



Özenç, M. (2020). What do the primary school teachers think about homework? A phenomenological study. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 8(1). 381-400.

Received : 30.09.2020
Revised version received : 02.11.2020
Accepted : 05.12.2020

WHAT DO THE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS THINK ABOUT HOMEWORK? A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Research article

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine primary school teachers' views on homework and their homework practices. In the study, phenomenological study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was employed. The study data were collected by interviews conducted with 14 primary school teachers working in the city of Niğde. The data were analyzed by content analysis method. The primary school teachers participating in the study defined homework as a study assigned to reinforce the subjects learned at school that day and to ensure permanent learning. All of the participating primary school teachers gave homework regularly. Almost all of the primary school teachers interviewed assigned research, reading and test homework. All of the primary school teachers who were interviewed used study aids as homework source, and they generally used sites related to education. Teachers had different forms of homework evaluation. While majority of the teachers wanted parents to check homework, more than half of them checked homework themselves and considered homework checking as an absolute must. The study results were discussed and compared with the other study results from the literature, and various recommendations were provided.

Keywords: homework, primary school teachers, phenomenological study, reasons for assigning homework

1. Introduction

Although homework has been one of the most frequently used teacher practices, it is still being debated. The Turkish Linguistic Society's current Turkish dictionary (2019) refers to homework as the work assigned by the teacher to the students to do outside the school. Cooper (1989) defined homework as the task assigned by the teachers to the students to do outside the school hours. In addition, Hong (2001) emphasized that homework is a teaching strategy used worldwide. Corno (2000) stated that homework is traditionally associated with reading, writing, and arithmetic. He also expressed that there is a need to conceptualize a new kind of homework and that the students will develop skills for their future homework from their ongoing homework processes. Teachers assign homework for various purposes. According to Epstein and Voorhis (2001: 181), teachers assigning homework have 10 purposes: practice, preparation, participation, personal development, parent-child relations, parent-teacher communication, peer interactions, politics, public relations and punishment.

All students are required to do their homework. However, studies on the effects of homework showed that careful assessment of students' developmental levels and conditions should guide homework policies and expectations. Many studies found a striking link between the level of student marks and the effect of homework on achievement. In

standardized tests, homework has the greatest effect on the achievement level of high school students, a moderate impact on the achievement level of middle school students, and no impact on the achievement level of elementary school students (Cooper, 2001: 34). Even though Cooper determined that homework assigned in elementary schools had no effect on students' achievement, he still recommended homework. However, he stated that the homework assigned should focus on non-academic advantages, time management, study habits, and encouraging learning (2001). In their study, Güven and Akçay (2019) determined that homework did not significantly affect the academic achievement of 4th grade students but significantly affected the achievement of 8th grade students. Ilgar (2005) mentioned that there are situations where teachers should pay attention to while assigning homework. These are providing students with homework that will be of interest to them and that can be completed in a short time. Homework should develop thinking and encourage research. Ilgar also recommended that homework should be checked regularly, and feedbacks must be provided to the students. Likewise, Rosario et al. (2018) stated that frequent, short and purposeful homework is positively related with students' homework efforts, positive emotions, and academic achievements.

The Ministry of National Education (MONE) made various legal arrangements about homework. With a regulation in 1989, it prohibited the assignment of homework during the first three years of elementary school. It limited the assignment of homework to 4th and 5th graders with no more than one hour a day (MONE, 1989). With a regulation drawn later, performance homework was included in the system (MONE, 2006). When the “performance homework” included the word homework in it, teachers assigned these projects as homework to the students. Later, with another regulation, performance homework was changed to performance tasks. The students were going to perform these tasks under the supervision of their teachers inside the classroom (MONE, 2007). In the following years, this practice was completely removed from the legislation (MONE, 2014). Put into effect in 1989, the ban on assigning homework still exists. However, teachers still continue to assign homework.

Many researchers conducted studies on homework, which has been frequently used by teachers. Amongst these studies, Hong and Milgram (1999) determined students' homework preferences and their real homework styles. Tertemiz (1991), and Kapıkıran and Kıran (1999) examined the effect of homework on elementary school students' math achievement. While Muhlenbruk, Cooper, Nye and Lindsay (1999) and Fan et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between homework and academic achievement, Hong (2001) and Hizmetçi (2007) revealed the relationship between students' homework styles and academic achievement. Cooper and Valentine (2001) put forth the attitudes towards homework and the positive and negative effects of homework. Ersoy and Anagün (2009) determined the Science and Technology homework process of primary school teachers. Atlı (2012) identified the effects of homework on students' concept achievements and academic achievements. Oluşum (2016) determined the frequency of which homework was assigned in the Turkish course in 4th grade. Rochelle et al. (2016) investigated the effect of online homework on student achievement. Valle et al. (2016) examined the relationship between academic goals, student homework engagement and academic achievement in primary school. Flunger et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between student characteristics and homework learning styles. Göllner et al. (2017) examined the relationship between doing homework and being conscientious. Cunha et al. (2018) reviewed elementary and middle school teachers' conceptions on homework feedback. Rosario et al. (2018) examined the homework follow-up practices of middle school mathematics teachers. Magalhaes et al. (2020) examined the benefits of online and traditional homework on student performance. Moe et al. (2020) investigated the effects of parental intervention to reduce homework stress.

