

## **THE IMPACT OF REGULARLY CHECKING HOMEWORK ON STUDENTS' SUCCESS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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### **Abstract**

Homework is a part in the curricula and it is curricular activity. Homework is a student's independent activity through which some of the requirements of the curriculum are fulfilled. The main goal of homework is to develop independence and responsibility among students. Homework is the student's activities, which result from the daily obligations to work at school and help in the performance of teaching duties but are realized outside of schoolwork. They are, in most cases, just an extension of schoolwork. Through checking the student's homework, the teacher has an insight into the student's progress, perceives their achievements but also their shortcomings in mastering the teaching material, and, based on that, builds a strategy to overcome the student's weaknesses and failures in the adoption of the teaching material. Also, the importance of giving homework lies in the fact that they help students achieve qualitative knowledge and skills, which they achieve independently. That's why we say that students, through homework, are active participants in the successful implementation of teaching work, and therefore we conclude that homework is a function of the success and achievements of students. The purpose of the research was to gain insights into whether regularly checking homework has an impact on students' success and achievement in primary school. Based on this purpose and the complexity of the problem posed above, we defined the descriptive method, the inductive method, the deductive method, the comparative method, and the statistical method. Also, for the needs of the research, the survey was used as a technique for collecting empirical data and as an instrument—a questionnaire for teachers and a questionnaire for students. According to the needs of the research, 210 teachers and 210 students from elementary schools were surveyed. The obtained results generally support the finding that working on the homework makes students more independent in the way they learn and how to take responsibility for themselves.

*Keywords:* homework, students, teachers, checking, achievement.

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### **Introduction**

Homework is a key link between school and home. With them, students maintain continuity in following the teaching content. With them, they also assume the obligation to work independently at home to acquire knowledge and skills, to practice, repeat, and determine the learned knowledge and skills presented at school in various teaching subjects. When the assignments are completed, the feeling of personal success among the students is at a high level, especially because they have an impact on the evaluation of the student's achievements.

Through the students' homework, teachers gain knowledge about the degree of mastery of the teaching material, so they can guide the student correctly and give appropriate feedback. Therefore, each teacher must control the success and the overall quality of the students' completed assignments, to hear their opinions regarding the difficulty of the assigned work assignments and the problems they faced during their preparation and possibly, if there is someone who did not produce them, to realize the reasons for which he was irresponsible towards homework, etc. And with that, at the same time, he will receive quality feedback about the level of knowledge acquired by the students during the implementation of the teaching process.

The motive and purpose of the research are to perceive the attitudes and opinions of teachers and students regarding whether homework is in the function of checking student achievements, i.e., whether and how much impact regular monitoring has, i.e., the feedback received from the completed homework tasks of the students, on the success and achievements of the students. An attempt has been made through the conducted research to see if the regular monitoring of homework and the feedback received from that monitoring have an impact on the success and achievements of students, based on the testing of two research hypotheses:

- X-1: *There is a difference of opinions between class and subject teachers regarding the fact that regularly checking homework has an impact on students' success and achievement, and*  
X-2: *There is a difference of opinions between teachers and students regarding the fact that regularly checking homework has an impact on students' success and achievement.*

The stated hypotheses were verified based on the answers received from a survey of 210 teachers and 210 students from seven primary schools from Tetovo, Gostivar, and Kichevo.

## **Theoretical approach**

### ***The benefits of students from doing homework***

Homework is a student's independent extracurricular activity through which some of the requirements of the curriculum are fulfilled. The main goal of homework is to develop independence and responsibility among students. Organizing students' homework should mean giving assignments at school, solving them independently at home, and checking results at school.

According to Xheladin Murati (2002), homework has:

1. **Teaching value** (students are prepared for independent work, the acquisition and expansion of knowledge);
2. **Educational value** (in students, they create habits for systematic work, planning time and responsibilities, increasing the level of responsibility towards them, and at the same time preparing students for self-evaluation). (Murati, Xh., 2002: 204)

Most research done on homework has proven that students benefit greatly from solving homework. The benefits of doing homework are that it encourages and develops independence, responsibility, organizational and management skills, and work habits are acquired. Research has shown that when learning continues at home, more positive results are obtained, such as:

- » skills and abilities for self-judgment and self-reflection are developed;
- » a positive attitude towards the school is acquired;
- » greater cohesion is achieved between the school and the home environment. (BZHA, 2013: 3)

Homework is aimed at the independence of the student and the strengthening of what they have learned at school, as well as maintaining contact and cooperation with the family (parents). They should be given according to the age of the students and should be realized independently. The goal of homework is not for students to reproduce what they heard in class, but to work independently, to apply the acquired knowledge in practice, use additional sources, and conduct research. (Вилотијевић, М., 1999: 326)

