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An Action Research to Improve 5th-Grade Students' Reading Habits*

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
	Reading habit is an important skill that should be acquired from early ages and developed and strengthened throughout students' education. However, there is a noticeable gap in the literature on the use of effective strategies to develop this skill. The present study aims to implement an intervention designed to enhance the reading habits of students identified as having weak reading habits. The research adopted an action research design and was conducted with 26 fifth-grade students and their parents at a public secondary school in Kayseri, Türkiye. The data collection instruments included a personal information form, a reading habit attitude scale, student diaries, a researcher diary, interview forms, and letters written by both students and parents. The data obtained through these multiple sources were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques. The findings of the study revealed a significant improvement in students' attitudes toward reading as a result of the intervention. Moreover, the process contributed positively to the development of students' reading skills and their use of reading strategies. Feedback from both students and parents indicated that the activities implemented were well-received and that there was a desire for their continuation throughout the academic year. Based on the results, it is recommended that teachers design and implement reading activities that encourage the active participation of students in order to foster the development of reading habits. Furthermore, establishing strong collaboration among teachers, parents, and students is essential for supporting the development of sustainable reading habits. **Keywords:** Reading, reading habit, secondary school students, action research

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is widely recognized as one of the essential skills for success in contemporary societies. It is a multifaceted language skill that involves conceptual, developmental, and methodological dimensions, and typically begins with the desire to learn and enjoy the process (Paris, 2005). Reading plays a fundamental role in an individual's lifelong learning journey. Beyond addressing daily life challenges, individuals use reading to foster their cultural growth and awareness (Gee, 2018). Accordingly, reading is a crucial skill across various domains such as healthcare, commerce, economics, technology, and most significantly, education (Çarkıt & Sur, 2023). In this context, both the ability and the habit of reading are considered valuable indicators of a society's socio-economic development (Aras, 2017). A strong link is often drawn between a nation's reading proficiency and its developmental level and global competitiveness, with studies highlighting that the most advanced societies consist of individuals with high reading competence (Krashen, 2004). This underscores the critical importance of fostering reading habits.

The effective application of reading skills largely depends on the development of reading habits. Individuals who integrate reading into their daily routines tend to cultivate such habits naturally (Baba & Affendi, 2020). Consequently, one of the primaries aims of modern education systems is to instill consistent reading habits in students (Ahmed, 2016). Students who develop reading habits generally achieve higher academic success, express themselves more effectively, and navigate social life challenges with greater ease. On the other hand, those who lack reading habits often struggle with communication in everyday life. Research also shows that individuals with limited reading practice tend to underutilize higher-order thinking skills (Karatay, 2015; Kırmızı et al., 2014).

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It is particularly vital for students to acquire strong reading habits during their school years, as achieving a proficient reading level is only possible through sustained and meaningful reading practices. Individuals who develop such habits become more aware of their reading abilities and responsibilities, and they embrace reading as an integral part of life. Conversely, those who do not acquire reading habits are often careless in selecting what they read and typically derive little enjoyment from the activity (Nuttal, 1996). This lack of engagement results in reduced reading frequency and insufficient time spent reading—factors that present serious obstacles to becoming independent readers (Florence et al., 2017). Effective readers, in contrast, are deliberate in their choice of reading materials, which enhances their enjoyment and motivates them to read more—ultimately facilitating their transition into independent readers (Cole, 2009). Therefore, the most crucial role for teachers and parents in helping children develop reading habits is to create environments where they can genuinely enjoy reading.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Reading habits are most effectively cultivated during early childhood and school years. Once formed, these habits tend to persist throughout an individual's life (Greene, 2002). The development of reading habits plays a crucial role in enabling students to access information efficiently and engage in meaningful learning. Numerous studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between reading habits and academic achievement (Bhan & Gupta, 2010; Camp, 2007; Daniel, 2017; Kaur & Pathania, 2015; Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2014; Rabia et al., 2017). Furthermore, cultivating a reading habit contributes significantly to alleviating reading-related anxiety (Aygün, 2021). Research also indicates a strong association between students' reading habits and their reading motivation (Akbabaoğlu & Duban, 2020), as well as their curiosity and desire for exploration (Kapıkıran & Susar-Kırmızı, 2019). In this regard, strong reading habits serve as a key factor in helping students achieve success in both their academic and personal lives (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012). Moreover, a well-established reading culture is a cornerstone in fostering a literate and informed society (Palani, 2012). Therefore, in addition to primary school educators, native language teachers play a vital role in instilling and nurturing reading habits in students.

Reading habits are among the most effective tools in shaping individuals' personalities and fostering sound, critical thinking (Issa et al., 2012). While primary school teachers are responsible for equipping students with fundamental literacy skills, they must also actively support the formation of strong reading habits through targeted strategies and instructional practices (Karakullukcu & Çelik, 2020; Taş, 2018). As students' progress through the education system, native language and literature teachers are expected to reinforce these habits, especially by identifying learners who develop negative attitudes toward reading and implementing interventions to shift these attitudes in a positive direction. It is important to raise students' awareness of the fact that developing strong reading habits is one of the key prerequisites for becoming individuals who can respond to the needs of the modern age—individuals who think independently, critically, and creatively (Tanju, 2010).

