

## AN ANALYSIS OF PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HOMEWORK IN IMPROVING ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT

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### Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to identify students' parent perceptions on the importance of homework in improving English achievement of eighth grade students at SMP Bina Bhakti Abab. The subjects of this study were all of the students' parents of eighth grade students at SMP Bina Bhakti Abab. The study used mixed method through questionnaire as a research instrument and documentation. The questionnaire was to identify and get the information on the importance of homework for their children and the questionnaire was divided into eight points, (1) Parents' role construction (2) Parents' self-efficacy (3) School invitations (4) Teacher invitations (5) Child invitations (6) Parental time (7) Parental energy and (8) Parental knowledge and skills. The total of the result of each points showed that: Parents' role construction 343 (Agree) and 287 (Strongly Agree), Parents' self-efficacy 111 (Agree) and 99 (Strongly Agree), School invitations 32 (Disagree), 32 (Somewhat Agree) and 42 (Agree), Teacher invitations 111 (Agree) and 56 (Strongly Agree), Child invitations 33 (Agree) and 25 (Strongly Agree), Parental time 42 (Disagree) and 48 (Agree), Parental energy 24 (Disagree) and 36 (Agree), and Parental knowledge and skills 74 (Agree) and 54 (Strongly Agree).

**Keywords:** students' parent perceptions, the importance of homework

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### Introduction

Teaching is a process of transferring information from teacher as a messenger to students as receiver. According to Brown (2000), teaching is showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand (p.7). While, Gleitman, Gross, and Reisberg (2010) stated that learning is the development of new skills, the acquisition of new knowledge, and more (p.260). In other hand, Richards and Schmidt (2002) stated that learning is the process by which change in behavior, knowledge, skills, etc, comes about through practice, instruction or experience and the result of such a process (p.298). Teaching is what teachers do and learning is what students do.

In teaching-learning activity a teacher tends to do various kinds of efforts to improve students' learning achievement. According to Allen (2017), there are five efforts for teacher to improve student learning success (1) Always do the best, (2) Use kind words and actions (3) Always have homework and supplies (4) Follow dress code policy (5) Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. Based on these statements, one of those efforts is by giving homework. Homework is a task to students by the teachers to be completed outside the classroom.

Cooper (1989) cited in Cooper, Robinson, and Patall (2006), homework can be defined as any task assigned by school teachers intended for students to carry out during nonschool hours (p.1). In the other words, homework provides an opportunity for practice and learning to occur outside the classroom. This includes both the completion of work not

finished in class, and set work for children to complete after school. In giving homework, students can learn more on the lesson at their home before in the classroom because the main point of learner is learning.

In relation to Cooper et al (2006), homework is an important part of most school-aged children's daily routine (p.2). According to Doorn, Janssen, and O'Brien (2010), homework has a contribution to effective learning through the repetition activities at home to improve students achievement and knowledge (p.1). Learning is essentially a repetition of material to be learned by repeating the lesson with the aim of it will be remembered and mastered. So, what is meant by homework here is carry out all the tasks assigned by the teacher at school, to be done at home. The activity of learning and teaching interaction should be increased effectiveness and efficiency because students not only learn one lesson, but many like economics, English, mathematics, history, etc. One of the lessons is English. To support students to get more understanding about the lesson, the teacher must be provide tasks outside school.

In brief, in giving homework students have a big impact on their learning activities at home. The provision of homework is where the students are given a special task outside of school hours because Cooper et al (2006) state homework is often a source of friction between home and school (p.3). Students may complete homework assignment during study hall, library time, or even during subsequent classes (p.1). Teacher, parents as well as students believe that this activity should be done in non-school hours to improve students' achievement and knowledge about what they learn in the school.

According to Turanli (2009), one reason for assigning homework is to

enable communication between schools, pupils and parents so that they can monitor the child's learning process more closely (p.62). Parents who are the closest person to their children have an important role to make their children realize that English is important language to be learn. Parents are such a good motivator for their children because they can be inspired, parents also can make a big spirit in their children learning process, because the first education is started at home.

