Homework and Students’ AcademicAchievement at the Chinese National Type Primary Schools

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Abstract
School homework has been synonymous with students’ life in Chinese national-type primary schools in Malaysia. Although many press reports have claimed that students were burdened with too much homework, it continues to be a common practice in national-type schools that is believed to contribute to academic achievement. This study was conducted to identify the relationship between the burden of school homework and academic achievement among the students in Chinese national-type Primary School in the state of Perak, Malaysia. The study applied the homework conceptual framework of Cooper (1985) and Taback (2005). A total of 384 students were chosen as the sample in this study. Variable of gender and location (urban/rural area) showed significant difference in students’ academic achievement. Female students from rural areas showed a higher mean score than males from urban areas. However, the parents’ level of education and family income showed no significant differences. The coefficient correlation analysis showed there was significant relationship between the students’ interests, number of pages and frequency of Chinese school homework to be completed each day with students’ academic achievement. Therefore, the teachers should give appropriate and relevant homework to primary school students to achieve good academic performance.

Keywords: homework, academic achievement, Chinese national-type primary schools, Malaysia

1.1 Introduction
Homework can be defined as any task assigned by school teachers intended for students to carry out during nonschool hours (cf., Cooper 1989). School homework is an important part of the daily tasks of children who are studying. Homework is an issue that may create strong controversy from time to time (Conner, 2004). The impact of homework on students is an issue that is often subject to dispute and conflict in the educational arena (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009) and a burning issue for the school as well (Nancy, 2009).

According to Eta (2000), no one can explain the real purpose of burdening the students with school homework. The school authority says that students are burdened with homework based on the request of parents, while parents argue that homework is given at the discretion of the school. Such controversy always arises and persists to this day.

Xu (2005) stated that school homework is an appropriate and relevant topic to be studied because homework may educate students beyond the curriculum and teach them a lot of things that cannot be learned from textbooks. For example, students who complete their homework consistently understand the importance of managing time and effort in learning properly. They