In Turkey, a significant number of studies have been conducted to assess the reading habits of students at all levels of education, from primary school to university (Balcı, 2009; Balcı et al., 2012; Bayat & Çetinkaya, 2018; Can et al., 2010; Deniz & Çeçen, 2015; Odabaş et al., 2008; Taşkesenlioğlu, 2013; Yılmaz et al., 2009; Yurtbakan & Erdoğan, 2020). Findings from these studies reveal that students generally exhibit moderate or insufficient reading habits. According to the 2018 PISA results, Turkey ranked 40th out of 79 countries in reading proficiency (MoNE, 2019), while in the 2022 PISA assessment, the country ranked 36th among 81 nations (MoNE, 2023). These rankings show that Turkey lagged behind 39 countries in 2018 and 35 in 2022 in terms of reading comprehension performance. Such findings clearly illustrate that reading has not yet become a firmly rooted habit among students, making it difficult to claim that learners across all educational levels—from primary to university—possess well-developed reading habits.

In addition to these findings, a substantial body of national and international research has explored the relationship between reading habits and various influencing factors (Aksaçlıoğlu & Yılmaz, 2007; Aksoy, 2017; Bozkurt & Memit, 2013; Eminoğlu & Özkan, 2019; McGeown et al., 2015; Pürsün, 2024; Şahin, 2019; Yıldız & Akyol, 2011). These studies examine the connections between students' reading habits and factors such as academic performance, attitudes toward reading, motivation, spelling accuracy, reading comprehension awareness, and family attitudes toward reading. The results consistently suggest that reading habits are significantly associated with these variables. However, despite the breadth of existing research, action-oriented studies that seek to actively improve students' reading habits remain quite limited in the Turkish context (Şeref & Şahin, 2022). This gap points to the need for practical research that can guide classroom teachers—especially at the secondary school level—in promoting and enhancing students' reading habits.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to offer a model implementation for classroom teachers who serve as field practitioners, with the goal of enhancing students' reading habits. In doing so, the study seeks to address a gap frequently noted in the literature concerning practical approaches to fostering reading habits among students. Within this context, the research problem and sub-questions guiding the study are as follows:

Main Research Question

- How can the reading habits of 5th-grade students be improved?

Sub-questions

- What is the impact of the implemented action plan on students' attitudes toward reading habits?
- What are students' perceptions of the action plan designed to improve their reading habits?
- What are parents' views on the action plan implemented to support the development of their children's reading habits?

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using the action research design, a qualitative approach that enables practitioners to investigate and improve practices within real-world settings. Action research is defined as a systematic inquiry undertaken by educators with the aim of enhancing their own teaching practices and addressing context-specific problems (Johnson, 2015; Swann, 2002). In this model, theory and practice are intertwined, and the process is structured around the identification of a problem, the implementation of an intervention, and reflective analysis to guide subsequent actions (Avison et al., 1999; Elliott, 1991). In the field of education, action research is widely used to develop solutions to issues observed in school or classroom settings (Köklü, 1993). Often referred to as "teacher research," this approach empowers educators to take an active and informed role in responding to students' needs through continuous and systematic engagement (Swann, 2002). Considering these characteristics, the current study was designed within the framework of action research, as it aimed to investigate and enhance the reading habits of secondary school students through a planned intervention.

The study was carried out over a 12-week period within a single academic semester. At the outset, the researcher conducted preliminary assessments to understand the students' reading profiles. To evaluate reading levels, students were asked to perform reading tasks, and their performances were recorded using structured observation forms. Additionally, their reading habits were assessed through informal interviews in which students provided information about how often they read and what types of books they typically chose.

The initial findings indicated that students had underdeveloped reading habits. This was further supported by observations shared by parents during a meeting held at the beginning of the semester. Parents reported that their children did not engage in regular reading and expressed concerns about the lack of motivation toward reading. They also requested that the teacher implement a systematic effort to address this issue and pledged their support for such an initiative. Based on these needs, the research problem was clearly defined as the improvement of students' reading habits. To design an effective intervention, the researcher consulted with two field experts, and an action plan was developed in light of their recommendations. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the process, a Validity Committee composed of experienced educators and researchers in the field was established. This committee played a consultative and supervisory role throughout the implementation by providing feedback on key stages of the research.

The action research process followed a cyclical model consisting of planning, implementation, analysis, and revision, as suggested by Sagor (2005) and Johnson (2015). During the planning phase, the overall timeline of the study was determined, and a week-by-week schedule was created. Upon the committee's recommendation, the research duration was set at 12 weeks. Taking into account the age and developmental level of the students, it was decided that one book would be read every two weeks, followed by a two-hour classroom session dedicated to literary discussion and critique. In coordination with the teachers' council, it was agreed that one lesson hour each week would be officially devoted to in-class reading activities. However, to foster a more positive and engaging reading experience, the action plan also included reading sessions conducted in diverse settings outside the classroom—such as the school library, canteen, garden, and theater hall. To increase student ownership of the reading process, it was proposed that the students themselves select the books they would read during the intervention. Accordingly, the researcher brought 35 books to the classroom, representing a range of genres and difficulty levels appropriate for fifth-grade students. The students reviewed these books and collaboratively chose six titles to read and analyze over the course of the semester. They also determined the sequence in which the selected books would be read. This student-led selection process was integrated into the final action plan. The weekly structure of the reading intervention, including the schedule and selected books, is presented in Table 1, which outlines the detailed planning of the 12-week action research implementation.