These studies were conducted in elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. In the studies conducted, the researchers focused on topics such as the effect of homework on academic achievement, the views of middle school teachers, where traditional or online assignments are more effective, the process of assigning homework, the relationship between students' learning styles and homework styles, and the assignment frequency of homework. However, what the primary school teachers think about homework assigned in elementary schools where many important behaviors and habits are developed was not studied. It is necessary to determine what primary school teachers think about homework, which is used quite frequently, and what their primary school practices are. In this context, this study was needed. The purpose of this study was to determine primary school teachers' views on homework and their homework practices. In order to achieve this goal, the answers to the following study questions were sought.

- (1) How do primary school teachers define homework?
- (2) What are primary school teachers' general views on homework?
- (3) What are the reasons for primary school teachers to assign homework?
- (4) What are primary school teachers' homework types and their homework sources?
- (5) How do primary school teachers evaluate the homework they assigned?

2. Method

In this study, phenomenological study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was employed. The phenomenological design focuses on phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding. Phenomenology provides a suitable research ground for studies that are not completely unfamiliar to us, but also aim to investigate phenomena that we do not fully understand. (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011: 72). In this study, the phenomenological study design was employed because primary school teachers' views on homework and homework practice were planned to be analyzed in-depth.

2.1. Study Group

The study group consisted of 14 primary school teachers working in the city of Niğde. Primary school teachers working in three randomly selected schools were asked if they would like to participate in the study. Volunteering 14 primary school teachers made up the study group. The data related to the study group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Frequency and percentage of participating teachers' demographic characteristics*

Characteristics		f	%
Age	Between 20-30	1	7
	Between 31-40	5	36
	41 and above	8	57
Sex	Female	10	71
	Male	4	29
Seniority	0-10 years	3	21
	11-20 years	4	29
	21 and above	7	50
Department Graduated From	Elementary School Edu. (4 years)	9	64
	Education Vocational School (2 years)	1	7
	Different Faculties	4	29
Graduate Education	Yes	1	7
	No	13	93
Grade Taught	1 st Grade	4	29
	2 nd Grade	5	36
	3 rd Grade	2	14
	4 th Grade	3	21

According to Table 1, 7% of the participating teachers (1) were in the 20-30 age range, 36% (5) were in the 31-40 age range, 57% (8) were 41 and over. 71% (10) of the teachers were female, and 29% (4) were male. 21% (3) of the teachers had seniority between 0-10 years, 29% (4) had between 11-20 years, and 50% (7) had 21 or more. 64% (9) of the teachers graduated from elementary school education, 7% (1) from education vocational school, and 29% (4) from different faculties. 93% (13) of the teachers did not have graduate education, whereas 7% (1) did. 29% (4) of the teachers taught 1st grade, 36% (5) 2nd grade, 14% (2) 3rd grade, and 21% (3) 4th grade.

2.2. Data Collection Tool

In the study, semi-structured interview form was used as data collection tool. Literature and academicians from the field were used while developing the interview form. Interview questions were prepared and given to two academicians to take their opinions. The final version of the form was developed with their contributions. The form contains six questions regarding demographic characteristics. The questions asked in the interview were parallel to the study questions.

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The study data were collected during the in-service training period in June 2018. The interviews were conducted with teachers who stated that they would participate voluntarily in the study. Before conducting the interviews, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the fact that the data obtained would not be used outside the study. In addition, the participants were informed about the being recorded with a voice recorder, and their consent was taken. The interview started with the demographic information, and then the interview questions developed in parallel with the study questions were asked.

The shortest interview lasted six minutes four seconds, whereas the longest interview lasted 28 minutes 39 seconds. The total of all interviews were 194 minutes and 23 seconds.

After the interviews were completed, the voice recordings were transcribed. A 52-page data set, the shortest of which was two pages and the longest was six pages, was developed.

Content analysis method was used for data analysis. The purpose of content analysis is to analyze the data in depth. The data set was reread by the researcher question by question. The statements common in every reading were identified and underlined. The purpose in doing this is to divide the data into common and meaningful units. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011) referred to these meaningful units within the data set as code. This process is called coding.

