

PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS HOMEWORK FOR EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study aims to explore and analyze the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding homework practices for early elementary school students. The primary focus is to gain insights into the beliefs and attitudes of both key stakeholders in the educational process. Homework is an integral component of the educational experience for early elementary school students, playing a crucial role in reinforcing classroom learning and fostering independent study habits. However, varying perceptions among parents and teachers regarding the utility, frequency, and impact of homework can significantly influence its effectiveness. This study seeks to bridge the gap in understanding between these two groups, to offer practical propositions to policymakers, parents, and teachers to improve the classroom. A survey-based research approach was employed to collect the data from a sample of 100 parents and 30 teachers from diverse elementary schools across Indonesia. An electronic questionnaire was designed and distributed through the network of parents' school committees and teachers at different educational institutions. The survey encompassed questions related to the perceived benefits and drawbacks of homework, the amount of time spent on homework, and preferences for homework types. Quantitative data analysis technique, descriptive statistics analysis, was utilized to derive conclusions from the collected responses. Findings from this research contribute to the existing body of knowledge on homework practices and serve as a foundation for collaborative efforts between parents and teachers to optimize the homework experience for early elementary school students.

INTRODUCTION

Homework is an integral component of the experience constructing the students' knowledge and skills, which contributes to the reinforcement of classroom learning and the development of independent study habits. Understanding the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the benefits of homework is essential for creating effective learning environment for early elementary school students. This paper aims to investigate into the perspectives of parents and teachers, to compare their attitudes towards the perceived benefits and the drawbacks of homework. Existing literature emphasizes the significance of homework in enhancing academic achievement and fostering self-discipline among students

(Cooper, Jackson, Nye, & Lindsay 2001; Corno & Xu 2004). However, the literature also highlights potential drawbacks, such as the risk of excessive workload and negative impacts (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006; Skaggs, 2007; Trautwein & Köller, 2003). Few studies have systematically examined the divergent viewpoints of parents and teachers, especially in the context of early elementary education, such as in grade 1-3. Therefore, it is essential to know how parents and teachers actually perceive the implementation of homework in early elementary education.

Research Question

1. How do parents and teachers perceive the benefits of homework?
2. How do How do parents and teachers perceive the drawback of homework?
3. What aspects of homework provide the most benefits for students according to the perception of parents and teachers?
4. What aspects of homework are the most worrying for students according to the perception of parents and teachers?

The role of homework in student education has sparked significant debate among those most intimately involved in the educational process, including students, parents, and educators (Gill & Schlossman, 2004). While numerous studies have highlighted the positive effects and direct benefits of homework on student development, there is a notable gap in these studies, as they predominantly focus on secondary and higher education students (Suyana, 2012). Research highlights the importance of homework as a vital element that enhances student achievement, complementing classroom instruction and the assimilation of class lessons (Marzano, 2003; Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008). This debate has been further fueled by the recent decision in Surabaya City to eliminate homework for elementary school students, a move that has drawn mixed reactions from the public, media, and educational scholars (Rizqi & Rahmadanik, 2022).

This policy has gathered attention, particularly because, despite the controversy, the practice of assigning homework persists, especially among younger students aged 7-10 years who are not fully independent (Rizqi & Rahmadanik, 2022). At this level, homework often requires parental involvement, leading to questions about the level of support and perspectives from various stakeholders regarding the policy's long-term viability. In light of these considerations, this study seeks to explore into the views and support of key stakeholders, including parents, elementary school teachers, and lecturers in elementary education, on the topic of homework for younger students. By examining theories of student

development and drawing on field experiences, this research aims to bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical application, particularly for students in the 7-10 year age group. Should the ongoing assignment of homework prove to be crucial, this study will also aim to develop recommendations for appropriate types of homework, taking into account the involvement of parents and the developmental needs of students at this stage. Ultimately, this research into the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding homework aims to provide insights that could significantly influence educational practices.