Table 1.
Research Action Plan

Item no	Weeks	Actions	Data Collection Tools
1.	Week 1	1. Validity Committee Meeting	Discussion Notes
2.	Week 1	Pre-test (Reading habit attitude)	Reading Habit Attitude Scale
3.	1-2. Week	1. Reading the book	Diary, Interviews
4.	Week 2	1. Criticizing the book	Observation, Researcher's Diary
5.	3-4. Week	2. Reading the book	Diary, Interviews
6.	Week 4	2. Criticizing the book	Observation, Researcher's Diary
7.	Week 4	2. Validity Committee Meeting	Discussion Notes
8.	5-6 Week	3.Reading the book	Diary, Interviews
9.	Week 6	3. Criticizing the book	Observation, Researcher's Diary

10.	7-8 Week	4. Reading the book	Diary, Interviews
11.	8th Week	4. Criticizing the book	Observation, Researcher's Diary
12.	8th Week	3. Validity Committee Meeting	Discussion Notes
13.	9-10 Week	5. Reading the book	Diary, Interviews
14.	Week 10	5. Criticizing the book	Observation, Researcher's Diary
15.	11-12 Week	6. Reading the book	Diary, Interviews
16.	Week 12	6. Criticizing the book	Observation, Researcher's Diary
17.	Week 12	4. Validity Committee Meeting	Discussion Notes
18.	Week 12	Post-test (Reading habit attitude)	Reading Habit Attitude Scale
19.	Week 12	Taking student opinions	Student Letters, Interview
20.	Week 12	Receiving parents' opinions	Parent's Letters

In the sessions labeled "Criticizing the book," students participated in structured group discussions guided by the teacher, focusing on elements such as plot, characters, and themes. They engaged in critical questioning, peer dialogues, and short written reflections. Some sessions also included creative activities like role-playing or drawing, aimed at deepening their engagement with the texts and supporting the development of lasting reading habits.

2.1. Participants of the Research

The study was conducted in a single 5th-grade classroom at a secondary school located in Kayseri. A total of 26 students participated in the research. Additionally, data were gathered from the students' parents during the study. Through this, parents shared their observations and feedback about the process by writing letters to the researcher at the conclusion of the study. By the end of the research, letters were received from the fathers of 8 students and the mothers of 18 students. Since the study was designed as action research, a purposeful sampling method was used to select the participants. Detailed information about the participants is provided in Table 2.

Table 2.
The Information of the Research Participants

Participant	Features		(f)
Students	**Age**	10	3
		11	21
		12	2
	Gender	Female	11
		Male	15
Parents	**Age**	30-35	6
		36-40	8
		41-45	5
		45+	7
	Gender	Female	18
		Male	8
	Occupation	Housewife	13
		Worker	7
		Civil Servant	4
		Self-employment	2

2.2. Data Collection Tools

The data collection instruments used in this study included a personal information form created by the researcher, the book reading habits attitude scale originally developed by Gömleksiz (2004) and later adapted by Balcı (2009) for elementary students, as well as student diaries, the researcher's reflective diary, interview forms, and letters written by both students and their parents.

2.2.1. Personal information form and attitude scale regarding reading habits

In this study, a personal information form was created by the researcher to gather demographic details about the participating students and their parents. To assess students' attitudes toward reading habits, a scale originally developed by Gömleksiz (2004) and later adapted for elementary school students by Balcı (2009) was utilized. Gömleksiz initially designed the scale for university-level students, with item factor loadings ranging from .36 to .63 and a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .88. To make the scale suitable for use with elementary school students, Balcı (2009) revised it based on expert feedback and conducted a new factor analysis using data from 150 students. As a result of this adaptation, the factor loadings were found to range between .40 and .71, and the internal consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) increased to .92. These

findings confirmed that the revised scale is a valid and reliable instrument for measuring the attitudes of elementary students toward reading habits. The scale consists of 30 items grouped under six sub-factors and is structured as a 5-point Likert-type scale, with response options scored from 1 to 5. Among the items, 9 are negatively worded and require reverse scoring. The sub-dimensions of the scale are titled Love, Habit, Necessity, Desire, Effect, and Benefit. Necessary permissions were obtained for the use of this measurement tool in the current study.

2.2.2. Student diaries

Participant diaries serve as valuable data sources that document all stages of the research process (Johnson, 2015; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Their sincere, personal, and straightforward nature enhances their significance as data collection tools in qualitative studies (Altun, 2017). During the implementation phase of this study, six volunteer students-maintained diaries to record their daily experiences.

These students were purposefully selected based on specific criteria: (1) regular attendance throughout the intervention process, (2) active participation in writing activities, and (3) willingness and ability to reflect on their learning experiences in writing. These diaries aimed to capture students' reflections and impressions of the process, thereby offering insight into how the intervention was perceived and internalized by participants.

2.2.3. Researcher's diary

During the action process, a researcher diary was maintained to document detailed observations and critical reflections related to the implementation. The diary served as an essential tool for recording field notes, contextual observations, and interpretive insights regarding the course of the intervention. The entries captured the researcher's perspective as an external observer, including emotional reactions, evaluative judgments, and analytical comments on the instructional practices and classroom dynamics. Particular attention was paid to students' engagement, responses to the book critique activities, and the overall classroom atmosphere. This diary contributed to the triangulation of qualitative data by complementing student reflections and interview findings, thus enhancing the depth and trustworthiness of the research.

2.2.4. Interview form

In action research, interviews serve as a valuable data collection method to gather information that cannot be directly observed (Creswell, 2015; Johnson, 2015). This method was employed in the study to capture students' perspectives on the action process and to enhance data variety. To this end, the researcher prepared a draft of a semi-structured interview guide containing 10 questions. Feedback was sought from three subject matter experts, who reviewed the items for content validity. Based on their consensus, seven questions were selected for the final interview form. A pilot test was carried out with four students, and following their feedback, the experts approved the use of the form in the main study. Interviews were then conducted with 10 volunteer students during and after the research period. These students were purposefully selected to reflect diversity in gender, academic achievement, and engagement in classroom activities. This strategy ensured the inclusion of varied perspectives and contributed to the credibility and richness of the data collected.