The process continued until all codes were determined. After the coding process was completed, a code list was developed by listing the determined codes. A data set was organized by combining similar ones in the code list. The data set was presented in figures based on study questions. The themes of the data set were made of the study questions. The frequencies of the common codes were presented in figures. After the whole analysis process was completed and the data were presented in figures, the data interpretation started. In the figures, the real names of the teachers were not provided, and the teachers were referred as T1, T2, T3, etc. While the figures were interpreted, direct quotes were given from the teacher interview records. At the end of the quote, which teacher the quote belonged to was given.

The following formula of Miles and Huberman (1994:64) was used for the reliability calculation of the study.

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Number of Agreements}}{\text{Number of agreements} + \text{Number of disagreements}}$$

An academician working in the faculty of education helped during the calculation. The academician, like the researcher, coded the data set. The coherency of the study was determined as 84% after calculating the agreement between the codings according to the formula given above. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a percentage of 70 or above indicates that the study is reliable.

3. Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine primary school teachers' views on homework and their homework practices. In order to realize this purpose, the data collected were analyzed and given in figures below. Below the figures, the explanations of the figures are presented.

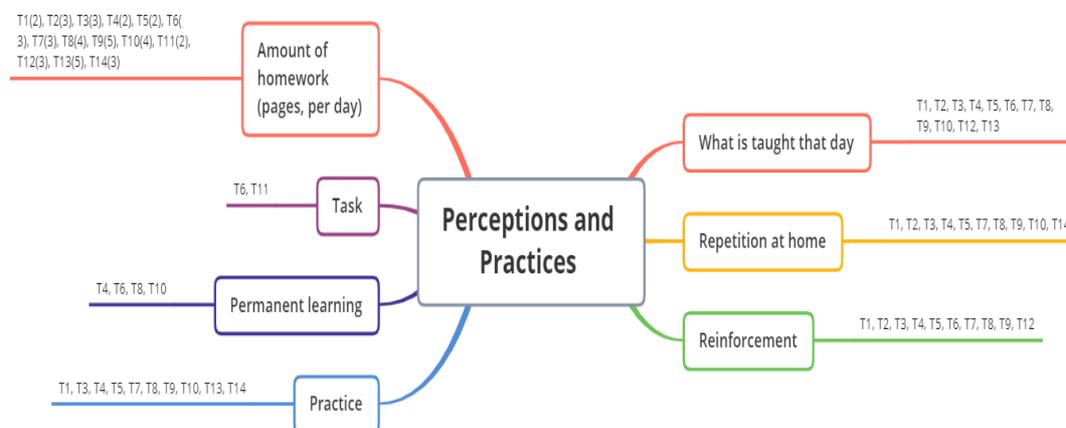


Figure 1. Primary school teachers' perceptions and practices of homework

Figure 1 shows how participating primary school teachers perceived homework. Almost all of the participating teachers (12) stated that the homework they assign is related to what was learned that day. In general, they (10) emphasized that homework is a practice done with the purpose of repetition and reinforcement at home. Four teachers mentioned that homework ensures permanent learning. There were two teachers who said that homework is a task. The participating primary school teachers gave homework that varied between two and five pages per day. The average amount of homework was 3.14 pages.

The teachers' definitions of homework showed similarities with their purpose of assigning homework. Generally, what came to the forefront in the definitions was that homework should be about what is learned at school that day, it is a repetition study at home, and it is assigned for reinforcement.

T1 defined homework as “the activity assigned to the children for them to repeat the subjects covered in the course of that day at home or to be reinforcement in order for them not to forget the lesson by repeating it”. T3 defined homework and said: “I think homework is the repetition and reinforcement at home of what is done and learned at school and is necessary. It is a habit that the child needs to do with the help of the family”. S4 defined homework as “the study done to permanently learn and reinforce a subject. First of all, it is to reinforce the subject because when homework is not assigned, repetition does not happen. When there is no repetition, there is no permanent learning”. T12 defined homework as “the reinforcement of what was done in the classroom when you go home”.

