

Running head: PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOMEWORK AT  
ONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN KAZAKHSTAN

**Parents' and teachers' attitudes towards homework at one elementary school in  
Kazakhstan**

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**Ethical Approval**

Dear Baktygul Shaikhiyeva

This letter now confirms that your research project entitled: Parents' and teachers' attitudes towards homework at one elementary school in Kazakhstan has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University. You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely

Kathy L. Malone

On behalf of Elaine Sharplin

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Professor

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**Parents' and teachers' attitudes towards homework at one elementary school in  
Kazakhstan.**

**Abstract**

Homework has become a subject of a long-lasting debate among educational stakeholders including parents, teachers, students, school administrators, and policymakers around the world. A group of stakeholders believes that homework is crucial for enhancing student learning and building students' study habits, while the other group runs counter emphasizing that homework diminishes student engagement. The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' and parents' perspectives about homework at a selected elementary school in Kazakhstan. The research disclosed elementary school teachers' and parents' homework development and assistance practices based on the main research questions 1) What are elementary school teachers' perspectives about out-of-class assignments, and 2) What are the attitudes of elementary school students' parents towards homework? Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five elementary school teachers and five parents. The findings revealed teachers' and parents' regular homework development, assignment, and assistance practices. Parents perceived their children to be spending comparatively more time than it was expected by teachers. Almost all the participants encountered certain difficulties in their homework practices. Teachers found the lack of didactic resources and designing differentiated homework tasks difficult, while parents struggled with the language barrier and family relationship issues. All these challenges encountered were perceived to have come from the introduction of Kazakhstan's newly updated curriculum. Disregarding these challenges, almost all the participants held a positive attitude toward homework viewing it as an essential part of student learning that brings positive academic achievements. Both teachers and parents described quality

homework as a clear task that links new learning with prior knowledge and promotes students' independent learning. Since it is the first research on homework in the Kazakhstani context, its findings will help teachers to inform their homework practices. Parents will benefit from this study by gaining more insights into the way they engage in their children's homework behaviour. The study may also contribute to the development of a coherent homework policy at the state, district, and school levels.

**Keywords:** homework, teachers, parents, student learning, academic achievement, challenges, updated curriculum.



**Отношение родителей и учителей к домашним заданиям в одной начальной  
школе в Казахстане.**

**Аннотация**

Домашняя работа стала предметом длительных дебатов среди заинтересованных сторон в сфере образования, включая родителей, учителей, учеников, администрации школ и политиков во всем мире. Одна группа участников дебата считает, что домашняя работа имеет очень важное значение для улучшения знания и формирования навыков независимого обучения у учащихся. В то же время, другая группа противоречит этим взглядам уверяя, что домашняя работа ухудшает вовлеченность учащихся в учебный процесс. Цель этого исследования - изучить взгляды учителей и родителей на домашнюю работу в начальной школе в Казахстане. Данное исследование выявило практики учителей и родителей начальной школы в разработке домашних заданий и оказании помощи при их исполнении, основываясь на следующих вопросах: 1) Каковы взгляды учителей начальной школы на внеклассные задания и 2) Каковы отношения родителей учащихся начальной школы к домашней работе? Полуструктурированные интервью были проведены с пятью учителями начальной школы и пятью родителями. Результаты показали, что учителя и родители регулярно занимаются разработкой домашних заданий, назначением и оказанием помощи в ходе их выполнения. Родители считают, что их дети проводят сравнительно больше времени, чем учителя ожидали. Почти все участники столкнулись с определенными трудностями при выполнении домашних заданий. Учителя считают, что нехватка дидактических ресурсов и разработка дифференцированных домашних заданий затруднительны, в то время как родители борются с языковым барьером и проблемами семейных

отношений при оказании помощи в выполнении домашних заданий. Все эти проблемы были восприняты как следствие внедрения обновленной учебной программы. Несмотря на эти проблемы, почти все участники положительно отнеслись к домашней работе, рассматривая ее как неотъемлемую часть обучения учащихся, которая приносит положительные академические достижения. Как учителя, так и родители охарактеризовали качественную домашнюю работу как четкую задачу, которая связывает новое обучение с предшествующими знаниями и способствует самостоятельному обучению учащихся. Поскольку это первое исследование проблемы домашнего задания в Казахстанском контексте, его результаты помогут учителям проанализировать свои практики разработки и назначения домашних заданий. Родители получают пользу от этого исследования, получая больше понимания о том, как они участвуют в процессе выполнения домашнего задания своих детей. Исследование также может внести вклад в разработку согласованной политики домашнего задания в республиканском, областном и школьном уровнях.

**Ключевые слова:** домашняя работа, учителя, родители, обучение учащихся, академическое достижение, трудности, программа обновленного содержания образования. .

**Қазақстандағы бір бастауыш мектептегі ата-аналар мен мұғалімдердің үй  
тапсырмасына көзқарасы.**

**Аңдатпа**

Үй жұмысы білім беру саласындағы мүдделі тараптар, соның ішінде ата-аналар, мұғалімдер, оқушылар, мектеп әкімшілігі және саясаткерлер арасында ұзақ пікірталас тақырыбына айналды. Пікірсайысқа қатысушылардың бір тобы үй тапсырмасы білімді жетілдіру және оқушылардың өз бетінше білім алуын қалыптастыру үшін өте маңызды деп санайды. Дегенмен, екінші топ өкілдері бұған кереғар пікір білдіріп, үй тапсырмасы оқушылардың оқу процесіне қатысуын нашарлатады деп сендіреді. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты - Қазақстандағы бастауыш мектеп мұғалімдері мен ата-аналарының үй жұмысы туралы көзқарастарын зерттеу. Бұл зерттеуде төмендегі сұрақтарға сүйене отырып, бастауыш сынып мұғалімдері мен ата-аналарының үй тапсырмаларын әзірлеу және оларды орындауға көмектесу тәжірибесі анықталды: 1) бастауыш сынып мұғалімдерінің сыныптан тыс жұмыстарға көзқарастары қандай және 2) бастауыш сынып оқушылары ата-аналарының үй жұмысына көзқарастары қандай? Зерттеу барысында бес бастауыш сынып мұғалімдері және бес ата-аналармен жартылай құрылымды сұхбат жүргізілді. Зерттеу нәтижелері көрсеткендей, мұғалімдер мен ата-аналар үй тапсырмаларын әзірлеуге, тағайындауға және оларды орындау барысында көмек көрсетуге үнемі қатысады. Мұғалімдерге пайымдауымен салыстырғанда, ата-аналар балаларының үй тапсырмасын орындауға айтарлықтай көп уақыт жұмсайтынын мәлімдеді. Қатысушылардың барлығы дерлік үй тапсырмасын орындауда белгілі бір қиындықтарға тап болды. Мұғалімдер дидактикалық ресурстардың жетіспеуі және сараланған үй тапсырмасын әзірлеу қиын деп санады. Ал ата-аналар үй тапсырмаларын орындауда тілдік кедергілер мен отбасылық проблемалармен

күресетіндігін атап өтті. Аталмыш проблемалардың барлығы жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасын енгізудің салдары деп қабылданды. Дегенмен, бұл проблемаларға қарамастан, барлық дерлік қатысушылар үй тапсырмасын оң академиялық жетістіктерге жетелейтін оқу үдерісінің ажырамас бөлігі ретінде қарастырды. Мұғалімдер де, ата-аналар да жоғары сапалы үй тапсырмасын жаңа білімді алдыңғы біліммен байланыстыратын және оқушылардың өз бетінше білім алуына көмектесетін нақты тапсырма деп анықтады. Аталмыш зерттеу жұмысы үй тапсырмасы мәселесі бойынша жүргізілген Қазақстандық аумағындағы алғаш зерттеу болғандықтан, оның нәтижелері мұғалімдерге үй тапсырмасын әзірлеу мен тағайындау тәжірибесін талдауға көмектеседі. Ата-аналар балаларының үй тапсырмасына қалай араласатындығы туралы көбірек түсінік алады. Сонымен қатар, бұл зерттеу жұмысы ұлттық, аймақтық және мектептік деңгейлерде жүйелі үй тапсырмасы саясатын дамытуға ықпал ете алады.

**Кілт сөздер:** үй тапсырмасы, мұғалімдер, ата-аналар, оқушылардың оқуы, оқу жетістіктері, қиындықтар, жаңартылған білім беру бағдарламасы.

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**Parents' and teachers' attitudes towards homework load at one elementary school in  
Kazakhstan**

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

The nature of homework tasks at schools as well as their quantity and quality are often a topic of hot discussion among school communities. Teachers assign homework tasks for various reasons. Some of them aim at simply consolidating and drilling the new material covered during the lesson, while others attempt to connect the content learned in class to students' real life. Whatever approach is used, it turns out that in many cases students spend hours on their homework assignments every day, and Kazakhstani students are no exception.

The problem of the amount of homework and time that should be spent on doing it, as well as the potential benefits of regular out of class assignments and havoc that they can play on students' emotional well-being, have lately become the centre of hot debates around the globe (Cameron & Bartel, 2009; Gill & Schlossman 2000). There have been dozens of research studies conducted on whether or not students should be assigned tasks to do at home and, how they should be designed and assigned (Bailey, 2003; Hong, Milgram & Rowell, 2004; Cooper, Robinson & Patall, 2006; Protheroe, 2009) Some scholars approve of the use of regular homework referring to it as an integral part of the teaching and learning process that improves students' academic achievements (Huntsinger, Jose, Larson, Balsink Krieg, & Shaligram, 2000; Murillo & Martinez-Garrido, 2014; Tam, 2009) and enhances their social skills (Corno, 1996). Homework can also be a useful tool that develops students' self-regulated learning skills like time-management, self-discipline, and responsibility (Stoeger & Ziegler, 2011).

Along with benefits that homework can offer, there are also some contradictory views pinpointing the potential harms that out of class assignments may bring. In other



words, more homework does not always guarantee that students are learning more and feeling better (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). If not properly designed and carefully assigned, homework may become nothing but busywork and the source of family conflict, student anxiety, demotivation, and isolation (Biscoglio & Langer, 2011).

The battle over homework is likely to have taken its roots from the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the quality of teaching practice was critically questioned (Gill & Schlossman, 2000; Cooper et al., 2006). Since problem-solving abilities and lifelong learning skills gained a priority over rote-learning, the American public and press opposed the quality of out-of-class assignments stating that they only required students' ability to memorize and recite, and did not push students' thinking. Moreover, while educators advocated such long-term benefits of homework as self-management and responsibility, parents argued that homework should be abolished as their children did not academically benefit from it (Cooper, Lindsay, Nye & Greathouse, 1998; Gill & Schlossman, 2004; Cooper et al., 2006). However, with the launch of the Soviet Sputnik in 1957, anti-homework discourse in America has gradually shifted to more favourable views as the abolishment of homework was believed to be one of the main reasons for America's failures during the Cold War and homework was defined as "an instrument of national defense policy" (Gill & Schlossman, 2004; p.177). To date, homework has still remained a problematic question among stakeholders leading to misunderstanding and causing "tension between home, school, policy-makers, and children" (Cameron & Bartel, 2009; p.49).

Should schools assign any homework? How much homework is acceptable for each age and grade level? Does it foster students' academic achievement? Some researchers highlight a strong and positive relation between homework and student learning (Grodner & Rupp 2013), while others believe that the notions of homework and academic achievement are positively correlated only when students get more mature during the

middle and high school years. (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005; Cooper et al., 2006; Biscoglio & Langer, 2011; Núñez, 2015b). Despite these assumptions, some research indicates that regular and effective homework practices are likely to support students to master essential mathematics and literacy skills, and consequently succeed in standardized high-stakes examinations (Cooper et al., 2006). However, in countries like Finland, Denmark, and Japan where students score the highest results on achievement tests, learners are assigned very little homework (Biscoglio & Langer, 2011; Partanen, 2011). Therefore, the dispute around the homework issue requires deep consideration based on reliable research evidence.