2.2.5. Letters

At the start of the study, parents were informed about the research process and it was agreed that they would share their observations and feedback by writing letters at the conclusion of the study. Accordingly, by the end of the process, letters were received from the fathers of 8 students and the mothers of 18 students. Additionally, during the final week, 18 students volunteered to anonymously write letters expressing their thoughts, feelings, and suggestions about the action research process.

2.3. Data Collection

Prior to the commencement of the action research, a meeting was convened to inform the parents about the research objectives and the proposed action plan. All necessary permissions were duly obtained, and parents were requested to complete a voluntary participation consent form. By signing this form, parents confirmed their voluntary consent, as well as that of their children, to participate in the study. Data collection was carried out in accordance with the action plan, utilizing instruments such as the reading habits attitude scale, interview forms, student diaries, the researcher's reflective diary, and letters. Ethical approval for the study was sought from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee at Gaziantep University. The application was reviewed and placed on the agenda of the committee meeting held on February 18, 2021, under item number 4. Following the review, approval was granted under protocol number 19727, confirming that no ethical violations were identified in the study. The data were collected systematically according to the action research plan.

2.4. Data Analysis

Throughout the action research process, the data collected through various instruments were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. To evaluate the pre-test and post-test results obtained from the Reading Habit Attitude Scale, a dependent samples t-test was conducted via the SPSS 26.00 statistical software. Since the t-test for dependent samples requires that the difference scores between the paired measurements follow a normal distribution, the assumption of normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The outcomes of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Shapiro-Wilk Test Significance Level Results of Pre-Test Post-Test Difference Scores

Factors	n	S	p
Love	26	.969	.599*
Habit	26	.944	.166*
Necessity	26	.932	.086*
Desire	26	.979	.855*
Effect	26	.967	.545*
Benefit	26	.964	.478*
General	26	.965	.506*

*p>.05

The Shapiro-Wilk test results, conducted to assess the normality of the difference scores between the pre-test and post-test measurements of students' reading self-efficacy, indicated that all p-values for the overall scale and its subscales were greater than .05. This finding suggests that the distribution of the difference scores does not significantly deviate from normality, thereby justifying the use of parametric statistical methods. Accordingly, the paired samples t-test was employed to analyze the pre-test and post-test scores on the Reading Habit Attitude Scale, and the observed changes were evaluated within the framework of the relevant subscales.

In addition to the quantitative findings, qualitative data were gathered through interviews, student and parent letters and reflective diaries throughout the research process. These qualitative data were examined using content analysis, a commonly used technique in qualitative research. As Creswell (2015) points out, integrating quantitative and qualitative data can offer a more comprehensive understanding and can be jointly interpreted in the discussion section. In line with this approach, both types of data collected during the study were synthesized and interpreted together in the discussion section.

2.5. Validity and Reliability

Scientific research quality is fundamentally evaluated through its validity and reliability. In the context of action research, these concepts encompass internal validity, external validity, internal reliability, and external reliability, as emphasized in the literature (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). To strengthen internal validity in this study, prolonged engagement with participants, comprehensive and focused data collection methods, methodological triangulation, and consultation with field experts were implemented. External validity was addressed by objectively presenting both qualitative and quantitative findings without interpretation, alongside limiting the sample to fifth-grade students to define the scope. Internal reliability was supported by gathering data through multiple forms, including written reflections and practical observations, with direct participant quotations systematically coded (e.g., Student 1, Student 2) and organized thematically. Additionally, external reliability was enhanced by providing thorough descriptions of participant characteristics, the research process, data collection instruments, and analytical procedures, thereby allowing for transparency and reproducibility.

3. FINDINGS

In this section, the findings regarding the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the research are presented.

3.1. Findings on the Quantitative Dimension of the Study

The results of the paired samples t-test for the pre-test and post-test application conducted with the analysis of the quantitative data obtained in the research process are presented in Table 4 in the context of the scale and sub-scales.

Table 4.
The Paired Samples t-Test Results of Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean Scores for Sub-scales and Overall Scale

Measurement		N	$\bar{X}$	S	SD	t	p
(I. Subscale / Love)	Pre-test	26	2.98	.53	25	-12.28	.000*
	Post-test	26	4.49	.39			
(II. Subscale / Habit)	Pre-test	26	2.87	.57	25	-11.36	.000*
	Post-test	26	4.52	.43			
(III. Subscale / Necessity)	Pre-test	26	2.93	.58	25	-6.48	.000*
	Post-test	26	4.24	.71			
(IV. Subscale / Desire)	Pre-test	26	3.14	.78	25	-7.19	.000*
	Post-test	26	4.55	.52			
(V. Subscale / Effect)	Pre-test	26	3.22	.76	26	-7.26	.000*
	Post-test	26	4.52	.49			
(VI. Subscale / Benefit)	Pre-test	26	3.45	.72	25	-6.35	.000*
	Post-test	26	4.56	.50			
(Scale Overall)	Pre-test	26	3.13	.53	25	-9.68	.000*
	Post-test	26	4.49	.41			

*P <.01

As shown in Table 4, a statistically significant difference was observed between the pre-test and post-test mean scores for the first subscale, Love [$t_{(25)}$= -12.28, p < .01]. The mean score for this subscale increased from $\bar{X}$ = 2.98 prior to the implementation of the action plan to $\bar{X}$ = 4.49 afterward. This result suggests that the action plan contributed to enhancing students' affection and appreciation for reading.