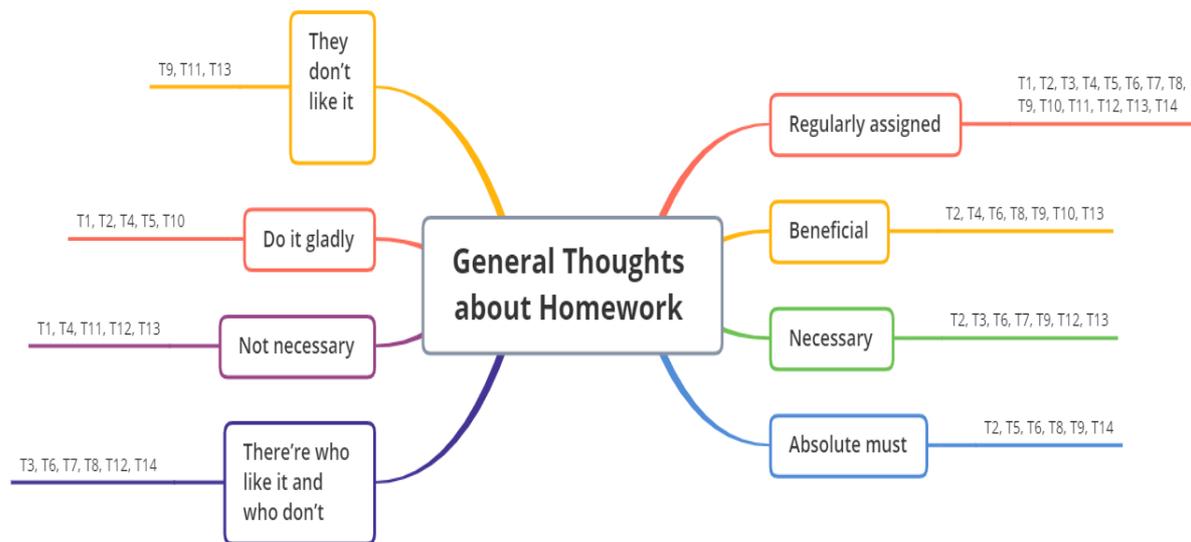


Figure 2. General thoughts about homework

When the interviewed primary school teachers' general thoughts about homework were examined, it is seen that all of the teachers regularly assigned homework to their students. Half of the teachers stated that homework is beneficial, and it is necessary to give homework. Nearly half of them considered homework as an absolute must. According to this data, almost half of the teachers who assigned homework believed that homework is not necessary. In order to fully analyze the cause of this situation, the reasons why teachers assign homework should be examined. T1, who assigned regular homework, said on this subject: “Homework is actually not necessary. I mean, you assign it or you don't. Doesn't make a difference. But, when we think about the children's home-family environment”. Similarly, T4 believed that it is not necessary to assign homework. He said:

The homework should not be a lot, and it would be all right if no homework is assigned at the elementary school level. But, with the purpose of repetition, we still assign homework in a playful way that doesn't tire the children.

T2, who believed that homework is an absolute must, argued, "In order to reinforce what he learned that day, he will go home and repeat it when I assign homework. If I don't assign homework, he won't repeat it. He will not turn it into a task". Both the teachers who considered homework as necessary and the teachers who considered it as unnecessary stated that they assign homework regularly to their students. However, teachers believed that students do not repeat the subjects if they are not assigned homework, and they emphasized the importance of repetition for learning.

The teachers who stated that students do their homework gladly wanted to get the attention on certain issues. T2 said: "If you assign them the homework they have learned, of course they do it gladly, but if you assign them homework that will challenge them, they have difficulty". Similarly, T5 said:

I think they do their homework gladly as long as the homework is not too challenging. I also do not assign tests as homework and writing all the time. We include different activities. We also have fun activities. They like homework when they are like this.

As can be understood from these views, the following points should be taken into consideration for the students to do their homework gladly: Homework should be assigned from the subjects previously taught in classroom, should not be above the level of children and should have entertaining value.



Figure 3. Primary school teachers' reasons for assigning homework

According to Figure 3, almost all of the interviewed primary school teachers (13 people) used homework for the repetition of the subjects. Also, the teachers generally (12) used homework for ensuring permanence and reinforcement (10). Nine teachers stated that they assigned homework for students to learn how to take responsibility. T8 who assigned homework for the repetition of the subjects said:

Here, our classrooms are crowded, our children sometimes can't understand. They may not understand when I explain the subject, and they may be afraid to ask questions. But, if assign the subject as homework, they repeat it and the homework makes them learn.

T9 believed that:

Assigning homework consciously is important. If the teacher assigns homework consciously, permanence is ensured. The achievement of students who do their homework increases day by day. The children with good academic foundation will be more successful in their future classes.

With these words, T9 emphasized that homework should be assigned consciously. In other words, homework should be prepared beforehand and be associated with the subject taught. She also believed that homework ensures permanent learning, and students will be more successful when assigned homework. T14's thoughts were as follows: "Homework is important for the child to learn something by himself and for him to research. Also, homework should be assigned to reinforce what is learned".