In addition, D'Angelo, Rich, and Kohm (2012) state that children will do better in school when their parents are involved their education (p.1). According to U.S. Department of Education (2005), children need to know that their family members think homework is important. If they know their families care, children have a good reason to complete assignments and to turn them in on time (p.10)

Harniss, Epstein, Bursuck, Nelson, and Jayanthi (2001) say homework can be defined as extra work to be completed, generally outside the school to reinforce school learning, and it is claimed to be one of the most controversial issues between children and parents (p.205). As the matter of facts, many argument or debates related to the importance of homework, some people said that it was a good idea to give homework to the students in order they can improve their knowledge and their achievement, but some others people said that it was not a good idea to give homework to the students because the student need time to take a rest and they miss another activities outside of school, just because of excessive homework.

According to Baumgartner, Bryan, Donahue, and Nelson (1993) in Turanli (2009), homework help parent monitor their children's academic development and appreciate their

children's efforts. However, too much homework reduces the time students could use for relaxing and socialization (p.62). In brief, teacher may assign homework that is too difficult or may inadequately prepare students for the successful completion of homework assignments. So, in this case parents have an effect in helping their children learn any subject offered by school including English subject at home because parents' attention is very important to help their children solve problems in learning problems.

However, the previous study that conducted by Carlsson (2008) showed that, the students who did not complete their homework well and bring it in the class on time because students have their own various reasons to not complete the homework (p.9). Darling-Hammond and Olivia (2006) share a number of reasons why students do not complete their homework assignments. One of the most frequent reasons is they do not know how to do and begin to do the homework. Especially in individual English homework, the students do not understand the instructions of their homework assignment that is given by the teachers. Therefore, it may discourage them to complete English homework (p.5)

In fact, homework has been part of students' lives since the beginning of formal schooling in the United States. It is important because it can improve children's thinking and memory. It can help them to develop positive study skills and habits that will serve them well throughout their lives. It can encourage them to use time well, to learn independently and to take responsibility for their work. But helping children with their homework benefits families as well (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p.4).

In addition, Tsai and Jiang (2013) claimed Chinese students enjoy

doing homework more than American, even though the former receive more homework. Chinese students complete their homework in school and by themselves, whereas American third graders finish that at home or learning center with others' help. Chinese schoolchildren have a six-day school day, while American students have a five-day school day. Furthermore, the hours of Chinese students staying at school are two hours more than American ones per day. As a result, it is possible that Chinese students have more time on self-learning in order to complete their homework at school (p.215).

In line with, Canadian Council on Learning (2009) argues, homework has long been of interest to students, parents, and teachers across Canada, although the empirical research has typically been conducted outside this country. Recently, however, researchers within Canada have begun to examine homework in our context. First, the 2007 *Survey of Canadian Attitudes towards Learning* (SCAL), conducted by the Canadian Council on Learning, revealed both positive and negative perceptions of homework. Over 5,000 Canadians were surveyed by telephone in the spring of 2007 for SCAL. While parents viewed homework as an important feature of education, they also reported that it was also a cause of household stress (p.4).

According to Wangid (2011) expresses that father of national education Indonesia has stated that the need for the responsibilities and obligations of education put on all the parties concerned. He refers to the "Tri education centre", which means that education is a shared responsibility between families, school, and community and there are some forms of cooperation that may occur in education, among other things: the first partnership between family and school, between

schools and the community, and between the last families and communities. One form of partnership between the school and the family can be a giving of homework of teachers, it can be used as a medium to cooperate and support each other to achieve the goal of education. The giving of homework by the willingness that not all students have the same capabilities in capture or understand the lessons that have been submitted by teachers in the classroom, so that students need more opportunities (p.2-3).

Puspitasari (2014) clarifies that in her study found that, homework is very helpful when studying at home. Students find it helpful because better understand the lessons presented by the teacher. While working on homework students can ask family, friends, neighbors, and the internet, thus the knowledge of students is getting wide is not glued to the book package (p.4)

In fact, based on observation conducted by the researchers in SMP Bina Bhakti Abab, the researchers gave their students homework in every meeting. From 2 classes of eighth grade that have 84 students were taught by the researchers, they found that there were 30% or 36 of students who did not do their homework and the researchers felt more shock when she found that there were 20% or 24 of students were boy and 10% or 12 of students were girl and the students who did not do their homework was always the same students. Based on the problem above, the researchers wanted to find out about what happen with the students who did not do their homework. Whether the problem was from their environment, especially their parents who did not give any attention on their children's homework or the parents who would like to help their children with homework, but may not always know exactly what was expected how to help, so the

students were lazy in doing their homework and it make them did not care about their homework.