Similarly, the paired samples t-test revealed a significant difference in the second subscale, Habit [$t_{(25)}$= -11.36, p < .01]. The mean score for this subscale rose from $\bar{X}$ = 2.87 before the intervention to $\bar{X}$ = 4.52 post-intervention. This indicates a substantial improvement in students' reading habits following the action plan.

For the third subscale, Necessity, the t-test results also demonstrated a statistically significant difference [$t_{(25)}$= -6.48, p < .01]. The pre-test mean score of $\bar{X}$ = 2.93 increased to $\bar{X}$ = 4.24 in the post-test, implying a heightened perception among students of reading as a necessary and valuable activity.

The results further indicate a meaningful change in the fourth subscale, Desire [$t_{(25)}$= -7.19, p < .01], where the mean score improved from $\bar{X}$ = 3.14 to $\bar{X}$ = 4.55. This finding reflects a notable increase in students' intrinsic motivation and eagerness to read as a result of the action plan.

With regard to the fifth subscale, Effect, a statistically significant improvement was also found [$t_{(25)}$= -7.26, p < .01], with mean scores increasing from $\bar{X}$ = 3.22 to $\bar{X}$ = 4.52. This outcome suggests that students developed a more positive outlook on the influence and outcomes of reading.

Finally, in the sixth subscale, Benefit, the paired samples t-test revealed a significant difference [$t_{(25)}$= -6.35, p < .01]. The average score rose from $\bar{X}$ = 3.45 to $\bar{X}$ = 4.56, indicating that students became more aware of and valued the benefits associated with regular reading.

When evaluating the overall results from the reading habit attitude scale, a statistically significant difference was found between the pre-test and post-test total scores [$t_{(25)}$= -9.68, p < .01]. The overall mean score increased from $\bar{X}$ = 3.13 before the action plan to $\bar{X}$ = 4.49 after its implementation. This comprehensive finding provides strong evidence that the action plan was effective in positively shaping students' attitudes toward reading and cultivating more favorable reading behaviors.

3.2. Findings on the Qualitative Dimension of the Study

In this part of the research, the findings obtained as a result of analyzing the data obtained by qualitative data collection tools with content analysis are presented in tables within the framework of the research questions.

Table 5.
Findings on Students' Perceptions and Opinions on the Research Process

Item no	Theme	Sub-Theme	(f)
1.	Reading Skills and Strategies	Improvement in ability to read aloud	18
		Improvement in silent reading skills	18
		Improvement in speed reading	14
		Highlight important points	14
		Abstracting	13
		Taking notes	12
		Search for unfamiliar words	10
2.	Like	Reading books in different places	20
		Application of bring your apple and book and join	20
		Discussion lessons	14
		Determining the books to read lesson	13
		Students starting to create their own library	10
3.	Dislike	Book criticism courses are found to be insufficient	8
		Insufficient reading lessons at school	6
		Inability to go to libraries as a class	6
		Application of bring your apple and book and join	1
4.	Effects and Benefits	More reading	21
		Read with love	20
		Effective communication	18
		Watching less TV	18
		Spending less time on the internet	17
		Enriching imagination	15
		Enrich the vocabulary	15
		Learning new information	14
		Creating a book friendship	6

According to Table 5, it can be stated that action research contributes significantly to students' reading skills and use of strategies. In this sense, the students stated that the activities carried out during the action research process contributed to the development of their reading aloud, silent reading, and speed reading. It was stated in the data obtained from the students that the action plan applied was also effective in determining the important sections in the book, highlighting these sections or gaining the habit of underlining these sections during reading process. Summarizing the book read and taking notes for the parts that are considered important or liked during the reading process were determined as the acquisitions made by the students in the research process. In addition to these, some of the students expressed their views on the point that they gained the habit of searching for unfamiliar words that they encountered in the book they read. Some of the findings obtained based on the theme of "Reading Skills and Strategies" are given below.

"I was afraid of reading books aloud in class because I was reading slowly. This application has improved both my reading aloud and my reading silently." (Student 9, Interview form).

"We read two books every month. Now I think I have started reading faster." (Student 12, Letter).

"Our vocabulary was not well developed before we started this activity. Now I am searching for words that I do not know while reading a book. Thus, our vocabulary gets richer." (Student 6, Interview form).

"While reading the book, I started to highlight the sentences I liked. I use these sentences in discussion lessons." (Student 5, Diary).

In the theme of "Like", there are features and aspects of the research process that are liked by the students. In this context, the students stated that, during the research process, they liked reading books in different places and bring your apple and book and join the most. In addition to these, discussion lessons in which the books read were criticized and the book review lesson, which was conducted to determine the books to be read, were determined as other aspects of the process that were liked by the students. Also, the students' obtaining the books they determined at the beginning of the research process and starting to create a library of their own are seen as favourite features. Some of the findings obtained depending on the theme of "Like" are given below.

"I loved reading books while eating apples outside. In our school, such activities should be done more, I think this would be enjoyed by everyone." (Student 1, Interview form).

"My favourite activity was the "get your apple and book and come" activity. Because cushions were laid in the garden, we both ate our apples and read books. I liked this very much." (Student 8, Letter).

"I and my friends liked to read books outside, in nature the most." (Student 1, Diary).