There were very few teachers who stated that they give homework to support higher level learning. There were four teachers who aimed to teach the ways of accessing information and two teachers who aimed to teach how to learn.

Amongs the teachers' reasons for assigning homework, there were also remarkable views. Four teachers mentioned parent pressure, and two teachers mentioned teacher pressure. Experiencing parent pressure, T4 used the following words:

Because there is particularly a parent pressure. Because the parents living in the same apartment have children going to different schools. Naturally, the parents reflect the homework assigned by other teachers to you. They say, 'this kid from our apartment goes to this school. Her teacher assigns this kind of homework.' Of course, you get affected by this.

T7 said that she was affected by parent pressure when she was assigned a new class to teach but she explained the situation to the parents. She stated that:

You are affected by pressure at the beginning. Especially during the introduction period, the parents ask me why I don't give homework. After I explain to them reasonably and after they learn my teaching system, they don't affect me. I mean, it doesn't bother that their children come home without homework from time to time.

T4 explained how he got affected by other teachers using the following words, "You don't just get influenced by teachers teaching the same subject as you but from the other teachers as well. You can even be influenced by teachers from other schools". T13 had both teacher and parent pressure. He said:

I am influenced by the other teachers who teach the same subject but I go my

own way. I noticed that this year. Have I ever been compared to other teachers? Yes. Did I hear about it? Yes, I did... Did I have a problem at the beginning of this year? Yes, I did. Would I have been affected? I could have been affected because there is community pressure in our society. I tried a lot but I said, 'No'. I said, 'This is my way. I'm going to continue like this' but it was difficult. So, I fought for it. I witnessed parents comparing me to other teachers. You begin to think 'I wonder if this is what a good teacher looks like.' There are parents and teachers who make you question yourself like this. Did I feel it? I felt it. But I resisted the change.

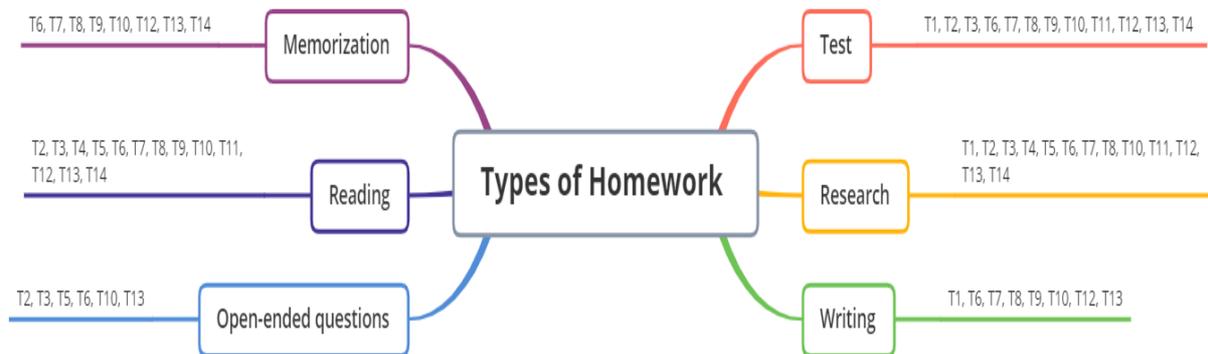


Figure 4. Types of homework assigned by primary school teachers

According to Figure 4, almost all of the interviewed primary school teachers stated that they give research homework (13), reading homework (13) and test homework (12). There were eight teachers who assigned writing homework. Six teachers assigned open-ended questions, and eight teachers assigned memorization. The types of homework assigned by teachers and their reasons for assigning homework are parallel to each other. The teachers in general expressed that they assigned homework for repetition and ensuring permanence. Tests, reading and writing, and memorization homework are for these purposes. At this point, research homework is noteworthy. Almost all of the teachers stated that they assign research homework. However, when teachers' reasons for assigning homework were examined, only a very small group of teachers assigned homework to teach the ways to access information. Teachers stated that they do not include works supporting high-level learning with the type of homework they assign. There was no homework towards teaching how to learn, teaching ways to access information, and towards developing critical thinking and problem solving skills.

T7 listed the types of homework she assigned using the following words: "Generally, I assign test, reading, short writing tasks". T9 expressed that she assign test type of homework but she did not find this correct. On this issue, she said, "Children lack in reading, comprehension, research, and answering open-ended questions". T10 explained the 'reading a book' homework and practice as follows:

We have a book exam once a week. They finish a story once a week. They read it at home for a week. During that one week, our children prepare 20 questions about the story they read. 20 questions and answers. They come to the school and repeat these in the classroom in the form of question and answer with friends before the exam. This contributed to the development of the children.