### **Background of the study**

The dispute around homework in Kazakhstan tends to be related to the launch of a new curriculum designed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Establishing a new curriculum was of major importance at that time as the one used during the Soviet period had a “centralized, rigid and inflexible” character and was limited to factual knowledge. (Yakavets, 2014; p.11). This was a problem for Kazakhstan since blindly adopting the Soviet curriculum was not enough for a new and young country which had an ambitious goal to enter the world arena and preserve its national identity at the same time. Having launched numerous national reform initiatives such as The Law on Languages (1997), The Law on Education (1999), and National Programme on Education (2000), Kazakhstani education policy tried to ensure democracy and decentralization of education institutions (Yakavets, 2014).

However, curriculum change remained a serious issue in Kazakhstan as students were still seen as objects of the teaching process, not as active agents of their learning. Moreover, the curriculum continued to be driven by “What to teach?” rather than “learning how to learn” (Yakavets & Dzhadrina, 2014; p.38). This might be because of the Soviet

legacy and lack of international experience in Kazakhstani educational practice (Yakavets, 2014). Therefore, with the support of a working group headed by the Soros Foundation Kazakhstan (Kazakhstani non-governmental charity organization) involving policy-makers, academics, teachers, and the educational experts from different countries, a new curriculum came to light in 2001 (Yakavets & Dzhadrina, 2014). The new curriculum was still knowledge-based and still had a prescriptive character. It was not until 2008 when the approach to curriculum design gradually changed with the intervention of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools and the 12-year education model that this changed. The initiatives of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools and 12-year schooling were seen as “an opportunity to improve the quality of secondary education” (Yakavets & Dzhadrina, 2014; p.34) as the existing curriculum was outdated and lacked child-centred teaching and learning. The transition from 11 to 12-year schooling, which has already been piloted in 104 schools around Kazakhstan, was initiated in order to prepare secondary school graduates for tertiary education and a labour market that will meet the needs and requirements of the local and global labour markets (OECD, 2014). Consequently, a new outcome-based integrated curriculum has been pioneered and piloted through Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (Yakavets & Dzhadrina, 2014; Shamshidinova, Ayubayeva & Bridges, 2014; Inform.kz., 2016).

Introduction of the updated curriculum and shifting to a five-day schooling system tend to have increased students' study load as they are likely to be “overloaded by being taught too many subjects” (OECD, 2014; p.93). Taking into consideration the fact that schools in Kazakhstan operate in double and sometimes even triple shifts, these changes are hard to be managed in Kazakhstani schools. This kind of multi-shifted teaching negatively affects the quality of teaching and learning as children have to study early in the morning or late in the evening. It has also been pointed out by the OECD Review Team

that students in the second shift performed worse than those in the first shift. The reason for this gap has not been explained. (OECD & The World Bank, 2015).

It is evident that in an attempt to keep up with the planned curriculum teachers mostly assign the rest of the teaching materials as a homework task. As revealed by the OECD Review Team, the secondary school curriculum in Kazakhstan tends to be too wide and not deep enough (OECD, 2014). Thus, students have to study all the compulsory subjects at the same level and take some elective courses as well (OECD, 2014). As a result, curriculum overload takes not only students' study time at school but also harms their non-academic hours which should be devoted to family bonding. Therefore, integrating subjects through a new outcome-based curriculum was considered a first-hand solution to the problem of student overload in Kazakhstan (Inform.kz., 2016).

Homework is also likely to be used as an essential tool to support underperforming students and eliminate grade retention in Kazakhstani secondary schools (OECD & The World Bank, 2015). Kazakhstani education system rarely uses grade repetition to support underachievers. According to the OECD review team, an estimated 0.04% of Kazakhstani students repeated a year in 2012 (OECD & The World Bank, 2015; p.148). Along with some additional homework assigned in order to catch up until the beginning of the following academic term or year, the gaps in student learning are usually addressed through remedial extra lessons and retaking exams. This might be because grade retention in Kazakhstan is believed to be "ineffective and costly" (OECD & The World Bank, 2015; p.162). OECD review team questions the effectiveness of using homework to support under-achieving students and suggests that academic strugglers be scaffolded with early support and personalized teaching (OECD & The World Bank, 2015).

### **Statement of the problem**

The problem of excessive homework at schools in Kazakhstan requires public attention to be solved. As it has been cited in the OECD Reviews of School Resources in Kazakhstan (2015, p.35), nearly 75% of parents regularly support their children when doing homework, thus Kazakhstani parents are likely to be more involved in the learning and education process of their children than those in other OECD countries.

In an attempt to address the current issue the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan developed the Methodological recommendations for school homework assignments. These recommendations have been the first official document in the history of Kazakhstani schools aimed at reducing students' homework load, strengthening their motivation to study, and improving students' academic performance (Inform.kz, 2017). According to Bibigul Assylova, a former Vice Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, shifting from six to a five-day schooling system has been one of the first steps taken to reduce student study load. The Ministry of Education is also working on reducing the amount of regular homework, which has currently been reduced by one third. However, a nightly homework load of 150 minutes that has been officially established by the Ministry of Education (Qazaqtimes, 2018) is still too much compared to Hong Kong school homework load where nearly 50% of students spend less than one hour per day on homework (Tam, 2009). Even if the Ministry of Education and Science is systematically working on the solution of the current issue, it is still unclear how much homework should be assigned at each grade level. Moreover, the average homework load indicated in the State Compulsory Education Standards is not clearly defined and limited only with elementary schools. So, the time allocated to regular homework should not exceed 50 minutes in grade 2 and 1 hour and 10 minutes in grades 3 and 4 (MoES RK,

2018). This vagueness may lead to students' increased study load, negative academic behaviour (Cooper et al., 1998), and stress (Galloway et al., 2013; Pressman et al., 2015).

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the perceptions of elementary school teachers and parents towards homework in one elementary school in Kazakhstan.

My epistemological position as an inquirer in this study is post-positivism where reality is critically questioned whether or not "the findings "fit" with preexisting knowledge" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994. p.110) since it is believed that "our own subjectivity is shaping that reality" (Muijs, 2011. p.5).

This issue of homework needs to be addressed both at the local and governmental levels as there is a likelihood that homework does not only occupy students' (as well as their teachers' and parents') time and effort but also harms their health and wellbeing (Biscoglio & Langer, 2011; Galloway et al., 2013).

### **Research questions**

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What are elementary school teachers' perspectives about out-of-class assignments?
2. What are the attitudes of elementary school students' parents toward homework?

### **Definitions of the central phenomena**

Cooper (as cited in Lacina-Gifford, & Gifford, 2004) defined homework as "any task assigned by schoolteachers intended for students to carry out during non-school hours" (p. 279), whereas Corno (1996) characterized it as any schoolwork, in its variety of forms like workbooks, worksheets, and essays on different subject domains, which is brought home.

Homework is also referred to as an important teaching tool that is aimed at enhancing student learning (Carr, 2013) and utilized to raise literate, academically disciplined, and successful students (Voorhees, 2011). Similarly, Sidhu and Fook (2010) describe homework as the “tasks assigned to students by school teachers that are intended to be carried out during non-school hours” (p.63).

According to Tam (2009), in Hong Kong’s curricular reforms homework is culturally considered a powerful tool for deepening student learning and constructing knowledge by the curriculum reform. Thus, cultural differences in understanding of homework might exist.

As can be seen above, there is a variety of definitions given to the notion of homework. This study will define homework as a task designed to be done out of classes and aimed at enhancing and deepening student learning.

### **Significance of the study**

The current study can be considered the first step taken to tackle the issue of homework load locally and address it to the Ministry of education. Due to the absence of research on the target issue in the Kazakhstani context as well as in Russia and Central Asia, this study will provide Kazakhstani as well as Central Asian researchers, educators, and policymakers with deeper insights into the importance of this current educational issue and address it at the national and international level.

The problem of excessive homework is a significant subject of investigation specifically for teachers, parents, and students since the results of this study will likely encourage teachers to shape the content and volume of homework assignments more meaningfully. This study will be beneficial for teachers since it will help them to inform their homework related practices. Parents will benefit from the current study by gaining

more insight into the way they understand the importance of homework in general and engage in their children's homework behaviour.

This chapter portrayed an overview of the thesis focusing on the background of the study, problem statement, research purpose, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 will review the research previously conducted on the issue of homework, while the rationale behind the choice of the research design and the recruitment of research participants will be discussed in Chapter 3. The major research findings outlined in Chapter 4 will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 will conclude the main findings of this research in light of the research questions and the theoretical framework.



## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

The problem of homework load and its effectiveness from the perspectives of different stakeholders has spotlighted a long-lasting controversial discourse among teachers, parents, school administration, and students as well. A group of researchers highlight the benefits of homework when it is relevant and skillfully developed (Lacina-Gifford & Gifford, 2004), while others claim that out of class assignments weaken family bonds and cause student anxiety (Kralovec & Buell, 2000).

The review of previously conducted research has defined effective homework policy, homework, and its connection to students' academic achievement as well as their wellbeing, and attitudes toward homework load from the perspectives of teachers, students, and parents internationally.

### **Effective homework policy**

Development of an effective homework policy is a key determinant of success in assigning quality homework tasks that align not only with classroom learning but also with students' needs and interests (Protheroe, 2009). One of the most effective ways to develop coherent homework policies is using a coordinated homework policy at the district, school, and classroom levels (Cooper, 1989). More specifically, districts should be clear and concise when informing stakeholders about the importance of homework, and the exact time students should spend on it. Accordingly, schools have to determine principals' and teachers' roles as well as arrange homework tasks among classes. Finally, teachers have to adopt policies and communicate assignments to students.

When talking about the importance of effective homework policy, the question of "what makes homework effective" arises (Carr, 2013; p.174). In this vein, Cooper (1989) defined the academic and nonacademic effects of homework. By academic effects, he implied students' level of knowledge and understanding as well as critical thinking and

intrinsic motivation which leads to students' positive attitude towards school.

Nonacademic effects of homework were characterized as students' autonomous learning skills like independent problem solving, self-discipline, and self-direction. These academic and nonacademic effects of homework are highlighted in Carr's (2013) research synthesis, in which effective homework is seen as an explicit connection between the learning in class and at home. Marzano and Pickering (as cited in Protheroe, 2009) assert that effective homework should be well structured which promotes students to accomplish it, whereas Coutts (2004) highlights authentic and culturally responsive nature of homework, meaning that it should be related to students' real-life experiences in their own country or community. Later on, Vatterott (2010) identified such important characteristics of effective homework as its purpose, efficiency, ownership, competence, and aesthetic appeal. First, homework should have a clear purpose and students should be aware of what they are expected to do and why. Second, homework should require students' higher-order thinking. Third, students have to be able to take ownership of their learning through a variety of tasks. Fourth, students gain competence when they complete their homework without any support. The idea of learning competence was also replicated in the research conducted by Viljaranta et al. (2018) in which 365 children from grades 2-4 were involved. The study concluded that the more autonomy given to children, the more task-persistent behavior they demonstrated. The last hallmark of effective homework defined by Vatterott (2010) is its aesthetic appeal, meaning that homework should be enjoyable for students.

Cooper, (as cited in Lacina-Gifford & Gifford, 2004), who investigated the relationship between homework and students' academic performance, suggested the "10 Minute Rule" to establish an effective homework policy in schools. This means that ten minutes multiplied by the student's grade level should constitute the average recommended time allocated to nightly homework. Despite this recommendation, the quantitative

research conducted by Pressman et al., (2015) and Murillo & Martinez-Garrido (2014), where 1173 parent and over 95 000 Latin American student respondents were surveyed about the amount of time they spent on homework, concluded that elementary school students had three times more homework than was recommended.

Compared to Cooper's "10 Minute Rule", Kazakhstani students seem to spend more time on out of class assignments. It is hard to determine how much time per night is recommended as The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2018) has not set any concrete time to be spent on homework per night. As has been mentioned above, the Ministry of Education established an average of no more than 50 minutes for Grade 2 and a maximum of 1 hour and 10 minutes for Grades 3-4 eligible for nightly homework (MoES RK, 2018), which exceeds the time implied by the "10 Minute Rule".