Under the theme of "Dislike", there are features and aspects of the research process that are not liked and criticized by the students. In this sense, students criticized the action research process mostly in terms of finding the book criticism lessons insufficient. At the end of the two-week reading sessions, two course hours of book criticism lessons were held. In these lessons, the students presented their opinions about the book read and asked questions about the book to their friends. Likewise, in these lectures, the favourite and disliked aspects of the book read were discussed. The students wanted these lessons to be longer and this request was reflected in 2. Validity Committee Meeting, but it was deemed appropriate to limit these lessons to two lesson hours at the end of the two-week reading sessions in order not to interrupt the annual planning prepared within the framework of the general outputs of the course, and it was recommended that the practice continues in this way. Another point those students criticized during the process was that the reading lessons were found to be insufficient in the school, which was conducted for 1 lesson per week. Since this decision was taken by the Turkish Department Teachers' Meeting during the planning of the teaching process at the beginning of the year, no new regulation has been made on this issue. The inability to go to public libraries as a classroom during the research process has been another criticism. Due to the fact that public libraries are outside the boundaries of the district, the necessary transportation facilities and permits could not be provided, so the relevant activity could not be carried out. In the 3. Validity Committee Meeting, it was mentioned that the relevant activity should be carried out in the school library and the activity was carried out in the school library. Along with these, a student said that he/she did not like the practice of 'bring your apple and book and join', and stated that he/she did not like the apple as a reason for this and suggested that the activity be held with another fruit. Some of the findings obtained depending on the theme of "Dislike" are given below.

"What I didn't like was that the book discussion lessons were insufficient. Because not everyone had enough time to speak." (Student 9, Interview form).

"I did not like that the reading time with our friends at school is only one hour a week." (Student 4, Letter).

"Book discussion lessons could have been longer." (Student 7, Letter).

"I did not like the practice of take your apple and your book and come because I do not like apples. It could have been another fruit instead of an apple." (Student 2, Diary).

Under the theme of "Effects and Benefits", there are findings of the research process regarding the effects and benefits of the students' reading habits. Accordingly, most of the students stated that the action plan implemented enabled them to read books more and fondly. A significant portion of the students stated that their communication skills improved and they could express themselves better and they spent less time in front of the television and on the internet. It was determined that the action research carried out together with them contributed to the enrichment of students' imagination and vocabulary and learning new information. In the interviews, some of the students stated that they formed a friendship through books among themselves during the action research process. This situation is considered very important in terms of both effective communication and creating a positive classroom atmosphere. Some of the findings obtained depending on the theme of "Effects and Benefits" are given below.

"I used to read very few books, now I finish a book every two weeks. And now I read books without my parents warn me. In other words, I can read more books than before and without getting bored." (Student 2, Interview form).

"Before, I did not read many books. Either I did not have time or I found an excuse not to read. I did not like to read books very much. Now we are reading as a class and my reading has progressed a lot." (Student 4, Letter).

"Teacher, my sincere idea is that while I was reading 2 or 3 books a year, now I read two books a month." (Student 7, Letter).

"Since we read books, I no longer play games on the computer for a long time." (Student 6, Interview form).

Table 6.
Findings on Parent's Opinions on the Research Process

Item no	Theme	Sub-Theme	(f)
1.	Effects and Benefits	Spending more time for reading	26
		Reading willingly and fondly	20
		Quality leisure time	19
		Decrease in TV watching habit	14
		Decrease in the habit of spending time on the Internet	14
		To be able to express themselves better	12
		The development of the imaginative world	12
		Improving vocabulary	12
		Increased reading speed	10
2.	Recommendations	Continuation of the application	26
		Organizing reading activities to include parents	11
		Studying for unknown words	2
		Increasing the number of books	2
		Keeping a dictionary book	3

According to Table 6, under the theme of "Effects and Benefits", the effects and benefits of the research process on students 'reading habits are included in the context of the parents' observations and determinations. In the letters they wrote within this framework, all of the parents of the students stated that the students spent more time to read within the framework of the action plan applied. Again, a significant portion of the parents stated that the students read the books that were decided to be read in the process voluntarily and fondly, they spent their free time in a higher quality compared to before, they observed a significant decrease in their habits of watching television and spending leisure time on the internet, and they are satisfied with this result. Along with these, some of the parents stated that their children started to express themselves better, their imagination and vocabulary improved and their reading speed increased. Some of the findings obtained depending on the theme of "Effects and Benefits" are given below.

"My daughter didn't use to read a lot of books in the past, but this year she started to read more." (Parent 1, Letter).

"My daughter used to get excited and stutter, especially when talking to a foreigner. With the contribution of the books, she read and the work you did throughout the semester, she started to express herself comfortably and without hesitation." (Parent 22, Letter).

Under the "Suggestions" theme, the suggestions included in the letters of the parents regarding the research process and thought to contribute to future practices are included. In this sense, it was stated that they were satisfied with the application carried out in all of the parents' letters and it was requested to continue the application in the future semesters and years. In addition to this, in a significant part of the parents' letters, it was recommended to organize reading activities in which the parents of the students would be included. Again, in two parents' letters, it was stated that conducting in-class studies on words whose meaning are unknown during the book reading process will contribute to students' understanding of the books read. In two parents' letters, it was stated that the number of books read was insufficient and that reading one book every week would be more efficient. Some of the findings obtained in the context of the "Recommendations" theme are given below.

"I hope you will continue this activity in the future, and thank you for your interest." (Parent 9, Letter).