The student who used to score 70 scored 80, and the one who used to score 80 scored 90. I got feedback from the parents that this was a better practice.

When the teachers' views were examined, there were also different views. For example, T4 stated that he did not give tests as homework and said:

We will assign homework that children can do with things at home. For example, we will assign Math homework. What is there in a house? There are nuts, there are walnuts, there are beans. Children can use them as materials, for example, in Math classes... In Turkish classes, we especially assign homework on diction, on speaking and on developing their vocabulary. Because of this, whenever I assign a Turkish homework, I definitely add fairy tales or stories. I mean, instead of assigning a test or a classic question directly, I definitely add a story. The children will read the story assigned in the Turkish homework, picture in their minds, and then solve the questions according to it. So, I don't assign homework in the form of test or classic question and answer.

T4 believed in associating homework with daily life. He thought such homework is more beneficial.

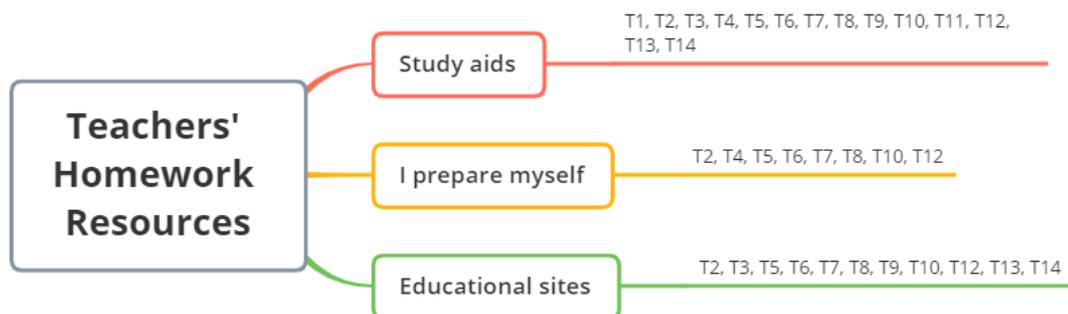


Figure 5. Primary school teachers' homework resources

According to Figure 5, all of the participating primary school teachers used study aids as homework source, and many of them (11) used educational sites. The number of teachers who prepared their own homework was eight. Prohibited to be used and recommended to students in schools, study aids constituted the most important homework source for teachers.

T2 listed the homework sources he used while assigning homework as follows: "We also have homework prepared by ourselves. There is also homework I get from study aids and educational sites. We use everything that is appropriate for us". The thoughts of T3 on this issue were as follows: "Generally websites or study aids that are given to us". T14 said: "We search from other sources in addition to the study aids. Whichever is appropriate to the level of the child, and whichever is appropriate to the curriculum we are teaching, that is what we assign". T9 who stated that she did not have time to prepare homework and assigned homework from ready sources said: "I would say from different study aids. Internet, homework sites. I can't find time to prepare homework myself".