In an attempt to suggest some ways of strengthening the homework policy, Protheroe (2009) and Lacina-Gifford & Gifford (2004) made a brief overview of homework research and practices and highlighted the complexity of the target issue as well. Along with relating it to classwork, Lacina-Gifford & Gifford (2004) and Protheroe (2009) believe that homework should be relevant, meaning that students should be asked to explain how to do the task, given some time to start doing it and are allowed to work together with classmates on the task in class before finishing it at home.

Another important feature that makes homework effective is the way it fosters students' independent learning and self-regulation skills (Corno, 1996; Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011). Having reviewed over 62 articles about homework and self-regulation, Ramdass & Zimmerman (2011) claim that the skills that students develop through homework accomplishment such as setting goals, eliminating distractions, perceived responsibility for learning, time management, and self-reflection are more important than

the time spent on doing homework. The authors believe that the above-mentioned self-regulatory skills develop gradually from elementary grades to college and justify their claim with the findings of the empirical study conducted by Stoeger & Ziegler (2008). These researchers related self-regulation to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive learning theory, which defines self-regulation as the continuum of self-observation, judgment, and self-response. This means that students observe and assess their thoughts, set goals and develop certain standards to achieve them, take action, compare their performance to the initial standards and finally reward or punish themselves for success or failure. Stoeger & Ziegler (2008) observed 219 fourth-grade students' self-regulated learning skills. Among the 17 teachers who expressed their willingness to participate in the study, 9 teachers underwent training in self-regulated learning and conducted a five-week training for students in their classes. Students were randomly allocated to training and control groups. Children from both the control and training groups filled out a questionnaire before and after the training. Training group students kept daily journal entries to register their regular homework practices, time management, and self-assessments. As a result of training, students in the training group reported that their time management and self-reflection skills significantly improved compared to the control group representatives (Stoeger & Ziegler, 2008).

Taking into account all the above-mentioned ideas, it can be stated that researchers define homework efficacy from different angles such as its compliance with learners' cognitive and personal diversity, its structure, level of complexity and clarity as well as its link to students' previous learning and real-life experiences. For homework to be effective, it should be "carefully planned to support specific educational goals, take into account the specific abilities and needs of students, and strengthen the link between home and school" (Protheroe, 2009, p.45).

### **Homework and students' academic achievement**

Different researchers and educators hold different perspectives on the effects of homework assignments on students' academic achievements. (Huntsinger et al., 2000; Bailey, 2003; Bailey, 2006). The link between homework and students' academic performance can be considered from different views, ranging from the amount of homework completed (Cooper et al., 2006), the link between in-class learning and home study (Knight, 2017) to parental involvement in homework accomplishment (Huntsinger et al., 2000) as well as the ways students engage in homework (Valle et al., 2016).

Huntsinger et.al (2000) prioritize parental involvement in homework assignments, saying that parental support in teaching as well as helping with homework has a positive influence on students' academic competence. Their findings are the result of a longitudinal comparative study where a group of 40 European American and Chinese American elementary school students' homework practices were observed. As a result, Chinese American students outperformed their European American counterparts in Mathematics. This gap in students' academic achievement is primarily explained by the differences in European American and Chinese American parents' cultural beliefs. Traditionally, teachers in China are considered the main source of knowledge, and respect for elders, concentration, and hard work is seen as a prerequisite of academic success. Accordingly, Chinese parents are likely to teach their children more formally and students in China tend to spend a lot of time on homework (Huntsinger et al., 2000). In contrast, American teachers are seen as facilitators and children as active learners. Children's social development is prioritized over their academic development. American parents seem to prefer more informal ways of teaching and believe that their children are overloaded with homework.

The targeted longitudinal research has contributed some thoughtful insights into parents' beliefs and practices about their children's homework. However, it is limited to the recruitment of participants. More precisely, the authors have engaged only the well-educated students from two-parent families who study at high-quality pre-elementary and elementary schools. The idea of whether the parents and elementary school students with relatively lower socio-economic status share the same opinion remains questionable.

Another important element of meaningful homework that promotes students' active engagement is the way it is reviewed in class. Murillo & Martinez-Garrido (2014) conducted a study with 200 Latin American students of Grade 3 and 6 and their teachers. Students' standardized test results in Mathematics and Language and context questionnaires taken by teachers and students focusing on homework experiences were analyzed. The study determined that significant attention should be paid to checking homework tasks and reflecting on them on a regular basis. The research revealed that students were assigned homework during almost every lesson and that the majority of teachers regularly checked their homework. Data analysis found a connection between homework and students' academic performance. Therefore, incorporating homework into classroom learning was found to be a predictor of students' academic success.

Another quantitative study with the participation of 454 Spanish students examined the relationship between teachers' feedback on homework as perceived by students, students' homework-related behaviors and their academic success (Núñez et al., 2015a). During the study, participants were surveyed on the nature and frequency of feedback they get for homework as well as students' homework behaviour such as the amount of homework they usually get, the average time students spend on homework, and their time-management skills. The results confirmed that higher grade level students receive less teacher feedback on homework. Additionally, teacher feedback has a positive influence on

the amount of completed homework and the quality of homework time management which are the predictors of students' academic achievements and positive behaviour (Núñez et al., 2015a). However, the validity of this research is questionable since the research was scrutinized only from the perspectives of students. The study could have been even more reliable if the participants' responses had been triangulated through lesson observations, analyzing student work, and involvement of teachers in the study.

Differentiated approach to assigning homework is considered an effective way of enhancing students' academic performance (Vorhees, 2011; Keane & Heinz, 2019). Voorhees (2011) argues that the reason why most students fail to do nightly homework is that teachers prepare tasks based on the "one size fits all" approach. In other words, they do not consider students' cognitive capacities and individual preferences when designing out of class assignments. Based on Rosenblatt's (1994) Transactional model of reading, Vorhees (2011) interpreted reading as "a transaction involving a particular reader, text, and context" (p.364), and developed a checklist of literacy assessment questions that teachers can use when designing homework tasks. The checklist comprises such thinking components as decoding (decoding words quickly), world and word knowledge (making meaning, possession of prior knowledge), metacomprehension (understanding the purpose of homework, activating prior knowledge), attention (concentration) and affect (self-efficacy, motivation). Voorhees (2011) claims that instead of worrying about whether homework improves student learning, it would be better to think about how to improve the quality of homework and make it doable. In this regard, running a homework club, where underachieving students are provided extra support is believed to be even more beneficial for students' academic progress. Thus, the more teachers are aware of their students' literacy demands, the more doable and relevant homework assignments are likely to be developed (Voorhees, 2011).

Keane and Heinz (2019) investigated the implementation of differentiated homework in their mixed-methods practitioner research. Based on a pre-study questionnaire, differentiated homework was designed and assigned to students once a week. Students were offered a choice of three tasks that were not ranked according to their difficulty levels. The study concludes that differentiated homework increases students' homework completion rates and improves their attitude towards homework.

Designing interactive homework seems to strengthen the coherence of homework and students' academic achievements (Bailey, 2003; Bailey, 2006). To be more precise, an experimental study in Alabama in which 84 second grade at-risk students from three different schools and their parents volunteered to participate, revealed that parental training enhances the academic achievement of academically at-risk students. In the experimental phase of the study, the research participants were allocated into three different groups: an experimental student group (both students and parents underwent interactive homework assignment (IHA) training), experimental control group (only students completed IHA) and a control student group (neither students nor their parents completed IHA training). Researchers used a wide variety of research instruments like pre- and post-parent surveys, Parent Checklist of Behaviors designed for parents to record their interaction with children and time spent on homework, pre- and post-inference tests for students and student diaries. The research findings were supported by students' pre- and post-inference test results and parents' pre- and post-training questionnaire responses. The study concluded that parental training on assisting their children for homework accomplishment is a prerequisite of the development of effective interactive homework which seems to be academically beneficial for students. The research has also suggested that teachers undergo special training and courses on designing interactive homework. However, teachers' regular practices in designing and assigning homework had not been analyzed during the study.



Alongside all the above-mentioned claims indicating the potential positive relationship between homework and students' academic success, there are also views that run counter to this relationship. According to the Center of Public Education (as cited in Protheroe, 2009), there is no clear and strong evidence proving that homework enhances students' academic performance. This idea is echoed in Tam's (2009) research findings claiming that junior elementary students do not academically benefit from excessive homework load. 2361 elementary school students in Hong Kong were involved in this particular study where the relation between time spent on homework and students' academic attributes were investigated using questionnaires and student diaries. The results claim that students' academic interests and efficacy conversely decline with the increase in the amount of time and effort devoted to homework. Additionally, a study on the relationships between parents' perceived homework involvement and students' academic achievements conducted by Cooper et al. (1998) and Núñez, et.al (2015b) revealed that the relationship between homework completed and students' academic success is stronger in junior high and high school rather than in the elementary school. In this study, 709 students, parents, and 82 teachers completed a questionnaire about the amount of homework assigned and their attitudes toward homework. The study results depicted a positive relation between homework completed and students' academic achievement at upper grades, while at elementary school homework assigned by teachers tends to be related to students' negative attitude (Cooper et al., 1989). Cooper et al. (2006) related this change with students' age differences, meaning that at elementary school children are less capable of ignoring irrelevant information due to the lack of effective study habits.

Another study conducted by Núñez et al., (2015b) revealed similar results. 1683 students from different grade levels were involved in research aimed at analyzing the relation between perceived parental involvement, students' homework behaviour, and

academic achievement. Data analysis revealed that these three variables were related to each other, but the relationship varied depending on students' grade level. Specifically, the relationship between perceived parental involvement and students' academic achievement was stronger in junior high and high school than in elementary school.

The above-mentioned studies on the amount of homework assigned and completed, students' and parents' homework practices, as well as students' academic achievement, show that the question of assigning homework for elementary school students is likely to be a hot-button issue (Cooper et al., 1989; Nunez et al., 2015b). However, since these studies are both quantitative, the extent to which they could contribute to the current research is uncertain.

### **Homework and students' emotional wellbeing**

Homework has been considered a source of student anxiety and stress at elementary school (Galloway et al., 2013). Research conducted on the relation between the time allocated to homework and students' wellbeing indicated that the detrimental effects of excessive homework outweigh its benefits (Galloway et al., 2013; Pressman et al., 2015). Galloway, et al., (2013) conducted a quantitative study in which 4317 high school students were surveyed on the amount and complexity of homework tasks, as well as the feelings students, experience when encountering nightly homework. The findings reveal that on average students spend more than 3 hours on nightly homework. Although participants show greater academic engagement, they tend to experience more academic stress and health problems. When considering this research, its limitations should also be considered. More precisely, the study cannot be generalized since the participants were from only highly privileged schools with students in the upper-middle social class. Moreover, only students' voices were heard in the research, and teachers' and parents' perspectives are not

included. What is more, the study relied only on students' self-reports, while the research data could be gathered by asking the participants to maintain homework diaries.

Another quantitative study done by Pressman et al. (2015) indicated the relation between students' homework load, parents' self-efficacy to assist their children and academic stress. 1173 Spanish and English speaking parents from the Greater Providence area of Rhode Island in the USA volunteered to participate in this study. They had children across all school levels ranging from kindergarten to high school. The participants were surveyed on the time their children spent on regular homework and their homework assistance practices. The results of the study revealed that the amount of time spent by the students across all grade levels was inconsistent with the 10 Minute Rule. Specifically, elementary school students' parents reported that their children spent more time on homework. Contrarily, high school students were reported to have spent less time on homework than expected. The study concluded that Spanish-speaking families would be more vulnerable to stress than the English speaking participants due to cultural and linguistic differences. However, the study only focused on the relation between homework load and family stress in general. Cultural and linguistic issues were not specifically analyzed in the research.