The correct assignment of homework involves several requirements:

- » To be given with a specific purpose, with which the students will become familiar
- » To present a challenge for students
- » To be diverse
- » They should not be too long and unnecessarily burdensome.
- » To praise the student for a job well done (Memeti, M., 2007: 12)

Therefore, according to the above, we can conclude that the planning of homework by the teacher is an important component that should be responsibly implemented by the teacher. The planning and preparation of homework assignments should be a daily and responsible obligation of the teacher, and the assignments should play their role and function, they should be given according to the need for learning, not exceed the limit of the burden, and not be unnecessary for students.

### ***Checking students' homework***

One important component in working with homework, as well as with students' school assignments, is their control or checking. The given work that the teacher does not control, and does not check, gets the student used to avoiding obligations and encourages him to be irresponsible. (Вилотијевић, М., 1999: 327) And also, if the student's completed homework is only recorded in the teacher's notebook as completed work, then the student feels worthless, and this can cause frustration and poor quality work. (USAID, 2009: 85). Therefore, feedback is the most effective means of controlling the teaching process, even in extracurricular work, which includes homework.

By checking the student's homework, the teacher has an insight into the student's progress, perceives their achievements, but also shortcomings in mastering the teaching material, and, based on that, builds a strategy to overcome the student's weaknesses and failures in learning the teaching material and also, based on that, he should build his strategy for the evaluation of the student's achievements from this point of view. (Адамческа, С., 1996: 40)

Homework checks are an integral part of the teaching process that should be planned and well organized. It should be done regularly and promptly, which achieves continuity in the student's work and leads to permanent learning. It is important to emphasize the fact that, when checking the tasks, we should be careful in our checking. Any formalization, carelessness, or other omissions are reflected in the further work of the students. So, the more precise and efficient our work is in controlling homework, the fewer mistakes students will make in their work, and it will not be so necessary to control them daily.

According to Nijazi Zulfu (1997), there are three effective ways of controlling or checking homework, namely:

1. The teacher controls each student's homework individually.
2. The teacher, together with the students, checks and corrects the homework, and
3. Classmates control homework among themselves (Zulfu, N., 1997: 450).

The teacher has a key role in choosing the method of checking homework. To be successful in completing the given homework, he needs to find an effective way to control it. It is recommended that the checking is at the beginning of the lesson to have an awareness of the amount of knowledge adopted. In doing so, the following principle should be respected: when checking, all students should be active (for example, when the teacher checks a task of one student, he includes the others in a discussion, then he can look for another way of solving and/or engage the students with a task that is an introduction to the following teaching content). (BZHA, 2013: 12) Also, discussing the topic before assigning the homework encourages and motivates the student for its preparation, and encourages his curiosity about the topic, and with that, he also has a desire for its further resolution and research.

These moments speak of a developed internal motivation among the students who find satisfaction in their involvement in the course of work, and the satisfaction of the obtained results is seen as a success and personal satisfaction. Students usually feel the problem posed a challenge to their abilities, and curiosity is an internal driver that leads them to affirmation and self-respect. If the above is properly respected, it will result in a pedagogical framework, which will give the process of homework checking a modern character.

## Research methodology and data

Based on this purpose and the complexity of the problem posed above, we defined the descriptive method, the inductive method, the deductive method, the comparative method, and the statistical method. Also, for the needs of the research, the survey was used as a technique for collecting empirical data and as an instrument—a questionnaire for teachers and a questionnaire for students. According to the needs of the research, 210 teachers and 210 students from elementary schools were surveyed. To enable the teachers to be honest, the questionnaire has been anonymous.

## Results

*3.1. Attitudes of teachers and students regarding the regular checking of homework:* In function of the hypothesis that we are considering here, the teachers were also asked to answer the question: *Do you think that regularly checking homework has an impact on the success and achievements of students?* Given that, the teachers gave the following answers (table no.1).

**Table 1.** Opinion of class and subject teachers about the impact of regularly checking homework on students' success and achievements

Do you think that regularly checking homework has an impact on students' success and achievement?		Class teachers:		Subject teachers:		Total:	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
a)	It always has an impact	68	64,76	64	60,95	132	62,86
b)	Sometimes it has an impact	33	31,43	41	39,05	74	35,24
B)	It never has an impact	4	3,81	0	0,00	4	1,90
Total:		105	100,00	105	100,00	210	100,00

$\chi^2=4,98$	$df = 2$	$p > 0.05$
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In terms of how much teachers are aware of the importance of homework and the impact of regularly checking on the success and achievements of students, from the data shown in the table, it is noted that 31.43 % of the surveyed class teachers and 39.05 % from the subject teachers surveyed, they declared that regularly checking homework sometimes has an impact on students' success and achievements.

