School Homework and its Relationship with Student Academic Achievement in Malaysia

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Abstract—School homework has been synonymous with students’ lives in Chinese national type primary schools in Malaysia. Although many reports in the press claimed that students were burdened with too much of it, homework continues to be a common practice in national type schools that is believed to contribute to academic achievement. This study is conducted to identify the relationship between the burden of school homework and academic achievement among pupils in Chinese National Type Primary School in the state of Perak, Malaysia. A total of 284 students (142 from urban and 142 from rural) respectively were chosen as participants in this study. Variables of gender and location (urban/rural areas) has shown significant difference in student academic achievement. Female Chinese student from rural areas showed a higher mean score than male from urban area. Therefore, the Chinese language 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

I. INTRODUCTION

School homework is an important part of the daily tasks of children who are studying. Homework is an issue that may create a strong controversy from time to time [1]. The impact of homework on students is an issue that is often subject to dispute and conflict in the educational arena [2] and a burning issue for the school as well [3].

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

School homework has become an issue of research and media attention in jurisdictions all over the world. In the United Kingdom, the news media follow this issue closely and new research continues to be conducted [4]. In Australia, both governments and independent researchers have analyzed homework [5][6]. In the United States, researchers [7], governments [8], and advocates all pronounce upon the issue. In Canada, there has been substantial media attention over the past two years, and new research has been published [9][10]. Clearly, homework is an important issue both inside and outside of academia.

In Malaysia, academic achievement is an issue that is always emphasized by parents, educators, and students themselves. Homework has occupied most students' lives and in the primary, secondary or upper secondary education. Although many reports in the press claimed that the students were burdened with too much of it, homework continues to be a common practice in today's educational arena as evidenced homework contributes to increased the students' academic achievement [11].

Work-related study found that a variety of findings of homework on academic achievement. Some of the findings show there may be a positive effect of homework on student academic achievement [12][13][14], while other studies show a negative impact of homework on the students [15].

From the above discussion, conclusion may be made that there are two main findings of homework. First and foremost is that homework increases academic achievement; and without excessive homework, our students’ test scores will continue to lag internationally. More on the first one shortly because that is the bulk of what the review covers. On the second point, the report points out that students in many countries, including Japan and Finland, are assigned less homework but still outperform U.S. students in international comparisons [16].

Therefore this study is aimed at examining the differences that exist between social background and academic achievement of students in Chinese national type primary schools. In addition, this study will investigate the relationship between time spent, number and frequency of homework, and interests of students with their academic achievement.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is aimed at answering the following research question:

Is there any significant difference in terms of social background and academic achievement of students in Chinese national type primary schools?

- a. gender and academic achievement in Chinese national type primary schools
- b. location and academic achievement in Chinese national type primary schools
- c. parents' education level and academic achievement of students in Chinese national type primary schools
- d. family income and academic achievement in Chinese national type primary schools

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is a survey research for survey research is one of the most popular methods in non-experimental research. Researchers limit the sampling in the North Kinta District and Manjung District in Perak only accordance with the purposive sampling method because North Kinta district meet the characteristics of a city while Manjung District has enough number of rural National Type Chinese Schools to run the sampling process.

The researchers have conducted stratified random sampling procedures to determine the target respondents of students at Level 2 (Year 4, 5, and 6).