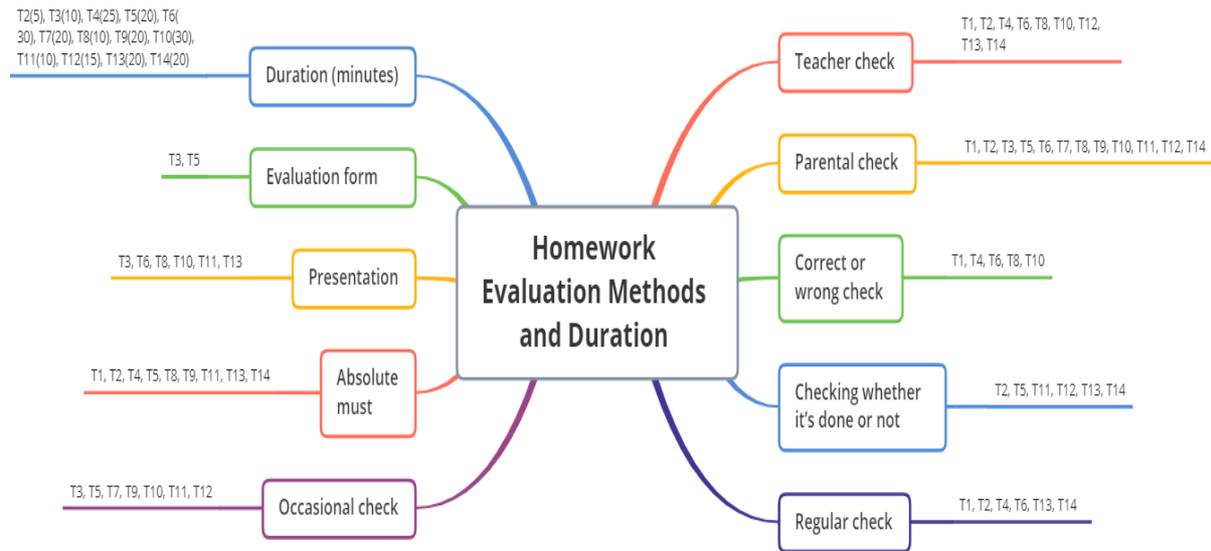


Figure 6. Primary school teachers' homework evaluation methods and duration

According to Figure 6, teachers had different types of homework evaluation. The majority of the teachers (12) wanted parents to check the homework, while more than half checked the homework themselves and stated that homework checking was an absolute must for them. The teachers who checked homework occasionally also made up half of the participants. The number of teachers who regularly checked homework was six. The durations of homework checking were between five minutes the shortest and 30 minutes the longest.

T5 who specifically wanted parents to check the homework said:

We want parents to check. We specifically want parent checking the homework. We check in the classroom, too but we can't check it every day. For example, we check one or two times or three times a week. We focus on those who do not do homework, but usually parents support us.

T9 explained the importance of parents and teachers in homework checking using the following words:

In small classrooms, the checking done by the family is important. Especially in the first and second grades, the family should sit with the child or after a while the family should check the homework of the child. What do some children do? They just randomly scribble. There are children who don't want to do homework. This doesn't mean anything. So, families have to check homework at home. If the teacher never checks homework, some children don't do homework then. They have to know that the teacher will check.

T3 who did not check homework one by one and wanted parents to check homework said:

I look if the parents check the homework or not. There are some parents who circle the questions they couldn't do. They don't explain themselves. I explain them immediately. We used to do this but we don't get to do it all the time. You know, homework is explained first during the first class. Everybody passes their homework to others. They check if others did their homework.

But, we don't do this all the time. I have to be honest. We start answering the test in the classroom. The children tick themselves the correct and wrong answers. That's how we sometimes check. But I can't say I go one by one to each student and check correct and wrong answers.

T11 stated that she only checked whether the homework was done or not. She explained this using the following words:

At the parent-teacher conferences, I frankly tell the parents I can't check all the homework. That's what I do. I can't check the accuracy or inaccuracy of the homework. I can't spare time, which isn't enough. 'You're going to do that.' I only check whether they did the homework or not, and fulfilled their responsibility.

T1 stated that checking homework control is an absolute must and said:

I definitely check the feedback from the students. I ask the family if their child did this homework by himself or if they did it together because this is the main goal of the homework, this is my main purpose. I evaluate that. I check the homework. In the classroom, I determine the incomplete information the students have, and I repeat the subject in the classroom immediately as soon as I found out about it. If you don't check homework, there is no point in assigning it.

4. Result, Discussion and Recommendations

This study aimed to determine primary school teachers' views on homework and their homework practices. In this section of the study, the results of other studies showing similarities and differences with the results of the present study are presented. Finally, recommendations were given regarding the study results.

The primary school teachers participating in the study defined homework as a study assigned to reinforce the subjects learned at school that day and to ensure permanent learning. The daily amount of homework assigned by teachers varied between two and five pages. While defining what homework is, teachers expressed their reasons for assigning homework. According to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 1999 data, Turkey is ahead of many successful countries in terms of time devoted to Science and Math homework. However, the scores of Turkey in the TIMSS exam are far behind other countries (Uzun, Bütüner & Yiğit, 2010). Thus, quality is more important than quantity when it comes to homework. According to Muhlenbruck et al. (1999), teachers use their homework at different school levels for different purposes. Primary school teachers use homework more often to help students repeat what they have learned. Deveci (2011) obtained findings parallel to the results of this study. Deveci (2011) found that teachers, students and parents attributed the concept of homework to works done at home in order to repeat the subjects and to understand the subjects better. Also, Ok (2018) determined that teachers attributed homework to reinforcement, repetition and task.

All of the participating primary school teachers assigned regular homework. Half of the teachers considered homework beneficial and necessary. For almost half of the participating teachers, homework was an absolute must. In parallel with the study results, a study conducted in France revealed that 80-90% of elementary and middle school teachers assigned regular homework ignoring the legal regulations (Glasman, 2004 cited in Güneş, 2014). Likewise, Pezdek, Berry and Reno (2002) found that teachers in the USA regularly give

homework and 4th-6th grade students spend on average of 4.70 hours on homework per week.