However, from the data it can be seen that for both groups of teachers, the largest percentage of them, i.e. 64.76 % of the surveyed class teachers and 60.95% of the surveyed subject teachers, declared that regularly checking homework always has an impact on success and achievements of the students, and a very small, minimal percentage of them, i.e. only 1.90% of the surveyed teachers, declared that regularly checking the homework never has an impact on the success and achievements of the students.

From the given data, it can be seen that between the class and subject teachers, there is no big difference in their opinion regarding the impact of homework on students' success and achievements. This conclusion is based on the obtained value of the Chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ), which is 4.98 and has no statistical significance.

Regarding the set hypothesis (X-1), that „*There is a difference of opinions between class and subject teachers regarding the fact that regularly checking homework has an impact on students' success and achievement*“, from the obtained results of this research it can be to state that it is *not confirmed*.

To test the hypothesis (X-2), which reads „*There is a difference of opinions between teachers and students regarding the fact that regularly checking homework has an impact on students' success and achievement*“, that is, to obtain additional knowledge regarding the importance of homework and the impact of regular checking on students' success and achievements, we also surveyed students from the VII and VIII grades of primary schools. When processing the attitudes of the students, we obtained the results that are shown in table no.2, together with the attitudes of the teachers.

**Table 2.** Teachers' and students' opinions about the impact of regularly checking homework on students' success and achievements

Do you think that regularly checking homework has an impact on students' success and achievement?		Teachers:		Students:		Total:	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
a)	It always has an impact	132	62,86	125	59,52	257	61,19
b)	Sometimes it has an impact	74	35,24	76	36,19	150	35,71
c)	It never has an impact	4	1,90	9	4,29	13	3,10
<b>Total:</b>		<b>210</b>	<b>100,00</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100,00</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>100,00</b>

$\chi^2=2,14$	df=2	p > 0.05
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From the data, it can be seen that both teachers and students, the largest percentage of them, that is, 62.86% of the surveyed teachers and 59.52% of the surveyed students, declare that regularly checking homework always has an impact on success and achievements of the students, while a much smaller percentage of those surveyed, i.e., 35.24% of the surveyed teachers and 36.19% of the surveyed students, claim that regularly checking homework sometimes has an impact on students' success and achievements, and a very small, minimal percentage of them, that is, only 1.90% of teachers and 4.29% of students, declare that regularly checking of homework never has an impact on student success and achievement.

According to the obtained values of the Chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ), which is 2.14, and the limit value for 2 degrees of freedom at a significance level of 0.05 is 5.991, it follows that there is no significant difference in their opinion between teachers and students regarding the influence of regularly checking on the success and achievements of students.

From the data, it can be seen that regularly checking of homework has a great impact on the success and achievements of students, and the hypothesized that: *there is a difference in opinions between teachers and students regarding the fact that regularly checking homework has an impact on students' success and achievement*, it is not confirmed.

## Conclusion and suggestion

In the interest of improving the quality of the teaching process and acquiring knowledge, teachers must have a serious and responsible approach to homework, because homework is as important as the work in class, it must be well thought out and properly implemented because only in this way will it help the student develop thinking skills, responsibility towards the work, and the opportunity to summarize the conclusions independently. The teacher should have good cooperation and also give good and clear feedback to the students regarding the given homework. He should discuss the way of preparing them, provide examples of how they should work independently, and have a real critical review in the analysis and assessment of their work. This will enable students with a reasonable and clear idea to develop analytical skills and also create a cooperative atmosphere in the teaching process itself.

If the homework is carried out with good cooperation between the teacher and the students, there is no doubt that a solid foundation will be created for the students' internal motivation for learning and independent work on the homework. From the results obtained from the conducted survey of teachers and students, it can be concluded that the largest percentage of teachers and students surveyed, i.e., 61.19 %, think that homework is very important for the success of students and that regularly checking of homework always has an impact on students' success and achievement.

The obtained results generally support the conclusion that, in the teaching process, regularly checking homework is a significant activity for students to develop awareness of the importance of the ability to assess their own work and, based on that, to contribute to the improvement of their success and their own work. The fact remains that homework is a necessity, but set in order to deepen and determine the students' knowledge, and that it should be an important parameter that will help and give teachers the opportunity to more easily and objectively check and evaluate the students' achievements.

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