The study provides a foundation for more informed decision-making in education policies. Policymakers can leverage this nuanced understanding to develop homework policies that strike a balance between the perceived advantages and concerns for a more constructive learning environment. Moreover, the paper's identification of aspects of homework perceived as most beneficial equips teachers with guidance for designing assignments that align with educational goals and enhance the overall learning experience. Addressing the apprehensions expressed by parents and teachers offers practical strategies to mitigate concerns and contribute to a more positive perception of homework. Meanwhile on a literary level, the research enriches the existing body of knowledge on homework perceptions. It advances understanding by offering insights into how parents and teachers perceive this practice. Moreover, the study sets the stage for future research by posing specific questions about the most beneficial and concerning aspects of homework, to provide a framework for scholars to investigate further into these critical areas. This study advances research studies on parents' perceptions of homework offering useful information for educators, policymakers, and parents.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopted a survey-based research design to investigate the perceptions of parents and teachers concerning homework practices for early elementary school students. The survey approach enables the collection of quantitative data. The study involved a sample of 100 parents and 30 teachers drawn from diverse elementary schools across Indonesia. This sample size was deemed appropriate to obtain a representative overview of the varied perspectives on homework practices. Participants were recruited through the collaboration of parents' school committees and teachers from different educational institutions. An electronic questionnaire was developed to capture insights into participants' perceptions. The survey encompassed distinct sections addressing the perceived benefits and drawbacks

of homework, the amount of time spent on homework, and preferences for homework types. The questionnaire design was informed by the research objectives, aiming to elicit detailed responses that would facilitate a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing perceptions towards homework.

The electronic questionnaire was distributed from November 1st to November 30th, 2023 through networks of parents' school committees and teachers at diverse elementary schools. Participants were provided with clear instructions and ample time to respond. The use of electronic surveys facilitated efficient data gathering while ensuring the anonymity of participants, promoting candid responses. Quantitative data analysis techniques, specifically descriptive statistics, were employed to analyse the collected responses. This methodological choice aligns with the research aim of gaining insights into the beliefs and attitudes towards homework practices among parents and teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

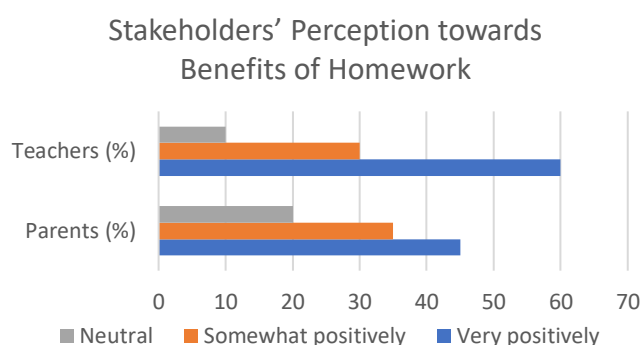


Figure 1. Stakeholders' Perception towards Benefits of Homework

The data from figure 1 presented the perceived benefits of homework for early elementary school students in grades 1-3, as discerned from the perspectives of parents and teachers. The statistics reveal a positive overall sentiment, with both parents and teachers acknowledging the advantages of homework in reinforcing academic concepts which aligned with the finding of Voorhis (2011) despite the debate among parents and teacher regarding its advantages. Notably, 45% of parents expressed a "Very positive" outlook, emphasizing a belief in the beneficial impact of homework on their children's learning experiences. An additional 35% held a "Somewhat positive" view, indicating an optimism among parents. A distinct 20% maintained a "Neutral" stance, reflective of a minority who did not firmly endorse or oppose the perceived benefits of homework. In contrast, teachers

exhibited a more positive sentiment towards homework benefits for early elementary students. A significant 60% of teachers reported feeling “Very positively,” emphasizing a widespread belief in the educational value of homework within the teaching community. Another 30% conveyed a “Somewhat positive” perspective, reinforcing the overall favorable outlook.

Conversely, a smaller proportion of teachers, constituting 10%, maintained a “Neutral” stance, suggesting a limited reservation among teachers. This distribution of sentiments highlights the importance of acknowledging the diverse perspectives held by parents and teachers regarding the role of homework in early education. While the majority perceive homework as beneficial, a notable subset of parents and a smaller segment of teachers express neutrality.