In order for students to do their homework gladly, the homework should be about the previously taught subjects, should be appropriate to students' level and should attract the attention of the students. Şentürk (2013) found a similar finding in his study. He determined that the duration of the homework and the attractiveness of it should be paid attention to while preparing the homework. Şentürk (2013) also stated that homework that prepared without paying attention to these makes students reluctant and careless. Yılmaz (2013) put forth that homework appropriate to students' level, interests and needs that is gladly done by them contributes to student achievement. In her study, Köseoğlu (2016) determined that homework that is structured according to students' interests, readiness and learning styles develops the metacognition of students with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder. These students also develop positive attitudes towards the importance and benefits of homework, and complete their homework faster by concentrating their attention on the homework. In addition, Zilkar (2015) revealed that elementary school students prefer to do fun, engaging and visual homework.

Teachers generally assigned homework for repetition, retention, reinforcement and gaining responsibility. However, there were very few teachers who said that they assigned homework to ensure high-level learning skills (teaching ways to access information, teaching how to learn). Corno and Xu (2004) state that teachers give homework to students in order to gain study habits and self-control. Barnes (2001) obtained similar results in his study, too. He determined that the most assigned homework was exercises for the purpose of reinforcement. In addition, similar to the finding of this study, Barnes (2001) found that teachers assign homework to teach ways to access information and how to learn such as creative writing, preparation for the new subject and projects. Ersoy and Anagün (2009) found similar results in their study. According to the results of the study, teachers assigned homework for reinforcement more and did not assign homework that would reveal students' creativity. In their study, Khaw and Kaur (2017: 29) also found that homework allows students to practice and reinforce what they learned in the classroom.

Almost all of the primary school teachers interviewed assigned research, reading and test homework. Similar results were found in other studies. In a study conducted by the MONE (2011), homework such as exercises are assigned more in the first grade. Oluşum (2016) put forth that primary school teachers assign reading comprehension homework more in the 4th grade Turkish course. Kutlu, Yildirim, Bilican and Kumandaş (2011) determined that teachers' homework on reading significantly affect 5th grade students' reading comprehension levels. In their study, Medwell and Wray (2019: 198) found that teachers gave more homework for reading, learning spelling and multiplication tables in primary schools. In contrast to these results, Kapıkıran and Kıran (1999) found that homework do not create a significant difference in academic achievement. They believed the reason behind this is the fact that homework in our country consists mainly of test, reading and writing.

All of the primary school teachers who were interviewed used study aids as homework source, and they generally used websites related to education. More than half of the teachers prepared their own homework. Textbooks were not included in these views. This may be due to the fact that teachers did not consider textbooks as a source of homework or as sufficient. Likewise, in a study conducted by MONE (2011), it was determined that teachers find student textbooks only moderately sufficient. In addition, in the present study, interviewed teachers frequently used other homework sources than workbooks, and they frequently prepared their homework themselves. In parallel with this result, in another study, 54% of the

teachers used homework sites while assigning homework (Yolcu, 2007). In their study, Medwell and Wray (2019) found that teachers in primary schools use worksheets, online sites, workbooks and multiplication tests as homework resources.

Teachers had different forms of homework evaluation. While majority of the teachers wanted parents to check homework, more than half of them checked homework themselves and considered homework checking as an absolute must. The duration of teachers' homework checks ranged between five minutes and 30 minutes. Zhou, Zhou, and Traynor (2020) state that teachers' homework feedback is important and that homework that is checked and provided with feedback will benefit students. Ilgar (2005) also stated that homework should be checked, and feedback should be given to the students. Similar results were obtained in a study conducted by MONE in 2011. 98.4% of the teachers stated that they check the homework they assign. Amongst the homework checking methods, checking the homework individually was the most common method with a rate of 61.6%. Superficial checking came in the second place with a rate of 16.7% (MONE, 2011). Patall, Cooper and Robinson (2008) found that parents' involvement in homework increased the rate of homework completion. In addition, Güneş (2014) determined that communication and interaction within the family were positively affected by assigned homework, and bridges were established between the school and the family. In the current study, it can be concluded that teachers tried to increase the rate of homework completion and increase communication between the school and the family by asking the parents to check their children's homework.

Based on the study results, the following recommendations were made:

(1) In-service trainings on qualified homework can be given to primary school teachers. In the trainings, preparing qualified homework can be emphasized.

(2) Qualified homework assignments appropriate to each grade level can be uploaded to the Education and Information Network developed by the Ministry of National Education to be examples.

(3) The textbooks can be written in a way that meet students' repetition needs.

(4) This study was conducted for primary school teachers. Studies that will determine the views of branch teachers can be conducted.

5. Conflict of Interest

The author states that there is no conflict of interest

Endnote

This research is the expanded version of the abstract presented at the 18th International Primary Teacher Education Symposium.

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