"I think that having a reading activity that we will also attend will motivate our children more." (Parent 25, Letter).

"There were a lot of words he didn't know. He learned these by asking me. I think it would be useful to study new vocabulary in your lesson." (Parent 5, Letter).

Table 7.
Findings on the Researcher's Opinions on the Research Process

Item no	Theme	Sub-Theme	(f)
1.	Effects and Benefits	Increased time allocated to reading	4
		Enjoying reading books	4
		Increased reading speed	3
		Enriching the imagination	2
		Development of vocabulary	2
2	Process	Identifying interesting books	3
		Creating a comfortable reading environment	3
		Planning book evaluation courses	2
		Organizing interactive book review courses	2
		Preparing a book dictionary list	2
3.	Recommendations	Continuation of the implementation	3
		Disseminating the application at different grade levels	2
		Organizing reading activities that involve parents	2
		Preparing a dictionary notebook	2

According to Table 7, the "Effects and Benefits" theme includes the observations and determinations of the researcher regarding the effects and benefits of the implemented action plan on students' reading habits. Accordingly, the researcher found that the students allocated more time for reading within the framework of the action plan. Similarly, the researcher stated that students liked the books that were decided to be read, students' reading speed increased, and students' imagination and vocabulary improved. Some of the findings obtained under the theme of "Effects and Benefits" are presented below.

> *In order to make the study of unfamiliar vocabulary in the action research process more effective, I think it would be more useful to provide students with a dictionary notebook at the beginning of the process and have them do their vocabulary studies in this dictionary notebook (Researcher Diary, Week 6).*

> *It would be appropriate to say that the studies have led to an increase in the students' reading speed (Researcher Diary, Week 8).*

The "Process" theme includes the findings of the researcher for the action research process applied. Accordingly, the researcher determined that it is important to carry out the process of developing students' reading habits with interesting books, to create a comfortable reading environment in the process, to plan book evaluation lessons, to organize interactive book evaluation lessons, and to create a book dictionary list. Some of the findings related to the "Process" theme are presented below.

> *It would be useful to prepare book dictionary lists in the process to support students' concept and vocabulary learning through the books read (Researcher Diary, Week 5).*

> *I think one of the most useful aspects of the process is the book evaluation lessons that we realized interactively (Researcher Diary, Week 2).*

The "Recommendations" theme consists of the suggestions in the researcher's diary that are thought to contribute to future implementations. The researcher stated that the action plan was useful and that the implementation should be continued in the next process. The researcher's suggestions for the implementation included extending the implementation at different grade levels, organizing reading activities that include parents, and preparing a dictionary notebook for the implementation process. Some of the findings obtained under the theme of ""Recommendations"" are presented below.

> *In order to make the study of unfamiliar vocabulary more effective in the action research process, it would be more useful to provide students with a dictionary notebook at the beginning of the process and to have them do their vocabulary studies on this dictionary notebook (Researcher's Diary, Week 5).*

> *The practice should be extended to different grade levels. I can state that there was a significant improvement in students' reading habits (Researcher Diary, Week 12).*

4. RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study implemented an action research approach aimed at enhancing the reading habits of 5th-grade students. Initially, the investigation focused on assessing the impact of a specifically designed action plan and its associated activities on students' attitudes toward reading habits. To this end, pre-test and post-test measurements of students' attitudes were conducted using the book reading habit attitude scale, and the resulting data were analyzed via paired-sample t-tests. The

findings revealed a statistically significant improvement across all sub-dimensions of the scale—namely love, necessity, desire, habit, effect, and benefit—indicating that the intervention positively influenced students' perceptions of reading. This outcome aligns with existing literature emphasizing the role of perceiving reading as a pleasurable activity in the formation of habitual reading behaviors (Bayat & Çetinkaya, 2018; Cole, 2009; Çağ, 2023; Florence et al., 2017; Gallik, 1999; Huang et al., 2014; Tanju, 2010). Accordingly, various activities were implemented throughout the research process to foster students' enjoyment of reading. Key interventions included book review lessons to assist students in selecting reading materials, the 'bring your apple and book' initiative, reading sessions conducted in diverse locations outside the traditional classroom setting, and structured discussions on the books read. Qualitative data analysis supported the quantitative results, demonstrating these activities' substantial effect on enhancing students' love and desire for reading.

The literature also supports the notion that regular reading practices contribute not only to transforming reading into a habit but also to perceiving it as an essential part of daily life (Arslan et al., 2009). Moreover, consistent engagement with reading activities is known to significantly benefit readers' linguistic, cognitive, personal, and social development (Merga, 2017; Pizzi & Rius-Ulldemolins, 2024). Within this context, the weekly reading activities conducted at both school and home are believed to have played a crucial role in reinforcing students' perception of reading as a necessity. Additionally, findings derived from qualitative data underscored the importance of interactive book discussion lessons in fostering students' awareness of the developmental contributions of reading. These results corroborate the conclusions drawn by Şeref and Şahin (2022), who highlighted the significance of interactive book evaluation courses. Collectively, these findings affirm that the action research positively influenced students' overall attitudes toward reading habits.