Considering the above-mentioned studies, it can be concluded that even though homework might help students to better learn some new materials and help to prepare them for tests, too much time spent on nightly homework is likely to be the predictor of greater academic and family stress, demotivation, student isolation and health issues (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). So, the more time students spend on homework, the less time and chance they have for family, friends, and extra-curricular activities that improve their well-being (Bennett & Kalish, 2006; Galloway et al., 2013; Pressman et al., 2015).

Students turned out to be vulnerable to homework-related stress depending on the approach that parents use when assisting their children in doing homework (Patall, Cooper & Robinson, 2008; Pressman, Owens, Evans, & Nemon, 2014). To be more precise, parents' negative and controlling attitude when helping their children with homework may lead to parent-child conflict, anxiety, students' dislike of homework, and lower student self-confidence. On the contrary, if parents positively support their children by letting them take ownership of their learning, students are more likely to enhance students' achievements (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007).

### **Attitudes toward homework**

This section considers different attitudes toward homework assignments from the perspectives of teachers, parents, and students.

#### **Homework from teachers' perspectives**

The review of previously conducted research on the issue of homework and its potential influence on students' academic performance and psychological wellbeing has revealed that teachers, in general, have a quite positive attitude towards assigning out of class assignments (Tokarski, 2011; Sidhu & Fook; 2010). In an attempt to find out teachers' thoughts behind regularly assigned homework, Tokarski (2011) interviewed 6 teachers from two different elementary schools in Northern California. Teachers from two different schools were enrolled in this study as the researcher wanted to know the perspectives and homework practices of teachers teaching the diversity of the student population. The findings of this research revealed that teachers consider homework an integral part of the teaching and learning process that improves student learning. However, designing homework requires a lot of time since when developing homework, teachers think of the purpose of assignments, the skills that should be developed through the tasks, students' home environment, and the academic benefits of homework. Disregarding

teachers' positive views about homework, further research is needed to scrutinize teachers' homework practices. This is because this study relies on teachers' self-reports only and the way they design homework in reality as well as how they are perceived by students and parents were not analyzed.

This kind of positive attitude about homework is also shared by Malaysian public elementary school teachers. According to Sidhu and Fook (2010), who investigated the implementation of new homework guidelines in Malaysia, found that elementary school teachers characterized homework assignments as the tasks used to consolidate and extend students' learning. 297 teachers from 17 elementary schools in Malaysia were recruited in this research. The participants responded to questionnaires and semi-structured interview questions and their regular homework practices were analyzed as well. As a result, teachers reported that the major purpose of assigning homework was to practice what has been learned, know the students' strengths and weaknesses, improve students' study habits, and independent learning skills. However, document analysis revealed teachers' homework practices included assigning more practice-based tasks rather than real life and engaging task as was reported by teachers.

American teachers do not seem to share the same view as Malaysian educators (Cameron & Bartel, 2009). The battle over homework is likely to be a two-sided problem in North America. The result of two different surveys like "Homework Realities: A Canadian Study of Parental Opinions and Attitudes" conducted in 2007 with the participants of 1094 caregivers of 2072 children across Canada, and "Teacher Perspectives on Homework" which is a survey of 945 teachers across Canada revealed that homework is a controversial issue that needs to be considered "at the policy level" (Cameron & Bartel, 2009, p. 48). To be more precise, teachers believed that they have to assign homework in response to parents' requirements, while parents continuously complained about the

overwhelming amount of nightly assignments. What is more, some teachers and the majority of American parents agreed that homework does not contribute to student learning but is a waste of time that caused negative consequences for students and their family relationships (Cameron & Bartel, 2009).

One of the major challenges that teachers were likely to encounter during their homework practices is time constraints. As a result of the study conducted by Rosario et al. (2019) with the 78 Portuguese Mathematics teachers from elementary and middle schools, it was found that teachers in general valued homework as an important educational tool. The major purpose of the study was to identify teachers' perspectives on the characteristics of quality homework and analyze the quality of their homework practices. The research data was collected through focus group discussions and analysis of homework tasks developed by the participants. The study concluded that in addition to the value of homework, checking homework assignments and providing constructive feedback was found to be time-consuming for teachers (Sidhu & Fook, 2010; Rosário et al., 2019). Furthermore, the problem of meaningful teacher training has become another topic of discussion among stakeholders. In the study of Sven and Mohan (2019) where 84 pre-service elementary school teachers were surveyed about their perspectives of the use of mathematics homework, it has been evidenced that instead of just being informed by policymakers about the time students are allowed to spend on homework, teachers expressed their willingness to be supported by taking some additional courses on designing homework assignments (Sven & Mohan, 2019).

Another reason why some teachers are cautious about assigning homework tasks is related to their beliefs about the negative effects that out of class assignments may have on students' everyday lives. This idea was the result of a qualitative study aimed at exploring teachers' views about the benefits and consequences of homework in elementary and

junior classes in Toronto. Teachers asserted that homework takes students' out of school time which should be devoted to extra-curricular activities where students learn social skills and such values as emotional intelligence and artistic skills which are not regularly taught in class (Davis, 2016). Thus, research on the benefits and challenges of homework concerning students' extra-curricular activities needs to occur.

### **Homework from students' perspectives**

Students are likely to have different attitudes toward homework depending on their cultural diversity. Chen and Stevenson (1989) compared Chinese, Japanese, and American elementary school students' attitudes to homework in their cross-cultural longitudinal research. The study involved 3500 elementary school children, their parents, and teachers from five cities: Beijing, Chicago, Minneapolis, Sendai (Japan), and Taipei. During the study, students' achievement tests were analyzed, mothers and teachers were interviewed, and fathers were surveyed as they were not always available for interviews. The study revealed that Chinese children received more homework than Japanese children, who were assigned more homework than American students. Moreover, Chinese children had a more positive attitude towards homework than American children, while Japanese children's views were moderate.

Similar results were discovered by Tam (2009). Studies conducted on parental involvement in student homework in Hong Kong revealed that students spend over two hours on homework assignments per day, which is significantly more than the USA where only 16% of 9-year-olds tend to spend more than one hour on homework tasks (Tam, 2009). This data was disclosed by the quantitative study in which 2361 elementary school students were surveyed about their homework involvement, namely the relation between time involvement and academic qualities like students' interest in homework, academic efficacy, and self-regulated learning skills. In addition to survey questions, data was

collected by analyzing students' homework diaries. The study concluded that disregarding students' heavy homework involvement, elementary school students tend to have a positive attitude towards homework and parents support the way their children are engaged in homework. This attitude is likely to stem from their cultural identity considering education as a key to personal, social, and economic development. Chinese students are more likely to be involved in formal educational experiences than their Anglo-American counterparts (Li, 2006). Chinese parents perceive their children to prefer homework assignments that facilitate higher-order thinking rather than those that are designed to automatically recall the class material. This is because math education in the USA was criticized by Chinese families to be lacking "more drills and practice, the higher difficulty level of content and more fundamental concepts" (Li, 2006, p.38).

As one of the key determinants of student homework behavioral engagement, students' attitudes toward homework depends on their perception of the usefulness of homework (Suárez et al., 2019). In an attempt to analyze the relation of students' intrinsic motivation, homework utility, and homework attitude to student homework engagement and academic achievement, 730 students from 14 Spanish middle schools were surveyed in this current research. The results showed that the students who found homework useful have a more positive attitude to it and are likely to be more intrinsically motivated and engaged in the learning process. Moreover, as students' homework utility perception is not static, there is a huge need for teachers and parents to sustain it as a society.

A similar idea was emphasized by Baker's (2007) study, where 5 cohorts of students in Norfolk and their parents were surveyed about their attitudes towards homework. The study revealed that homework supported student success on high-stakes examinations. However, parents reported their children to be fulfilling homework assignments just for the sake of good marks and they expressed their willingness to be



academically and cognitively challenged when doing homework. The results of this study cannot be generalized to other populations because of a small research sample.

Additionally, data were collected only from the perceptions of parents, and children's real academic and homework practices were not examined.

### **Homework from parents' perspectives**

Parents seem to hold different perspectives on homework assignments and their utility depending on their cultural diversity, the social and economic conditions in a country as well as the way homework is communicated by teachers.

As one of the main participants of homework discourse, parents seem to be influenced by the challenges of students' homework practices. In some cases, homework may contribute to the problem of social inequality (Torres & Hurtado-Vivas, 2011; Thorne, 2017; Castillo, 2019). Torres and Hurtado-Vivas (2011) were involved in projects on family literacy in the colonies between New Mexico and Western Texas. Parents were mostly women from low-income immigrant families. The target project with Latino parents revealed insufficient parent literacy, extra expenses on research projects that parents cannot afford, and the hegemony of English as the significant barriers that cause inequity and marginalise ethnic minorities from the learning process (Torres & Hurtado-Vivas, 2011). The project communicated Latino parents' views that it is not parents', but teachers' duty to teach children. Homework was considered to have caused additional overload for mothers. Parents cannot assist their children with homework as they speak very little English. The research suggested such support for parents as guiding older siblings of a family to assist the younger children with homework (Castillo, 2019) and providing parents with the translations of homework in the parents' native language (Thorne, 2017). Anyway, Latino parents believed that their job was to educate their children with values, respect, and desire to learn, while schools should have provided them

with instruction necessary for their future. Moreover, parents held the view that tasks should be done at school since the ones done at home do not academically support students. (Torres & Hurtado-Vivas, 2011).

A similar project was organized in California, in which 6<sup>th</sup> Grade immigrant students from Mexico were recruited (Castillo, 2019). The project aimed to support students in assisting their younger siblings. This is mostly because immigrant parents cannot fully assist their children in homework engagement due to their limited schooling, full-time employment, and language barrier. Consequently, older siblings are the only members of the family who were capable of supporting younger siblings in homework accomplishment. During the project, grade 6 students underwent a workshop on how to assist their younger siblings with homework. The study concluded that methodological guidance for homework assistance could improve students' homework engagement.

From parents' perception, poor homework communication can be defined as the next barrier that limits the effectiveness of homework and hinders students' active engagement in the learning process. Parents often struggle when assisting their children and seem to blame teachers for the lack of timely and useful communication regarding their child's needs (Munk et al., 2001). A survey on 265 general and 83 special education parents' homework experiences suggested that both groups of parents experienced the same problem of the lack of regular and useful communication on their children's needs.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study relied on the theory of shared reality. According to this theory, individuals strive to achieve and maintain shared understandings and values about certain objects or events (Ledgerwood & Liviatan, 2010). Shared reality enables people to find solutions to various issues by taking into account the views of others. It also allows

individuals within a certain group to generate and expand their shared identities (Echterhoff, 2012).

In the context of this study, successful homework means that teachers, parents, and students share similar visions about homework. The research participants reflect on their homework-related practices, identify key problems encountered, and suggest their ideas for the solution of the issue. Hence, this study looked at whether the research participants had a shared understanding of meaningful homework.

### **Summary**

Based on all the previously mentioned research on the issue of homework, it might be beneficial that each school follows a thoroughly developed homework policy based on a definite official regulatory document and everyone is aware of his or her responsibility and shares leadership.

If homework is designed and communicated inappropriately, it may have negative effects on students' emotional wellbeing. Moreover, positive and motivating parent involvement as well as parents' perceived self-efficacy play a crucial role in the successful accomplishment of out of class assignments. If parents treat their children negatively when assisting, it may cause student anxiety and family conflict. Therefore, homework is beneficial when it is developed considering students' competence levels and communicated to parents on time. This requires teachers to be aware of how their students learn. In this regard, as the main designers of homework assignments, teachers need to take special courses and training in creating student-friendly homework.

Assigning homework is a sensitive problem that can unintentionally cause social inequality. Some homework assignments like research projects might be cost-effective as not all families can afford it. Moreover, language hegemony and lack of parents' literacy in assisting children for homework accomplishment may marginalize some linguistic and

ethnic minorities. Therefore, when designing and assigning homework, not only students' abilities and skills but also socio-economic backgrounds must be taken into consideration.

