlarına etkisi

### Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, ortaokul öğrencilerinin okuma başarısını ve tutumunu artırmaya yönelik yeni bir uygulama geliştirmektir. Bu düşünceyle okuyarak yarışma etkinliği tasarlanmıştır. Bu etkinliğin ortaokul öğrencilerinin okuduğunu anlama başarısına ve okumaya yönelik tutumlarına etkisi incelenmiştir. Araştırmada nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden yarı-deneysel model kullanılmıştır. Araştırma 2018-2019 eğitim öğretim yılında Kütahya ili Merkez ilçesi Seyitömer Ortaokulunda öğrenim göre 5. sınıf öğrencileriyle yürütülmüştür. Araştırmanın uygulama süreci 8 hafta sürmüştür. Deney grubunda dersler Okuyarak Yarışıyorum Etkinliği kullanılarak işlenmiş, kontrol grubunda Türkçe Dersi Öğretim Programına göre devam edilmiştir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Ortaokul Öğrencilerine Yönelik Okuma-Anlama Başarı Testi ve Okuma Tutum Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen bulgulara göre Okuyarak Yarışıyorum Etkinliği ile okuma uygulamasının yapıldığı deney grubu, kontrol grubuna göre anlamada daha başarılı olmuştur. Yine araştırma bulgularına göre deney ve kontrol gruplarının Okuma Tutum Ölçeği'nin son testinden aldıkları ortalama puanlar arasında anlamlı bir farkın olduğu görülmüştür. Sonuç olarak bu araştırmayla Okuyarak Yarışıyorum Etkinliğinin okuma eğitiminde kullanılabilecek bir uygulama olduğu ortaya konmuştur.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* Okuyarak Yarışıyorum Etkinliği; okuma becerisi; okuma eğitimi; okuma tutumu; okuma başarısı

### AUTHOR BIODATA

Prof. Dr. Fulya TOPÇUOĞLU ÜNAL works at Kütahya Dumlupınar University in Faculty of Education Department of Turkish Language and Social Science Education. She has got a PhD in Turkish Language Teaching from Marmara University. Language teaching, teacher training, speaking education and reading education are among her fields of interest.

Serpil UYAR works as a Turkish Language Teacher at Seyitömer Secondary School. She received her MA from Kütahya Dumlupınar University. Reading skill is among her fields of interest.