Secondly, the study examined students' perspectives regarding the strengths and limitations of the action research process to provide an in-depth understanding of its effects. The data indicated that the intervention significantly supported the enhancement of students' reading skills and strategy utilization. According to interviews and student diaries, the activities improved students' abilities in oral reading, silent reading, and reading speed. The book review lessons contributed to cultivating habits such as selecting meaningful passages, highlighting, and annotating. Furthermore, students employed foundational reading strategies including summarizing texts, noting favorite excerpts, and searching for unfamiliar vocabulary encountered during reading. These observations align with the literature, which emphasizes that effective reading involves the acquisition of various physical, cognitive, and affective skills and strategies, typically developed through active practice (Afflerbach et al., 2008; Akyol & Kodan, 2016; Baydık, 2011; Carrell, 1998; Yang, 2006). Accordingly, this study appears to have supported students in gaining valuable experiential knowledge of reading strategies and skills.

One of the objectives of this research was to identify features of the implemented practices that students favored or criticized, thereby providing detailed feedback for future researchers and practitioners. Throughout the study, students expressed a preference for reading in diverse environments outside the classroom and for the 'bring your apple and book' initiative. Additional favored activities included book discussion lessons, book selection lessons, and the opportunity to establish personal libraries. These preferences support prior research findings emphasizing the importance of cultivating a love for books and reading during the development of reading habits (Arslan et al., 2009; Baba & Affendi, 2020; Huang et al., 2014; Merga, 2017). Fostering positive attitudes toward reading through engaging activities is widely recognized as essential in this developmental process (Cole, 2009), and this principle was consciously integrated into the research design.

Conversely, identifying elements of the program that students found unsatisfactory is equally important for enhancing future implementations. The primary critique pertained to the perceived insufficiency of book criticism lessons, which were held biweekly for two class hours. In these sessions, students presented their opinions and discussed aspects they liked or disliked about the books. Students expressed a desire for extended durations for these lessons. Another notable criticism concerned the limited frequency of reading lessons at school, which occurred once weekly due to pre-existing departmental decisions established prior to the research. Furthermore, the absence of a public library visit as part of the program was mentioned as a shortcoming. A singular student also voiced dislike for the 'bring your apple and book' activity due to a personal aversion to apples, suggesting the inclusion of alternative fruits. Overall, the majority of criticisms related to scheduling and logistical constraints, underscoring the importance of accommodating student feedback during the planning and implementation stages of action research (Creswell, 2015; Johnson, 2015; Köklü, 1993). Due to limitations concerning time, school resources, and curricular demands, no modifications could be enacted during the study in response to these concerns.

Thirdly, the study evaluated changes in students' reading habits based on parental feedback and researcher observations to enhance data triangulation and involve families as key stakeholders. Parents reported that their children dedicated more time to reading within the framework of the intervention, engaged with the selected books voluntarily and with enthusiasm, and exhibited a notable reduction in television viewing and internet use during leisure time, which they welcomed. Parents also observed significant improvements in their children's self-expression, imagination, vocabulary, and reading speed. These parental observations were consistent with data gathered from student interviews and the researcher's diary, which noted enhanced verbal expression in Turkish classes and increased reading speed throughout the intervention period. Students themselves reported increased reading frequency and enjoyment, improved communication skills, and reduced screen time. This aligns with existing research underscoring the pivotal role of families in nurturing reading habits (Aksoy, 2014; OECD, 2002; Tanju, 2010; Yıldız, 2016; Yusof, 2010). Accordingly, family involvement was purposefully integrated into the research process, both as observers and contributors.

At the conclusion of the study, both parents and the researcher offered recommendations based on their observations of changes in students' reading habits and reflections on the research process. Parents expressed satisfaction with the intervention and advocated for its continuation in future terms and academic years. Suggestions included organizing reading activities that actively involve parents and increasing the frequency of book reading sessions from biweekly to weekly. Parents also noted that when children encountered unfamiliar words during reading, they sought their meanings from parents, highlighting the need for classroom activities focused on vocabulary development related to these words. In response, the researcher recommended initiating a dictionary of unfamiliar words at the outset of future interventions, as recorded in the researcher's diary. Furthermore, expanding the program to include multiple grade levels and increasing parental engagement in reading activities were proposed. Considering these recommendations is expected to enhance the quality and effectiveness of subsequent research and practice.

4.1. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

While this action research provides meaningful insights into enhancing 5th-grade students' reading habits, certain limitations should be acknowledged to contextualize the findings. One important constraint relates to the limited sample size and setting. The study was conducted with a small group of students from a single public school, which restricts the transferability of the results to broader or more diverse educational environments.

Additionally, the relatively short duration of the implementation may have limited the depth of observed changes in students' reading behaviors. Longer-term interventions could offer greater insight into the sustainability and long-term impact of efforts to foster reading habits. The absence of a control group also presents a methodological limitation. Although action research prioritizes reflection and responsiveness within a real-world context, the lack of a comparison group makes it difficult to attribute observed outcomes solely to the intervention.

Furthermore, the study relied primarily on self-reported data sources, including student diaries and interviews. While these tools provide valuable qualitative insights, they are subject to potential biases such as social desirability or limited self-awareness, especially given the developmental stage of the participants. Acknowledging these limitations not only promotes transparency but also highlights directions for future research, such as studies with larger and more diverse samples, extended intervention periods, and the integration of mixed-method designs to provide a more comprehensive picture of how to support lasting reading habits in young learners. In light of these findings and limitations, several recommendations can be made to guide future studies and educational practices aimed at fostering reading habits in middle school students:

- Studies can be conducted to determine the factors affecting students' reading habits.
- The research can be repeated at different grade levels.
- Experimental studies can be conducted in which methods and techniques that support the development of reading habits are applied.
- Qualitative studies can be conducted to examine students' opinions about their reading habits.
- Studies examining teachers' opinions on students' reading habits can be performed.

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