Many issues about the importance of homework, parents also had their ideas about that, some of them agree that homework was important to make their children learnt more, but some others parents disagree that homework was important for their children because they think that their children need more time to take a rest after school. Therefore, the problem, the problem of this study formulated, as follow "What were the students' parent perceptions on the importance of homework in improving English achievement of eighth grade students at SMP Bina Bhakti Abab"?

## Literature Review

### 1. Definition of Homework

The meaning of the word homework is very much incorporated into the word itself, the word *work* is done at home or outside of school hours. In the definition by Cooper et al (2006), homework excludes all types of guided study, which means that home courses with audio or video guidance, in-school study and extracurricular activities are not included in the term. Based on this definition homework in this study is defined as work that is assigned by the teacher to be conducted by the individual pupil at home or during nonschool hours. The Oxford Dictionary of English defines homework in the same way, it is a schoolwork that a pupil is required to do at home.

In addition, Stokes and Baer (1977) as cited in Emami, Sharif, and Jafarigohar (2014), homework is defined as school-related assignments by a teacher, or through mutual agreement of the student and teacher, which will require time and effort outside of the regular classroom for successful

completion. Homework is also defined as academic work assigned in school that is designed to extend the practice of academic skills into other environments during non-school hours (p.30).

According to U.S. Department of Education (2005), homework is an opportunity for children to learn and for families to be involved in their children's education (p.7). It could be concluded that, homework can create greater understanding between children and their parents to improve their relationship for each other in communication. By helping their children in doing homework, parents also can know what their children learn and it will make their children become confident in competing to be the best in school.

## 2. The Importance of Homework

Some experts have found that homework has some importance for teacher, parents and also for students. A survey conducted by Henrikson (2007) found that 56% of parents claim that homework is very important, 50% of teachers, and 45% of students claim that homework is very important. From the surveys above, parents considered that homework is very important than the teachers and students. According to Fisher and Frey (2008), the majority of teachers reported that they used homework to "improve skills in the classroom and for improving life skills beyond high school", especially in establishing effective work habits about assuming responsibility (p.40).

Moreover U.S. Department of Education (2005) claims the teachers assign homework for many reasons. (1) Homework can help their students review and practice what they've covered in class (2) Get ready for the next day's class (3) Learn to use resources, such as libraries, reference materials and computer Websites to find

information about a subject (4) Explore subjects more fully than classroom time permits (5) Extend learning by applying skills they already have to new situations and (6) Integrate their learning by applying many different skills to a single task, such as book reports or science projects. Homework also can help students to develop good study habits and positive attitudes that are (1) Teach them to work independently (2) Encourage self-discipline and responsibility (assignments provide some children with their first chance to manage time and to meet deadlines) (p.8).

Wilkes (2006) expresses that well planned and regular homework will enrich student learning and attainment. Homework is set to (1) Help students prepare for a lesson through reading (2) Allow students to complete or improve work done in class (3) Consolidate and secure learning (new knowledge, skills and understanding) (p.1).

## 3. Types of Homework

According to Arthurs and Templeton (2009) in Faoziah (2016), there are two types of homework. The first is collaborative homework that includes group work assignments. Therefore, this homework will be done by a group of people who will work together and share their opinion. This collaborative homework may create a good relationship among group members and improve personal interest toward the material. The second one is individual homework or personal homework that is done individually (p.4).

Different to Arthurs and Templeton (2009), U.S Department of Education (2003) divided homework into four types. First is a practice to review and reinforce student skills of the concept that is taught in the classroom. Second is completion of unfinished in class assignment because of time

limitation that is given by the teacher. Third is preparation that prepares the students for the upcoming lesson or unit. The last is extension in which the students explore the materials in classroom learning further. Related to English homework, the teacher usually gives practice, preparation, and extension homework for the students to reinforce their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, prepare them for upcoming English materials, and explore their knowledge.