The effectiveness of homework assignments depends on its nature, purpose, and cognitive complexity. Homework can be effective when it not only supports students to recall the materials previously learned but also promotes them to apply and integrate their skills acquired from multiple contexts. Homework should not be just boring busywork that leads to student and family stress. For homework assignments to be beneficial, they should be connected to and extend student learning in an engaging way. But the question of how to design these kinds of tasks at school is a matter of deep concern, time, and effort.

Since there are no studies on the issue of homework either in Kazakhstani or Russian contexts, the results of the afore-mentioned studies in the Asian context could be considered for this particular research due to the countries' geographical locations and cultural similarities. Additionally, there is a lack of extant research communicating teachers' regular homework development practices. This might be because teachers' homework experiences are mostly scrutinized based on parents' and students' perceptions and self-reports. Thus, this particular gap in international research could be filled by this study.

In the next chapter, the choice of research design and data collection tools, as well as the selection and recruitment of the research participants will be discussed. Moreover, the Methods chapter will outline the ways the theoretical framework will be used in light of the research purpose and research questions.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

This chapter outlines the rationale behind the choice of research design and methods aimed at interpreting the views of elementary school teachers and parents about homework load in the context of Kazakhstan. The research was based on two major questions:

1. What are elementary school teachers' perspectives about out-of-class assignments?
2. What are the attitudes of elementary school students' parents toward homework?

#### **Research design**

The qualitative research method was found most suitable for this study as it aligned with the purpose of the research and its main research questions which were focused on exploring the perceptions of elementary school teachers and parents about homework.

A phenomenological research design was found most suitable for this research since it describes real-life experiences of research participants who have experienced a certain research phenomenon (Lichtman, 2017a). In other words, teachers experienced the target research phenomena when developing and assigning homework tasks, while parents experienced it while assisting their children for homework completion. In addition, in light of the theoretical framework of shared reality, qualitative research would enable me to determine teachers' and parents' common understanding of homework in depth.

#### **Sampling**

The participants of the target research were chosen based on convenience and snowball sampling methods. Convenience sampling was chosen because it enabled a researcher to easily access particular sites (Mujis, 2011). This sampling method was used to recruit teachers for this research since they were my former colleagues, who were also available to give consent and participate in this study.

As for the snowball sampling method, it helped the researcher to recruit parents for the research through teachers. In other words, having gained teachers' agreement to participate in the study, teachers were asked to identify parents willing to be interviewed.

Five teachers and five parents from one elementary school disregarding their gender, ethnicity, and social status were interviewed on a voluntary basis. All teacher respondents were females with 10-20 years of teaching experience and there was only one male among the parent respondents.

### **Data collection tools**

Semi-structured individual interview questions were used for data collection as they helped explore the shared views of participants. This type of interview was supportive since it enabled me to use a variety of questions depending on different situations during the interview (Litchman, 2017b). Hence, talking directly to the research participants, posing the main and follow-up interview questions which are based on the main research questions enables the researcher to gather information relevant to the research topic. It also allowed me to ask for clarification and elaboration and support me in answering the research questions.

Initially, interview questions were designed in the English language. The validity of the interview questions was tested by asking the research supervisor to review and make changes if necessary. Accessibility of the research instrument was ensured through its translation into participants' native language, which is Kazakh.

The interview questions were developed based on the research literature, research questions, and the theoretical framework. For instance, both teachers and parents were asked the question "What is quality homework in your understanding?" This question was asked since the research questions were focused on teachers' and parents' attitudes toward homework. Furthermore, both groups of participants were asked the same question since

the theory of shared reality seeks individuals' common understandings (Ledgerwood & Liviatan, 2010; Echterhoff, 2012). The interview protocols can be seen in their entirety in Appendixes C and D.

### **Data collection**

After talking directly to the school principal and gaining access to the research site, elementary school teachers (who are headteachers at the same time) were approached in person and asked to participate in the current research. Those teachers who signed the consent form (see Appendix A), were asked to volunteer for the study to support the recruitment of parents. Since teacher participants have full access to parents, they were asked to share the purpose, outline, and potential benefits of this study with parents on my behalf, using teacher-parent group chat on WhatsApp (see Appendix E). Those parents, who were willing to participate were asked to contact me individually, not in the group chat. Volunteer participation in research was likely to guarantee the credibility of a study since it ensured "cooperation", transparency, and "relevant data provision" (Creswell, 2014. p.147).

Both teachers and parents had a choice to be interviewed online or face-to-face wherever and whenever it was convenient for them. All the research participants were interviewed once only for about 30 minutes and the interviews were recorded, but they were warned that some participants might be questioned several times if further clarification was needed.

### **Data analysis**

As a first step of the qualitative data analysis, all the interviews were transcribed. Then the interview transcripts were read carefully and coded manually. It should be noted that all the qualitative data was read several times before, during, and after coding in order to get its whole sense and interpret it meaningfully. Qualitative data analysis is an iterative

process that enables an inquirer to get a deeper understanding of data each time it is read (Creswell, 2014).

### **Ethical issues**

In order to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the research participants' personal information, each participant was given a pseudonym. The participants' personal information was not disclosed for any publications and conferences. All the consent forms and interview recordings were stored in my password-secured personal computer.

Along with anonymity, the participants might run some psychological risk as well. Specifically, some interview questions might have caused the participants' negative feelings like guilt and anxiety. This risk was minimized by letting the participants know that the researcher did not have any intention to judge them and that the participants could skip any sensitive question at any time.

### **Summary**

This chapter described the rationale behind the choice of the research design and methods used to achieve the research purpose. In particular, the chapter introduced the research design, selection, and recruitment of research participants as well as data collection and analysis procedures. Finally, the chapter focused on the ethical considerations applied to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. The results of data analysis will be provided in the Findings chapter.

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## **Chapter 4: Findings**

### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the findings of the study conducted in an attempt to explore teachers' and parents' perspectives on homework at a selected elementary school in Kazakhstan. As a result of data analysis, 4 major themes were identified: (1) Expectation vs reality; (2) Challenges encountered; (3) Homework and students' academic achievement and (4) Three Cs of homework.

### **Expectation vs Reality**

This section includes the findings of elementary school teachers' practices in designing and assigning homework as well as the way parents perceived its accomplishment at home. The section specifically focuses on such key points as the methods used by teachers to develop homework assignments and how parents are involved in the process of homework accomplishment.

#### **Why teachers give homework?**

Interviews and data analysis revealed that teachers assigned homework for various reasons ranging from simply keeping students apart from distractions to revising classroom learning and enhancing students' independent study skills.

**Homework as a tool to enhance classroom learning.** Foremost, teachers tended to give homework every lesson mostly to encourage students to remember and review the materials learned in class. As Teacher 1 said, "For regular homework, I prepare only easy tasks directed to the learning objective covered in class". Additionally, Teacher 2 mentioned that she assigned homework to see whether or not everybody in class achieved the learning objectives. In this regard, the way students completed homework tasks was likely to help teachers figure out if students understood the learning material or needed any help. She stated:

I give homework because I need to make sure that all my students understand the new material. As the class size is very big (34 students), it is impossible to guarantee that all learners acquire learning for sure. Therefore, homework is a gateway reflecting the gaps in student learning. By checking homework, I usually know the extent to which my students acquired knowledge. Mistakes students make enables me to work individually with them and bridge the gaps in their learning.

The aim of giving homework for consolidating class learning was also reflected by Teacher 5's response. She supported her viewpoint with the diversity of student learning and curriculum overload. She claimed:

Students sitting in front of teachers are not the same, and peculiarities of subjects are different as well. The structure of the curriculum is not organized systematically enough, meaning that students are bombarded with a new topic every lesson. Consequently, not all of them are capable of grasping new learning successfully. Therefore, I assign homework to consolidate learning acquired in class.

Teachers also highlighted that they rarely assigned homework requiring students' higher-order thinking. In other words, teachers admitted that they gave more practice-based tasks leaving little opportunity for extension tasks that required students' to analyze and synthesize skills. As Teacher 1 said, "I try not to assign any tasks for extension. All the tasks demanding higher-order thinking are usually done in class". Accordingly, Teacher 4 commented, "I rarely assign those kinds of tasks. Mostly students practice classroom learning like retelling the stories and reciting poems. Only sometimes I assign them the tasks like finding extra information and sharing it with a class".

**Homework as independent learning.** Teachers assigned homework to improve students' independent learning skills. In other words, regular homework was believed to

push students to recall all their knowledge gained in class and connect it with previous learning. "At this point, it is important that students do everything by themselves, not under the guidance and provision of parents and other members of the family. Otherwise, learning is not going to be individual and independent" (Teacher 1).

**Homework as prevention from study distractors.** Interestingly, some teachers turned out to be assigning homework just to keep students on task. They backed it up with the alarming increase in excessive screen time among youngsters. In this vein, Teacher 3 said:

I give homework to keep my students busy. This is because students spend too much time on TV and social network these days. Therefore, instead of wasting time on useless films and videos, it would be better for students to do something beneficial. And homework is of huge help here.

This idea was echoed in the remarks of Teacher 4. She noted, "I regularly give homework to guide students to manage their free time. Students study in the morning, meaning that they are free in the afternoon. So, homework is good for students to avoid time wasting".

#### **How teachers design homework tasks?**

Data analysis depicted that teachers generally thought they designed homework to last 15-30-minutes. They also used a variety of resources ranging from textbook materials to different internet resources.

**Time to be spent on homework accomplishment.** Teachers believed that they designed homework for each subject to be completed in 15-30 minutes. Overall, depending on the number of lessons per day, teachers expected students to be spending about an hour or two on homework every day. Teacher 1 said:

I think that the time devoted to homework should not exceed 15 minutes.

Otherwise, students will get bored. So, if a student spends about 15 minutes for

each homework task, regularly it must take them about an hour or an hour and a half at most.

On the contrary, Teacher 4 said that the time on homework accomplishment depended on the subject and complexity of the topic learned in class. She added:

Math homework tasks do not usually require too much time since students just follow certain fixed rules to solve problems. Thus, it will take students 10-15 minutes maximum. However, the subjects like Kazakh language and Literature may require more time as retelling, learning by heart, essay writing or some other extended answers might be needed. There these subjects will probably take at least 30 minutes. (Teacher 4)

Data analysis has disclosed the lack of teachers' awareness of the standard time allocated for homework accomplishment for each grade level established by the Ministry of Education. There were only two respondents who mentioned it during the interviews, but they did not specify an exact time. Teacher 4 noted, "There is a specific time for homework at each grade level". Likewise, Teacher 3 added, "There is a standard that we have to follow when developing out-of-class assignments, but I don't remember exactly what it looks like".

**Techniques used in designing homework.** All the teachers highlighted that the priority was keeping assignments simple and doable. Teachers tended to perceive no point in giving homework if a student puts too much effort into it and struggles to complete it. As Teacher 3 pointed out, "Why should I assign the task that causes too much trouble for a child and the whole family? Homework should be so easy and fun that a student does not even notice how homework time passes by".

Another participant added that she used only textbook materials for homework to make homework manageable for every student. She said:

The range of homework assignments that my students get is fixed with exercises from textbooks, the tasks that require solving particular math problems, and retelling. Given that the students from city outskirts are not likely to have access to the internet, I try not to assign any tasks involving online research but those that are accessible from the textbook. In this way, I try not to hurt their feelings. (Teacher 3)

In addition, some of their colleagues were likely to refer to online resources or develop their homework assignments. In this regard, Teacher 5 added:

Since there are sometimes not enough tasks and exercises in textbooks, I have to borrow some similar tasks from the internet or generate them myself. In such cases, I print up the worksheets for each student or share them with parents via WhatsApp messenger.

**Shared homework tasks.** Data analysis disclosed teachers' experiences in designing shared homework. Some teachers said that they had to seek assistance from their colleagues to make homework engaging. Teacher 2 said, "Sometimes I refer to young teachers with comparatively less teaching experience when developing lesson plans and homework assignments. I borrow their tasks developed in the previous year and adapt them to my class". Additionally, the idea was repeated by Teacher 1, "I ask for preservice teachers' advice since they are young and full of new ideas".