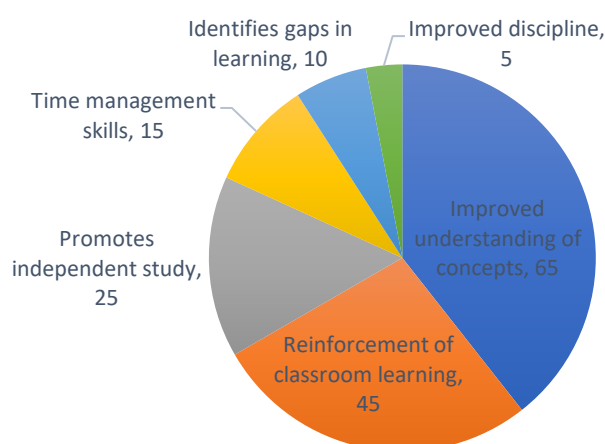


Figure 2. Specific Benefits of Homework as Selected by Parents and Teachers

The data on perceived benefits of homework from figure 2 reveals several noteworthy features that shed light on how parents and teachers perceive the role of homework in the educational development of early elementary school students. Notably, the highest-ranking feature is “Improved understanding of concepts” with a significant 65% agreement among respondents. This emphasizes a widespread consensus that homework serves as a pivotal tool for deepening comprehension and reinforcing academic concepts introduced in the classroom. The significance of this finding lies in its implication for the educational efficacy of homework, suggesting that a majority of participants see it as a valuable means of consolidating foundational knowledge.

Another salient feature is “Reinforcement of classroom learning,” registering at 45%. This accentuates the recognition among nearly half of the respondents that homework plays a crucial role in stimulating lessons learned in the classroom. The implication here is that homework is perceived not just as a supplementary task but as a key component in the educational process, providing additional practice and consolidation of newly acquired knowledge. Moreover, the acknowledgment by 25% of participants that homework “Promotes independent study” voices to an appreciation for homework as a catalyst for self-directed learning. This finding indicates that a segment of respondents views homework not only as a means of reinforcing classroom content but also as a tool fostering students’ autonomy in their academic pursuits. The collective insights into these features contribute to

Parents' Perceived Drawbacks of Homework (%)

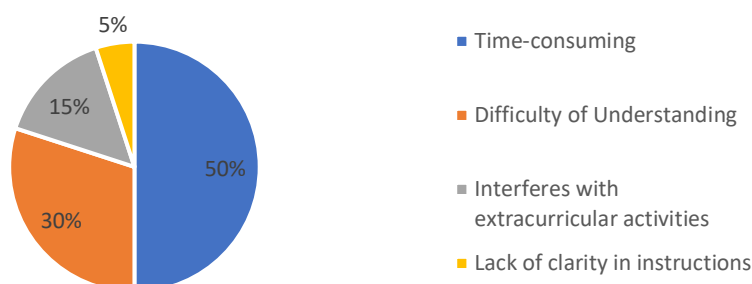


Figure 3. Parents' Perceived Drawbacks of Homework

a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted roles attributed to homework by parents and teachers, highlighting its potential impact on comprehension, reinforcement, and the cultivation of independent learning skills among early elementary school students.

The data on parents’ perceived drawbacks of homework as illustrated on figure 3 provides insights into the challenges and concerns that parents associate with their children’s engagement in homework assignments. The most expressed drawback is the perception that homework is “Time-consuming,” with 50% of parents admitting this concern. This highlights a apprehension among parents regarding the amount of time their children dedicate to homework. Another significant drawback identified by 30% of parents is the “Difficulty understanding” aspect of homework assignments. This finding suggests that a sizable proportion of parents perceives challenges in their children’s comprehension of homework tasks. Furthermore, the acknowledgment by 15% of parents that homework “Interferes with extracurricular activities” highlights a delicate balance that needs to be maintained to ensure that students have the opportunity to engage in a diverse range of activities beyond academics. The recognition of these drawbacks collectively highlights the

need for teachers to address concerns related to time management, clarity in instructions, and potential conflicts with extracurricular interests.

Teachers' Perceived Drawbacks of Homework (%)

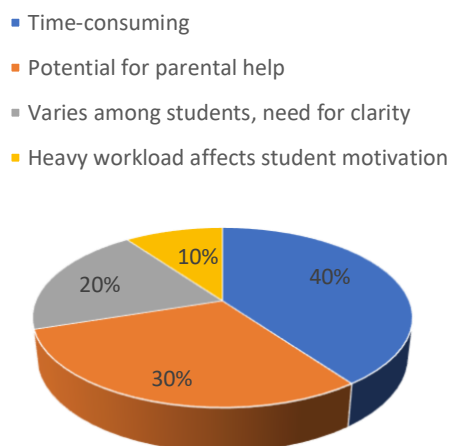


Figure 4. Teacher's Perceived Drawback of Homework

Examining teachers' identified challenges with assigning homework to early elementary school students reveals concerns in this practice. A primary concern, shared by 40% of teachers, centers on the belief that homework consumes a significant amount of time. This collective concern suggests that many teachers fear the time demands of homework might disrupt the delicate balance necessary for effective teaching and learning. Additionally, the acknowledgment by 30% of teachers regarding the "Potential for parental help" adds complexity to the discussion. This aspect indicates that a substantial number of teachers recognize the role of parental involvement in completing homework assignments. While parental engagement is commendable, the data implies a potential issue — a reliance on parental assistance that may unintentionally hinder students' independent understanding and application of academic concepts. Moreover, the insight that "Varies among students, need for clarity" (20%) highlights the necessity for clear instructions and tailored support to address diverse learning needs and styles. Lastly, the perception that "Heavy workload affects student motivation" (10%) emphasizes the delicate balance teachers must strike to prevent an overwhelming homework load from diminishing students' innate motivation for learning. In summary, these revelations provide a nuanced understanding of the intricate challenges teachers face as they incorporate homework into the educational landscape of early elementary education.