#### 4. Advantages of Homework

Homework can have many benefits for young children. It can improve remembering and understanding of schoolwork. Homework can help students develop study skills that will be of value even after they leave school. It can teach them that learning takes place anywhere, not just in the classroom. Homework can benefit children in more general ways as well. It can foster positive character traits such as independence and responsibility. Homework can teach children how to manage time (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p.1).

Moreover Suskind (2012) wrote the benefit of homework to (1) Improving study skills, especially time management (2) Teaching students that learning can take place outside the classroom (3) Involving parents (4) Promoting responsibility and self-discipline (p.11).

Furthermore, Xu and Yuan (2003) say it is important to consider the main purpose of homework, especially English homework, is to give more exposure to the students in order to make them become familiar with new words (vocabularies) and improve their understanding of the English materials.

In relation to, one of the advantages of English homework is

improved students' skill and understanding ability for mastering the concept of English subject and develops their problem-solving ability such as how to find the meaning of a difficult word effectively (LeFrancois, 1991 in Emami, Sharif, and Jafarigohar, 2014, p.29).

Henrikson (2007) claims that 86% the purposes of homework is to help students prepare for the test, 80% to help students develop good in working habits, 67% to develop students' critical thinking skills, for 65% motivated students to learn and the last for 63% the purposes of homework is to assess students' skills and knowledge.

Homework has the important role to expand student opportunities through exposure and practice or review the materials that already explained in the classroom. Therefore, it may help student to achieve their expected goals in language learning such as a satisfied grade in their test.

#### 5. Disadvantages of Homework

In doing homework, some of children maybe have the advantages, whereas homework does not only have the advantages but also disadvantages. According to Doorn, Janssen, and O'Brien (2010), the effect of homework may be positive, negative or nonexistent (p.1). The possitive effect of homework will increase students understanding about what they learn, the negative effect of homework is students will copying homework from another students when they do not understanding about the instruction of homework, while homework is also have nonexistent effect, the students will do the homework because they think homework is they responsibility without understand what they do.

According to U.S. Department of Education (2003), homework, if not

properly assigned and monitored, can also have negative effects on children. Educators and parents worry that students will grow bored if they are required to spend too much time on schoolwork. Homework can prevent children from taking part in leisure-time and community activities that also teach important life skills. Homework can lead to undesirable character traits if it promotes cheating, either through the copying of assignments or help with homework that goes beyond tutoring (p.1).

Probably, the most obvious negative effect is the stress homework can produce in both student and parent. Homework can be a major battleground between parent and child, and in such cases, it's hard to argue that it's worth it. There are other potential problems with homework (1) Homework demands can limit the time available to spend on other beneficial activities, such as sport and community involvement (2) Too much homework can lead to students losing interest in the subject, or even in learning (3) Parents can confuse by using teaching methods different from those of their teachers (4) Homework can widen social inequalities (5) Homework may encourage cheating (Suskind, 2012, p.11).

In relation to, with homework parents can be involved in their children's educational process, who's can strengthen the relationship between both of them, but excessive homework can mean that there is no time for family activities.

## **6. Parents Role in Students Education**

The learners especially children, must have education in their life. Education is more important than everything. Children need motivation and support from parents for their education. As educational components,

parents take place as educator for their children. So, parents should be involving in their children education.

According to Umar (2015), parents are the main responsibility in the education of their children. Wherever their children are educated, whether in the formal institutional, informal and non-formal parents still play a role in determining their children future (p.20). Although they may not frequently discuss homework with their child, most parents have established rules for their children about doing homework (Henrikson, 2007, p.87).

Xu and Yuan (2003), consistently with their perceived importance of doing homework, parents felt that doing homework was their children's top priority during after-school hours. They viewed that their role, primarily, was to make sure that their children completed homework first (p.34).