However, there were also some teachers who did not ask for any help as they believed they were highly proficient in this area. Accordingly, Teacher 3 stated, "I never ask for anyone's help and ideas when it comes to homework. I think I don't need it as I have more work experience. It is my colleagues who ask for advice instead".

In conclusion, at this school, it could be generalized that teachers assigned homework tasks with the purpose of practicing and revisiting the learning acquired in

class. Homework was also considered the main method for identifying the gaps in students' learning and taking actions for further development.

Teachers assigned textbook exercises, used internet resources, or generated their own assignments for homework. When designing out-of-class assignments, some teachers tended to refer to their colleagues for help and attempted to share experiences.

### **Parents' homework practices**

The data revealed that all parents regularly supported their children in doing homework. Most parents even accepted homework involvement as their job. As Parent 4, a housewife and a mother of three children claimed, "Helping my kids with homework is one of my major duties at home. I'm the only person who is responsible for it".

**Time spent on homework completion.** Most parents agreed that their children regularly spent about 20- 40 minutes per task. "If the tasks are easy enough, it takes us about 20 minutes to write several drafts through proofreading, editing, and copying the final version into the copybook", said Parent 2. But, Parent 1 countered that "homework which required retelling takes comparatively more time as we have to read several times, clarify the meaning of some unfamiliar words, recall the main ideas in chunks and glue them all together".

Interviews made clear that homework tasks about science and mathematics did not usually take that much time. In contrast, parents argued that their children spent a considerable amount of time on humanities such as Kazakh, Russian and English languages and Kazakh Literature as well as other subjects like Natural Science and Worldview. Worldview, an introduction to Kazakh history, is one of the compulsory subjects at elementary school. Although Natural Science was considered a science subject, it required reasoning and justification skills that elementary school students had not developed enough yet. As Parent 1 noted:

Mathematics is not as hard as Worldview for my child and does not take that much time, only 20 minutes maximum, whereas the latter usually requires twice as much time at least. I think my daughter finds it overwhelming due to the lack of vocabulary to express her ideas or the topics learned might be too complicated for students' age.

During the interviews, all parents acknowledged that they did not simply guide their children when doing homework. Indeed, parents tended to assist their children until all homework tasks were completed. As Parent 3 commented, "When learning grammar rules by heart, I have to sit with my son, explain each unfamiliar word, and recall the rule together with him. In this way, we kind of do homework together..." Moreover, Parent 1 added:

I usually explain the task. For example, when given the tasks for practicing the order of mathematical operations, my daughter frequently gets confused. Even if she is right, she always asks me for verification. Therefore, I explain everything first and my daughter completes the rough draft of the task. Then I check if everything is correct, and only after that she copies everything into her copybook.

**Whole family support for homework accomplishment.** Most parents highlighted the way they supported their child for homework as a whole family. Although teachers expressed their ideas regarding the extent to which parents should provide support, it did not seem to be that successful according to the interview data. As Teacher 1 argued:

Parents should not sit and control each step of their children when doing homework. Students just need to be guided at the beginning, that's it. I know how my students learn in class. If a child makes mistakes, it's ok. Parents should let their children learn from their own mistakes. Otherwise, learning is not going to be meaningful.

However, improving students' independent learning through homework was problematic in reality since parents had to support their children as a whole family. In this regard, Parent 3 added:

I always help my child with homework in the evening when coming home from work. I'm usually responsible for assisting my son with retelling, writing essays, and learning grammar rules and poems by heart. When it comes to Math tasks, our father supports us. My older son assists in doing English homework since neither my husband nor I understand English.

Additionally, Parent 4 commented that he tried to support his children for homework, and they did their best to finish all the tasks in the afternoon before their mother came home from work. In cases when he was not capable enough of doing so, his wife gave a helping hand after dinner. He said:

I'm a father of two boys who are 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade students. I cannot say that I'm 100 percent confident to assist my children in quality homework accomplishment. But I try at least. If I struggle to help them, I refer to my wife via WhatsApp. But when it comes to writing essays or short stories, I'm a bad helper. Since my wife is a teacher, it's usually her who supports the kids for such uneasy tasks.

Overall, the interviewees' remarks depicted that parents constantly assisted their children for homework accomplishment. The time they devoted to each homework task varied depending on the subject and the task. Regardless of teachers' attitudes toward the extent of parental support to be provided for homework, parents gave ongoing support throughout the whole process of homework accomplishment.



### **Challenges encountered**

This section focuses on the challenges that both teachers and parents faced in their homework related practices.

#### **Challenges faced by teachers**

While analyzing the interviews with teacher participants, several common challenges like the lack of didactic resources and experience in designing differentiated homework assignments were identified during the interviews.

**Lack of resources for designing homework tasks.** When discussing the difficulties faced while designing out-of-class assignments, some teachers mentioned the lack of resources and its connection to the updated curriculum. For example:

Preparing homework tasks takes time as there are not enough didactic resources provided in the textbooks. I think this is because a new curriculum does not oblige teachers to assign homework, meaning that it is voluntary. So, in order for my students to practice the learning material, I have to generate some new tasks by changing or adapting the ones that I already have or look for some new resources on the internet. (Teacher 5)

Interestingly, Teacher 3 added in this regard that she did not have any problems regarding the volume of homework tasks. “What is good about the new textbooks for Grade 4 is that there is a special Homework subsection provided for each unit. Therefore, teachers do not need to push themselves to design homework”. This might mean that the curriculum did not make homework mandatory at the early elementary school level. Teachers could decide whether or not to assign homework. Maybe this implies that homework might gradually become part of the learning process by the end of elementary school.

**Differentiated homework challenges.** Another perceived obstacle that hindered the process of homework implementation was designing differentiated homework based upon individual student needs. Teachers agreed that not all students acquired new learning successfully. That was why teachers felt it would be beneficial for students to do tasks that expand their learning. Teacher 2 said:

Each student is unique and perceives learning differently. But we usually assign standard tasks for the whole class. Some students, who are capable enough, complete them quickly without much effort, while weaker students struggle with the assignments and get stressed out. Therefore, differentiating homework according to students' abilities is quite hard for me.

Furthermore, Teacher 1 expressed a quite sensitive opinion on this point.

My problem is that I do not want to give a "one size fits all" homework task to my students. I would like to assign different tasks depending on the level of students' knowledge and I don't mind differentiating homework into A, B, and C level assignments. But my concern is that students would guess about being assigned the tasks based on their knowledge level. I'm afraid that they would feel like I'm discriminating against them. Therefore, I mostly have to give standard tasks for the whole class.

As can be seen, differentiated homework was considered a two-sided issue.

Nevertheless, assigning standard tasks might be inevitable if teachers consider it necessary in order not to hurt students' feelings.

### **Challenges faced by parents**

Language barrier and family conflict seemed to be the major issues experienced by parents when helping their children complete homework.

**Language barrier.** The difference between the use of Kazakh and Russian as either the first or second language at home was one of the root causes of challenges faced by parents and their children when doing homework. For instance, Parent 2 said:

My sons attend a Kazakh school, while I went to a school with the Russian language of instruction. Although we speak only Kazakh at home, assisting my children with Kazakh language and Literature is hard for me. This is because I know only the phrases used in everyday spoken language. Not only my sons but also I do not understand some literary words for example.

Parents admitted that it was hard to support children for homework completion especially when it came to English.

In my way of understanding, there is no point in imposing a third language on a child who has only started learning vowels and consonants in his or her native language. English could be learned more consciously by the time children reach Grade 5. It is unbearable for my child to learn new English words by heart. I am not completely sure whether or not I am pronouncing the English words right when helping my child. (Parent3)

**Family conflict issues.** Another challenge encountered by the majority of parents was the havoc that homework played on family relationships. Most parents admitted that homework time usually ended up with arguments between parents and children leading to students' anxiety. Parent 2 noted:

My elder son wants to quickly finish all homework assignments and go out to play. But the problem is that he can't complete the tasks on his own. He always needs someone near who clarifies uncertainties. Consequently, he can't finish his homework on time and gets angry.

Another evidence for this issue was the response of Parent 3. A mother, who was totally against children doing homework after lessons, claimed that evenings had to be devoted to family bonding. She argued:

Working all day long always makes me tired and emotionally drained. Instead of being close to each other and enjoy our evening time together, we do homework. This inevitably leads to arguments and family conflict. As a result, my children want to cry and feel isolated. On the contrary, in developed countries like Finland, students do no homework at all since evening time is considered to be devoted to family reunion. Even if I try to control myself, it is not always possible. This definitely leads to conflict and makes everybody frustrated.

Parent 4 shared the method she used to deal with these frustrations:

I sometimes get angry while assisting my children with homework. I even scream at them. At these moments, my children leave me for a while and let me calm down. Later they come back and we continue doing homework.

Parents also made suggestions to improve homework practices. Namely, Parent 1 suggested that teachers assign not only drill exercises but also creative tasks as well,

Students' homework repertoire should not be limited to monotonous practice exercises. It would be fantastic if teachers assign the tasks that encourage students to apply their knowledge and skills in real life. For example, students can be extrinsically motivated through the nomination of a Best Reader during vacations. This can also enhance students' intrinsic motivation for reading.

### **Updated curriculum as a trigger of challenges**

Interview analysis made it obvious that both teachers and parents considered the updated curriculum as the main cause of difficulties encountered not only in assigning and accomplishing homework but also in the teaching and learning process as a whole. Teacher

3 expressed her viewpoint that some subject programmes needed to be reviewed according to the peculiarities of the local context:

The curriculum is too hard and does not coincide with students' learning capacities. Besides, teachers are shaped by the curriculum. They rush to teach new topics in every lesson. The content of the subject programmes is too complicated these days. For instance, the Natural Science programme for Grade 4 is closely related to physics. Now I am constantly learning Physics for Grades 7 and 8 in order to prepare for lessons. I think these programmes have been developed based on the experience of some pilot schools in Almaty. However, it would be better to think in advance whether the experiences and capacities of schools in one region can be generalized to the whole country.

A similar idea was shared by Teacher 2 when they commented:

The subject programme for Natural Science is quite complicated. For example, the topic of the ancient tribes like Saka and their culture is very difficult for students. Even parents get shocked by this topic. Mathematics is ok, but the subject programmes for Worldview and Natural Sciences seem to have been developed unconsciously and without much effort.

In line with teachers' perspectives, parents expressed their dissatisfaction with the new curriculum.

It would be better to totally exclude such complicated subjects as Natural Science, Worldview, and Self-cognition from the elementary school curriculum and focus on students' functional literacy only. These subjects take students' time causing more stress since students do not consciously understand what they read. Therefore, there is no need of studying these subjects. In the afternoon children should attend various clubs, while evenings should be spent with a family. (Parent 3)

Parent 4 expressed a similar perspective:

These days, the content of a new curriculum is too complicated. Sometimes even I find it hard to understand some Math problems. For example, grade 4 students are now learning how to multiply four- and three-digit numbers. I myself remember learning it in Grades 7-8.

Both teachers and parents highlighted the updated curriculum to be predominantly responsible for the problems occurring inside classrooms and at homes. Teachers suggested that subject programmes be reviewed by adding more clarity and taking into account different learning capacities. Parents also expressed their desire to have the amount of homework reduced by simplifying the content of subject programmes and excluding some subjects from the curriculum.

### **Homework and students' academic performance**

Even though teachers and parents encountered noticeable difficulties in their homework practices, both agreed that doing regular homework enhanced students' learning and academic performance. Teacher 5 believed that "if students do homework regularly and appropriately with the sense of responsibility, they could succeed in any test".

In addition, Teachers 2 and 3 highlighted that whether or not students achieve positive results on summative assessments depended on the subject. They supported their argument with the difficulty of subject programmes. In this regard, Teacher 3 emphasized the importance of the alignment between teaching and assessment. She said:

Homework completion and academic success are certainly related to each other unless students are tested in what they learn. We need to admit that not all teachers test what they teach in regular classes. It is a big issue. Some teachers do not want to waste time developing summative tests and use test specifications or model tests that are available for public use. Undoubtedly, some parents prepare their children

for tests in advance. Therefore, such tests might cause academic misconduct and disparity when marking students' term results.