The first finding related to parents and teachers perceptions indicated a generally favorable view of homework among parents and teachers of early elementary students. This positive sentiment aligns with the broader research, which often emphasizes the value of homework in reinforcing academic concepts and enhancing student learning. For instance, Cooper, Jackson, Nye, & Lindsay (2001) and Corno & Xu (2004) have highlighted the role of homework in improving academic achievement and fostering self-discipline. However, the presence of a neutral stance among a notable subset of parents and teachers suggests a more complex picture. This ambivalence may reflect concerns about the potential downsides of homework, such as those identified by Cooper, Robinson, & Patall (2006) and Skaggs (2007), who point to the risks of excessive workload and negative impacts on student well-being. Therefore, while homework is generally seen as beneficial, its implementation and design need careful consideration to avoid these pitfalls.

Further examination of the specific benefits of homework shows a strong consensus on its effectiveness in improving understanding of concepts and reinforcing classroom learning. These findings resonate with Marzano & Pickering's (2007) research, which reports significant gains in student achievement attributable to homework. The recognition of homework's role in promoting independent study also aligns with the broader educational literature that advocates for homework as a means of developing students' autonomy and critical thinking skills. Parental involvement in homework, as highlighted by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001), plays a crucial role, not just in providing immediate help but in modeling positive attitudes and study skills essential for school success. Parents, seen as competent and relatable figures by their children, serve as influential models. Morrison et al. (2000) reinforce this, noting that parent participation in school-related activities positively correlates with students' school bonding and perceptions of parental involvement in their supervision. This aspect of parental engagement adds another layer to understanding homework's efficacy.

However, this positive view is not universal, as evidenced by the varied responses in the data. This variation could be attributed to differences in homework quality, the individual learning needs of students, or the varying contexts in which homework is assigned and completed. The concerns highlighted by parents and teachers, particularly regarding the time-consuming nature of homework and its potential interference with extracurricular activities, offer a critical lens through which to evaluate the efficacy of homework. These concerns echo the findings of studies that caution against the negative effects of excessive

homework, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach. The challenge for teachers, therefore, lies in creating homework assignments that are meaningful and manageable, ensuring they reinforce classroom learning without overwhelming students. This balance is crucial for maintaining student motivation and interest, as suggested by the research on the impact of homework workload on student motivation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the findings offered an understanding of the role of homework in early elementary education, as perceived by both parents and teachers. The data reveals a predominantly positive sentiment towards homework, with a majority of parents and an even larger proportion of teachers recognizing its benefits in reinforcing academic concepts and enhancing students' understanding. Specifically, the emphasis on homework as a tool for improving concept comprehension and reinforcing classroom learning highlights its perceived value in the learning process. However, this positive outlook is tempered by notable concerns. Parents express apprehension about homework being time-consuming and potentially interfering with extracurricular activities, while teachers are wary of the time demands and the varying degrees of parental involvement, which might affect students' independent learning. Additionally, teachers are conscious of the need for clarity in homework assignments and the impact of workload on student motivation. These insights highlight the complexity of homework as learning tool, which balances its benefits in promoting understanding and independent study against the challenges of time management and the need for tailored approaches to suit diverse student needs. This perspective calls for a careful consideration of homework's role in early elementary education, as people perceive that it serves as a constructive component of the learning process rather than a source of undue stress for students and their families. It becomes clear that while homework is recognized as a valuable educational tool, its effectiveness is contingent on various factors, including its design, the amount assigned, and the individual needs of students. The data suggests that when homework is well-designed and thoughtfully implemented, it can significantly enhance student learning and development. However, educators must remain mindful of the potential drawbacks and strive to strike a balance that maximizes the benefits of homework while minimizing its negative impacts. This approach aligns with the broader consensus in educational research, which advocates for a nuanced and student-centered approach to homework in early elementary education.

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