Hill and Taylor (2004) stated that families and schools have been working together since the beginning of formalized schooling (p.161). According to Umar (2015), parents are the first and foremost figure in children's education. Although children have been entrusted to school, but parents still play a role in the learning achievement of children (p.25).

U.S. Department of Education (2003) describe that homework can involve parents in the school process. parent involvement can have either a positive child's learning. It can give them an opportunity to express positive attitudes about the value of success in school. When parents get involved with their children's homework, communication between the school and family can improve. It can give parents a firsthand idea of what students are learning and how well their child is doing in school. if a child is having difficulty with homework, parents

should become involved by paying close attention (p.3).

Students' homework creates opportunities for important interactions among schools, families, students, and other adults who help care for children. Well-designed homework helps students learn, it also offers parent opportunities to see what students are learning, talk with children about their learning, and interact with teachers and other school-community members about ways to support student learning.

### Methodology

In writing this study, the researchers used quantitative – qualitative method known as mixed method. According to Clark and Ivankova (2016), mixed method research is a process of research in which researchers integrated quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis to best understand a research purpose (p.1). The researchers used mixed method in this study, because this method was helpful to explain and interpret, to address a questions at different levels, and also mixed method was helpful to analyze the data in this research, or in other words, the researchers can use mixed method in this research if that is suitable with this research, quantitative and qualitative technique cannot use in together case, but mixed method is combination between quantitative and qualitative method in the certain times.

The subjects of this study were all of the students' parents of eighth grade students at SMP Bina Bhakti Abab. The researchers chose among 84 parents to get their perceptions on the importance of homework for their children, because of eighth grade students at SMP Bina Bhakti Abab there were 84 students. In this case, the researchers gave the questionnaire step by step. The first step, the researchers

came to the school when the school was having a committee meeting with all of students' parents in SMP Bina Bhakti Abab, when the meeting was ended the researchers asked for a moment to all of students' parents to fulfill the questionnaires.

In collecting the data, the researchers used a documentation technique through questionnaire as a research instrument. According to Syahri, Sulaiman, and Susanti (2017), documentation comes from the word document which means written items. Technique or method of document meant how to collect data by recording existing data. Documentation is a stable source, useful as test evidence, natural, not reactive, so it was easy to find with content review technique. In summary, a large number of facts and data are store in documentary material, and the main nature of the data contained in the documentation was not limited to space and time, giving researchers an opportunity to know what was happened before (p.84). Document may be either of text, images, or the monumental works of someone (Sugiyono, 2016, p.326). The researchers used documentation to identify parents' perceptions toward on the importance of homework in improving English achievement.

In this study, the researchers used questionnaire as a research instrument. The questionnaire given to the students' parents of eighth grade students at SMP Bina Bhakti Abab and the parents answered all the 25 items in the questionnaire. The result of questionnaire showed the parents' perceptions on the importance of homework. The researchers used a ready – made closed - ended questionnaire. According to Syahri, et al (2017), closed – ended questionnaire is a question item accompanied by answering choices. The subjects only chose responses in



accordance with perceptions and opinion that they feel. Parents' can give or choose respond by tick giving a cross or circle (p.79). The questionnaire was taken from Fan (2012). In this context, the questionnaire consisted of 25 items that used a Likert Type Scale. Syahri, et al (2017) stated that likert scale is used to measure subject in giving viewed by selecting and giving a check on the options column: Strongly Agree, Agree,

Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree (p.79). The questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Indonesia. That was aimed to avoid the possibility of different perceptions in understanding the statement. Therefore, using Bahasa Indonesia in the statement would be useful for parents to understand in answered the question.

**Table 1.** The Category Instrument of Questionnaire

Variable	Indicator	The Item Number
Closed – ended Questionnaire	Parents' role construction	1, 5, 6, 7, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23
	Parents' self-efficacy	2, 9, 10
	School invitations	4, 11
	Teacher invitations	12, 13, 17
	Child invitations	8
	Parental time	14, 21
	Parental energy	18
	Parental knowledge and skills	3, 24, 25

In this study, the researchers described the analysis result of twenty five questionnaire items that have been given to the 84 students' parents of eight grade students at SMP Bina Bhakti Abab as respondents. In addition, the researchers found out that most of the students' parents said "agree" with the importance of homework for their children.