Most parents also shared a similar view of the positive influence that regular homework had on students' academic progress. They confirmed that the amount and frequency of doing homework could significantly improve student learning. The response of Parent 1 could be a great example for this point:

I do not know what specific types of tasks my child gets and whether they are related to in-class learning, but my daughter regularly tells me about her summative test results. Hence, I believe that the volume of homework and students' success in doing it predict their academic achievements.

Likewise, Parent 4 highlighted the link between learning in class and homework. She added, "If students understand what has been learned in class and practice it regularly at home, they will not fail any exams. If students are guided by teachers and their parents, I believe they will complete any test successfully".

Interestingly, there were two parents who had comparatively different viewpoints regarding the question of homework and students' academic achievements. This was because one of them did not know much about the new assessment system in Kazakhstani secondary education (Parent 3), while the other was completely unaware of his children's academic performance.

Having analyzed the given responses, it became clear that teachers and parents mostly agreed with the way homework could improve students' academic achievements. The only disagreement occurred with parents who were ill-informed about either the new criteria-based assessment system or their own students' progress. Overall, parents prioritized regular practice in class and at home as a key determinant of academic success.

At the same time, teachers made it clear that students succeeded when learning in class and at home were reflected in testing.

### **Three Cs of quality homework**

This section outlines the characteristics of quality homework assignments from the perspectives of teachers and parents. Data analysis revealed three agreed upon hallmarks of quality homework as clarity, consistency, and competence.

#### **Clarity**

Research participants defined clarity as the most important quality of homework tasks. In other words, they believed that homework was meaningful only when it was clear and concise, meaning that students were aware of what to do and how to do it. As Teacher 1 noted, "Homework should be clear and to the point. When designing homework, teachers should make sure that the majority of students can do it successfully".

Parent 1 added that good homework should most importantly have a specific purpose. She stated, "Homework should be directed to a certain learning objective which students are aware of. Besides, children should be clearly explained how to complete the task. If students do not know why they need to fulfill a certain task and how to do it, it becomes a useless waste of time".

#### **Consistency**

Interviews depicted the perception that quality homework should be logically linked to students' prior knowledge. Teacher 3 pointed out:

In addition to being purposeful, homework should be based on what students have learned before. That is, good homework should be like a bridge that merges new learning to prior knowledge. So, meaningful homework pushes students to complete the task building on their prior knowledge.



If teachers interpreted consistency as the connection between new and prior knowledge, parents were likely to define it as the link between the learning in class and at home. This vision was clearly reflected in Parent 1's comment,

It is good when students practice at home exactly what they learn in class. Bearing in mind large class sizes, it is hard to guarantee that children fully grasp new learning within a 40-minute lesson. And when coming back home, students have to practice it again. Therefore, when preparing homework, teachers should make sure that learning in and out of class is similar. Homework should be devoted to enhancing the learning acquired in class.

### **Competence**

Both groups believed that quality homework should be manageable and improve students' independent learning skills. This was believed to be possible when homework assignments were in line with students' learning competences. "Ideally, the level and amount of homework should depend on students' learning potential. If tasks are too difficult and students rely on their parents to manage them, we cannot define it as independent learning", said Teacher 1. The idea was further elaborated by Teacher 2:

Quality homework encourages students to work independently without parental support. It does not mean that tasks should be too easy or too hard. Just like any other exercise in class, homework should be in line with students' learning abilities enabling them to complete homework independently. For example, homework tasks in my class are usually perfectly done. But in class, students do not always demonstrate that level of knowledge. This means that parents help students do homework. In such cases, parental support hinders students' independent learning.

This idea was mirrored in parents' comments as well. As Parent 2 mentioned:

My children are kind of dependent on their mother's supervision and verification. Even if their ideas are somehow right, they need everything confirmed by parents. Everything they write should be checked and approved by their mother. If there is something wrong, they have to write another draft based on their mother's feedback. Children can copy the final draft into their exercise books only when it is perfectly written, meaning that there should be no mistakes in their copybooks.

Quality homework was described as the task that encouraged students to apply their knowledge and skills in practice. "Homework can be valuable when students use the knowledge they gained in class to solve various problems in real life" (Teacher 5).

Parents held the same perspectives as teachers, except for one parent who was totally against students receiving homework. All the respondents claimed that homework could become an effective teaching and learning tool when it advanced students' independent learning skills. Parent 2 pointed out that "real homework enables children to learn independently, without parental support".

The same idea was reflected in Parent 5's statement that "quality homework should foster students' holistic development".

One of the parents characterized homework as a task that develops students' critical and creative thinking. Specifically, she emphasized the role of school libraries:

Students keep drilling memorization and rote learning at home. Therefore, our children should be assigned those tasks that foster logical thinking. We know that there is a subject Logic in their regular timetable. But I do not know anything about the way that subject is taught. Consequently, along with observing the Logic subject at school, teachers should give more reading for pleasure as homework.

(Parent 1)

The remarks of research participants showed that both teachers and parents mostly shared similar views regarding the characteristics of quality homework. The two stakeholders believed that good homework should be clear and reflect certain learning goals. Tasks fulfilled at home should encourage students to work on their own, without adult supervision. Besides, quality homework was believed to develop students' creativity and logic.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to present the key findings interpreted from the data analysis regarding the elementary school teachers' and parents' perspectives about homework at a selected elementary school in Kazakhstan.

In conclusion, the findings showed that homework assignment, accomplishment, and assistance were regularly practiced by teachers, students, and parents at the elementary school level. Students were perceived to be spending comparatively more time than it was expected by teachers. The time spent on homework engagement varied depending on the type of subject and the complexity of topics learned.

Almost all the participants faced challenges in their homework practices. Teachers struggled with the lack of didactic resources and experience in developing differentiated homework, while the language barrier and issues in family relationships tended to be the major problems encountered by parents. Moreover, the new curriculum, its content, and complexity were perceived to be responsible for the hardships faced.

Both teachers and parents characterized quality homework as a clear and succinct out-of-class assignment that bridges new learning with prior knowledge and fosters students' independent learning. In this regard, teachers seemed to assign simple and doable homework, while parents expressed a willingness for getting homework tasks that pushed students' logical thinking.

This chapter presented the findings derived from the data analysis from my study of elementary school teachers' and parents' perceptions of homework. The findings from this analysis will be explored in greater depth in the Discussion chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

The previous chapter outlined the main findings collected from the analysis of semi-structured interviews. This chapter analyses and interprets the key findings based on the review of existing research.

The purpose of this study was to explore elementary school teachers' and parents' perspectives about homework. In order to attain this goal, two overarching research questions were posed: 1) What are the elementary school teachers' perspectives about out-of-class assignments, and 2) What is the attitude of elementary school students' parents toward homework?

The findings are discussed in this chapter in close alignment with the research questions and the theoretical framework. The implications of these findings are intended to provide some new insights into elementary school teachers' and parents' understandings about homework.

### **Expectation vs Reality**

The section revealed the reasons and ways teachers design and assign homework and how it was accomplished by students in the views of parents.

#### **Why teachers give homework?**

Interviews revealed the major reasons teachers assigned homework varied from revisiting classroom learning and developing students' independent study skills to keeping students on task both at school and at home. These findings are in line with several past studies (Cooper, 1989; Sidhu & Fook, 2010; Viljaranta, et al., 2018)

**Homework as a tool to enhance classroom learning.** When giving homework, teachers specifically highlighted its main purpose of enhancing classroom learning. In other words, teacher participants agreed that they assigned homework to revisit the materials learned in class and make sure that all learners achieved the learning objectives. This finding was in line with Cooper's (1989) synthesis of homework studies defining homework as an effective learning tool that reinforces the knowledge and skills acquired in class. Along with such positive effects of homework as memorizing and understanding the materials taught in class, Cooper (1989) concluded that "it is better to distribute materials across several assignments than to have homework concentrate only on material covered in class that day" (p.89). However, as some respondents pointed out, teachers in this study were not likely to be able to give students such multiple opportunities to review classroom learning due to the intensive structure of the curriculum.

In addition to explaining homework at the beginning of the lessons and starting homework completion in the class, Carr (2013) highlighted that whatever task students do at home should be explicitly related to class learning. Similarly, both teachers and parents in this study confirmed this alignment between class and home in order to achieve their main purpose of consolidating classroom learning.

Although teachers expressed their attempts to enhance classroom learning through homework, out-of-class tended to emphasize rote learning. In other words, the homework tasks assigned did not require students' higher order thinking skills. This finding replicated the results of research conducted by Sidhu & Fook (2010) which concluded that although Malaysian teachers viewed homework as an integral part of learning that reinforces school learning and reflects the strengths and weaknesses of students, they assigned practice-based homework directed to drilling students' memory skills.

**Homework as independent learning.** Most of the teacher participants of this study agreed that they assigned regular homework in an attempt to improve students' independent study habits. At this point, teachers specifically highlighted that parents should let children work on their own. Along with Cooper's (1989) research synthesis where independent learning was characterized as one of the nonacademic benefits of homework, this finding replicated the research conducted by Viljaranta, et al. (2018), in which moderate parental guidance was seen as a key trigger of students' independent study skills. In other words, the more parents supported their children in homework completion, the less task-persistent behaviour children showed. On the contrary, the more autonomy parents gave to children, the more independent learning skills they exhibited. Similarly, teachers believed that too much parental supervision hindered the process of independent learning. Parents shared the view that homework should be done independently. At the same time, many parents seemed to be helping their children extensively with their homework. Therefore, parents need to be reminded of this research in order to improve their homework support practices.

**Homework as prevention from study distractors.** The study also disclosed teachers' homework practices aimed at keeping students on task. Specifically, teachers assigned homework to guide students to manage their time and eliminate such study distractors as excessive screen time. In this regard, Ramdass & Zimmerman (2011) asserted that regular homework engagement reinforces students' self-regulation skills by setting goals, reflecting on learning, preventing study distractions, developing focus, and managing time. However, teachers did not mention any of these self-regulation skills during the interviews. Their responses were only limited to helping students spend their time wisely. Meanwhile, Carr (2013) argued that homework should be purposeful and that assigning homework as "busy work" was "counterproductive" (p.174).

Teachers in this study did not mention any negative sides of homework assigned. Some of them were likely to think that homework should occupy students' free time. As teachers confirmed, students had free time in the afternoon which could be spent on homework rather than watching TV or playing video games. On the contrary, parents described supervising their children's long hours of homework that often caused stress and conflict. In this vein, Galloway et al. (2013) showed that the more time students spent on homework, the more vulnerable they were to academic stress, health issues, and lack of balance in their lives. Thus, this implies that teachers should rethink the purpose of assigned homework.

### **How teachers design homework tasks?**

During the interviews, teachers shared their experiences in designing homework tasks that were perceived to be completed in 15-30 minutes per subject, meaning that students were assumed to complete about 1-2-hour homework daily. At the same time, teachers claimed that they tried to make homework short and manageable. Given that elementary school students' homework engagement time should not exceed 50 minutes in Grade 2 and 70 minutes in Grades 3-4 (MoES RK, 2018), the amount of homework assigned by teachers seemed to be way too much. Moreover, according to Murillo & Martinez-Garrido (2014), spending 15 minutes on regular homework in elementary school was acceptable, but if it required more time to be completed, it might lead to students' work overload. Interestingly, Cameron & Bartel (2009) considered that asking about adequate time for homework was wrong since it was hard to predict how much time each student would invest in a certain task. The same homework might occupy a different amount of time depending on students' abilities, preparedness, interests, understanding of the topic, and emotional state. Therefore, Cameron & Bartel (2009) suggested that instead of worrying about the amount of time that homework may occupy, we should worry about



the time that homework took away from children's ability to engage in play and recreation time. Accordingly, disregarding most parents' positive views about homework, there was one parent who fully supported Cameron & Bartel's (2009) research findings asserting that students' out-of-class time should be spent on family bonding, hobbies, and recreation.