## Result and Discussion

**Table 2.** Summary of Grading Instrument of Questionnaire

Indicators	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat at Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Parents' role construction	34	53	47	76	343	287
Parents' self-efficacy	0	7	7	28	111	99
School invitations	19	32	30	32	42	23
Teacher invitations	9	20	19	37	111	56
Child invitations	3	3	10	10	33	25
Parental time	11	42	30	23	48	14
Parental energy	10	24	4	0	36	10
Parental knowledge and skills	28	38	15	43	74	54

Based on the total of the result above, the researchers could be concluded that parents of SMP Bina Bhakti Abab at eight grade students have positive responds about homework, because the total of the result on the importance of homework toward Parents' role construction was 343 (Agree) and 287 (Strongly Agree). So, it could be concluded that parents of SMP Bina Bhakti Abab at eight grade students think that Parents' role construction was important in improving their children achievement.

Then, based on the total of the result of parents' perceptions toward Parents' self-efficacy above, the result showed that parents have positive responds with the total of the result was 111 (Agree) and 99 (Strongly Agree). So, it could be concluded that parents of SMP Bina Bhakti Abab at eight grade students think that Parents' self-efficacy was important in improving their children achievement.

After the calculation of the data was gained in questionnaire done by using mixed method, it found that the result of the data was standardized by using frequency and percentage of parents' answering the questionnaire. It could be seen that the level of parents' agreement more dominant than disagreement. It was found that the students' parent perceptions on the importance of homework were Agree or in other word the parents have positive perceptions toward the importance of homework for their children in English subject. It was proved that the most parents chose "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" in positive statements and chose "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" in negative statements. It could be seen on the total of the result of each points, there were: Parents' role construction 343 (Agree) and 287 (Strongly Agree), Parents' self-efficacy 111 (Agree) and 99 (Strongly Agree), School invitations

32 (Disagree), 32 (Somewhat Agree) and 42 (Agree), Teacher invitations 111 (Agree) and 56 (Strongly Agree), Child invitations 33 (Agree) and 25 (Strongly Agree), Parental time 42 (Disagree) and 48 (Agree), Parental energy 24 (Disagree) and 36 (Agree), and Parental knowledge and skills 74 (Agree) and 54 (Strongly Agree).

Then, it could be interpreted that the eight main points of parents' perceptions on the importance of homework in improving English achievement were parents' perceptions toward Parents' role construction, parents' perceptions toward Parents' self-efficacy, parents' perceptions toward School invitations, parents' perceptions toward Teacher invitations, parents' perceptions toward Child invitations, parents' perceptions toward Parental time, parents' perceptions toward Parental energy and parents' perceptions toward Parental knowledge and skills. The researchers finally could be concluded that parents think that homework was important for their children to improve their children achievement especially in English subject. By doing homework, they believe that their children academic achievement especially English subject could be much better and by doing homework the relationship between parent and children could be improved because when their children did not know how to do their homework, it was a time for parents involved in their children's education.

So, in line with Doorn, Janssen, and O'Brien (2010) previously, homework has a contribution to effective learning through the repetition activities at home to improve students achievement and knowledge (p.1) and also D'Angelo, Rich, and Kohm (2012) state that children will do better in school when their parents are involved their education (p.1).

## Conclusion

In relation to the data or results of the findings and interpretations, the researchers intended to conclude their study. First, as mentioned previously, the problem of this research based on the following question: “What were the students’ parent perceptions on the importance of homework in improving English achievement of eighth grade students at SMP Bina Bhakti Abab?”. That question was answered in the finding of the study and it could be seen from the total frequency toward eight main points in questionnaire that containing 25 items. Thus, the researchers found that there was positive perception toward the importance of homework. In other words, the parents responded “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” with the questions item given.

In addition, parents think that homework was important for their children to learn and improved their children achievement. By doing homework, parents believe that their children academic achievement, especially in English subject could be much better and by doing homework their relationship between parent and children could be improved because when their children did not know how to do their homework, it was a time for parents involved in their children’s education, because helping their children with homework is the parents’ responsibility.

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