Importantly, the estimated time for homework was not mirrored in parents' comments. Although teachers believed that they assigned homework that took approximately 15-30 minutes, reality showed that students' daily homework engagement occupied considerably more time. Parents viewed their children as to be spending about 20-40 minutes per task depending on the subject matter and the level of homework complexity. This finding was similar to that of Chen and Stevenson's (1989) study results in which 3500 American, Chinese, and Japanese students' homework involvement time was compared. During the research, they concluded that American students completed about 70-190 minutes of homework, while Chinese and Japanese students did around 440-490 of homework. Similar to Chinese students, Kazakhstani students were likely to have over 400-minute homework load each week. Moreover, like Chinese parents, this study's participants expressed a positive attitude toward homework in general, defining home study as an integral part of student learning. However, what made this study distinct from Chen and Stevenson (1989) was that this research topic was scrutinized based on teachers' and parents' self-reports only, unlike in Chen & Stevenson (1989) that collected data using document analysis, students' homework diaries, and pre or posttests.

All the research participants agreed that homework accomplishment on Humanity subjects as well as Natural Science and Worldview required comparatively more time than Math homework. This finding was new knowledge in the field as there was a lack of research conducted on the amount of time spent on homework across different disciplines.

When designing homework, teachers predominantly referred to textbook materials for homework development. In some cases, teachers borrowed some online resources and tailored them according to the needs of students. Moreover, some teachers were also likely to design homework tasks in close cooperation with their colleagues. This was found as a way of sharing experiences since teachers used support from their less experienced colleagues like pre-service and novice teachers. Importantly, there was not any research found to support this finding. Bailey (2003) tried to spotlight teachers' homework designing experiences, but only defined such key characteristics as interactive homework, reasoning, and self-management. Bailey (2003) concluded that teachers needed special training in order to design interactive homework, but he did not specifically investigate teachers' homework development practices in regular lessons. Subsequently, due to the lack of research in teachers' everyday homework designing experiences, this finding could be considered new knowledge in the field of homework research that requires further study.

### **Parents' homework practices**

In this study, parents expressed their daily experiences in providing ongoing support in homework accomplishment. Some parents even perceived it as one of their main responsibilities.

**Whole family support for homework accomplishment.** Another important finding of this research was that homework accomplishment was considered a whole family task. All the parents agreed that almost all adult or older members of the family helped children with homework depending on the subject matter. Sometimes this was due to parents not being capable of supporting their children because of such problems as insufficient knowledge of some topics, poor level of English, and difficulties in shifting from the first language to the second one or the other way around. There was no research

found that directly evidenced any experiences of providing whole family support for homework. Previous studies mostly revealed mothers and fathers helping children with homework (Chen & Stevenson, 1989; Huntsinger et al., 2000), but not grandparents. This might be because of the cultural differences of Kazakh society, where people mostly live in extended families. Castillo's (2019) findings might reflect on this idea of whole family support in terms of language barriers. Castillo (2019) discussed grade 6 immigrant Mexican students' experiences in supporting their younger siblings with homework due to their native language differing from the language of instruction. Similarly, students in this research were perceived to be referring to their older siblings' help since their parents did not understand English. However, this research differed in the background characteristics of participants since the families in Castillo (2019) were from low socio-economic background which is not the case with the parents involved in this study.

### **Challenges encountered**

Research findings divulged numerous challenges encountered both by teachers and parents, which in many cases were connected to the implementation of the updated curriculum.

#### **Challenges faced by teachers**

**Lack of resources.** Most of the teachers highlighted the lack of resources as the major challenge encountered while generating homework tasks. Teachers acknowledged that they mostly used textbook materials for homework assignments, which was not enough for them. Due to this insufficient amount of didactic materials and internet resources, designing homework tasks tended to occupy a considerable amount of teachers' time. Similar to the finding of teachers' experiences in designing regular homework, teachers' challenges of lacking resources in homework development may also be considered as new learning that emerged in the field of current research. This was because

past research in the field focused on teachers' homework-related challenges with regards to the purpose of homework and the amount of time devoted to designing and checking homework and not on how they accomplished the design of homework (Tokarski, 2011; Rosário et al., 2019). Thus, due to the lack of research on teachers' homework development challenges, this finding needs further elaborations through thorough investigation.

**Differentiated homework challenges.** Most of the teachers expressed it was challenging to design differentiated homework tasks based on students' different learning abilities. Similar to Keane & Heinz (2019), teachers viewed differentiated homework tailored to students' learning capacities as a key determinant of successful student learning. Teachers in this study also supported Protheroe (2009) prioritizing the link of homework to students' learning abilities. They did not approve of "one size fits all" homework assignments. However, in reality, teachers did not differentiate homework because of its complex and sensitive character. Therefore, this finding is likely to highlight teachers' need for professional development in utilizing differentiated instruction and homework design. The difficulty with differentiated homework experiences of teachers shows a lack of past research.

### **Challenges faced by parents**

Parents perceived their language barrier as leading to various family conflicts and resulting in a major problem encountered when supporting their children for homework.

**Language barrier.** Shifting from Kazakh to Russian or vice versa as a first or second language was found as a key predictor of challenges encountered by parents during homework assistance. They admitted that inconsistency between students' language of instruction at school and that spoken at home caused parents' concerns about their confidence in homework assistance. Some parents even expressed their complaints against

English as a third language. Parents felt their lack of English language competence hampered their ability to give homework assistance. Also, they felt that children were not mature enough to learn a third language in elementary school. The issues surrounding the language barrier in terms of homework assistance were mostly scrutinized in the context of immigrant Latino parents with low educational attainment and socioeconomic status. In this regard, Thorne (2017) asserted that providing parents with the translation of homework into their native language would help support immigrant students. Hence, translation of homework into the first language could support parents' ability to help their children do English homework tasks in particular.

**Family conflict issues.** Students' home study experiences seemed to be negatively reflected in their family relationships. Some parents perceived homework to be overburdening children and causing an increased stressful atmosphere within the family. Such family stress issues corroborated the ideas of previously conducted research where homework was found as the major source of stress and anxiety (Galloway, et al., 2013; Pressman et al., 2015). Although homework reinforced students' academic outcomes, it did not mean that they learned the material deeply and enjoyed it. If the homework is excessive, Galloway, et al. (2013) found that it caused increased amounts of stress, isolation, and pressure to meet homework deadlines. Similarly, parents in this study described their children as getting angry if they did not finish the homework within the expected time period. Parents expressed concerns about their competence in providing homework support and that it led to family tensions. This is not surprising since Pressman et al. (2015) found a link between family stress and parents' level of self-efficacy especially in terms of parental language barriers. Hence, family stress was likely to rise as the level of parents' perceived self-efficacy to assist their children declined.

**Updated curriculum as a trigger of challenges.** One of the most important findings that shed light on the problem of homework in Kazakhstan was teachers' and parents' beliefs that the homework-related challenges stem from the introduction of the updated curriculum.

This finding closely aligned with the theoretical framework since both teachers and parents had a similar view about the curriculum causing tensions both for in-class learning and homework. All teachers in this study complained about the complexity of the new curriculum highlighting that it did not meet students' cognitive abilities. The updated curriculum was also perceived to be too intensive, meaning that a new topic had to be learned each lesson leaving no time to absorb new learning materials in connection to previous learning. At the same time, parents expressed their concerns regarding their competence in supporting their children with homework as some tasks were too difficult to handle. Similar to Castillo (2019), parents could not provide any relevant support for the English homework since they did not understand this language. As shown by Pressman et al. (2015), the lack of parents' ability to provide relevant homework support predicted parents' low level of self-efficacy and resulted in family stress. This implies that the content and complexity of the updated curriculum tend to be the main reason for family conflicts. Hence, the challenges caused by the implementation of the updated curriculum urge its revision and needs of participants to receive some methodological support for its successful implementation.

**Homework and students' academic performance.**

In line with the idea of shared reality, almost all the research participants believed that regular and quality homework accomplishment fostered student learning and boosted academic success (Huntsinger et al., 2000; Knight, 2017). This finding aligned with

Knight's (2017) quantitative research results, which revealed the direct relation between academic achievement and homework in the first grade.

Furthermore, participants fully supported Huntsinger et al.'s (2000) findings which confirmed that meaningful homework accompanied by parental support positively affected students' academic performance. More importantly, Huntsinger et al. (2000) emphasized Chinese parents' cultural beliefs that viewed learning and education as the main gateway to success and provided their children with ongoing support in homework engagement. Similarly, the majority of parents in this research expressed their positive view about homework by accepting it as their main duty or responsibility to provide support during home study similar to that of Huntsinger et al.'s (2000) Chinese parents.

However, this finding contradicted numerous studies on homework that did not reveal a strong positive relation between homework and students' academic progress at elementary school level (Cooper et al., 2006; Tam, 2009; Núñez, et al., 2015b). In their homework meta-analysis, Cooper et al. (2006) concluded that elementary school students did not academically benefit from homework as much as those in middle and high school. It was explained by the lack of students' effective study habits at this age. Younger students were considered to be less able to ignore irrelevant information. Therefore, home study was less effective for elementary school students than for older ones. Additionally, Núñez, et al. (2015b) found a stronger relation between parental involvement in homework accomplishment, students' homework behaviour, and academic achievement for junior high and high schools compared to elementary school. Both studies determined that students gain significant academic benefits from homework engagement at high school rather than at elementary school. This difference in findings could indicate the limitation of my study which is based only on parents' and teachers' perceptions. Thus, a quantitative

study analyzing direct correlations between homework and students' academic success might offer huge benefits.

### **3 Cs of homework**

The participants prioritized clarity, consistency, and competence as the main characteristics of quality homework. Previous research on homework suggested that homework should have a clear purpose (Cooper, 1989; Protheroe, 2009). In other words, students should not blindly complete homework as a matter of routine, but know why and how to do it. Similarly, participants of this study claimed that homework should be explicitly related to the learning objectives covered in class.

Quality homework was also believed to meaningfully foster students' in-class learning (Carr, 2013; Knight, 2017). This means that students' home study should directly reflect what has been learned at school. Similarly, almost all the participants of this study viewed meaningful homework as the bridge between prior knowledge and new learning. Both teachers and parents agreed that homework should be based on students' previous knowledge and explicitly related to the learning acquired in class.

Along with clarity and consistency, participants perceived coherent homework as the tasks that were tailored to students' learning abilities and reinforce their independent learning skills. A similar vision of quality homework was mirrored in Vatterott's (2010) hallmarks of good homework. She claimed that homework fosters students' competence when it is designed according to their abilities, meaning that students should be able to manage homework successfully without any anxiety and adult supervision. Accordingly, both teachers and parents admitted that if students could not complete homework tasks on their own and continuously relied on the support of adults, then it was only busywork. Moreover, effective homework was seen as the task that encouraged students to apply their knowledge and skills in multiple contexts.



### **Summary**

This chapter portrayed elementary school teachers' and parents' perceptions about homework along with their regular homework experiences. In summary, the results of this study were consistent with numerous existing research. Specifically, the previous discussion illustrated that teachers assigned homework every lesson using multiple methods (e.g., textbook exercises, online resources) to help students practice new learning, review prior knowledge, identify students' learning gaps and develop their independent learning skills (Cooper, 1989; Carr, 2013; Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011).

However, nightly homework accomplishment was likely to have occupied considerably more time than it was assumed by teachers (Chen and Stevenson, 1989). Teachers assigned homework to last 10-30 minutes per homework task, whereas parents believed it took on average about 20-40 minutes per homework task.

Teachers' challenges of finding relevant didactic materials and internet sources for designing homework as well as tailoring homework to students learning abilities were the new knowledge gained in the field of homework research.

As for parents, they constantly supported children in homework accomplishment (Huntsinger et al., 2000). Parents were challenged by language homework (Castillo, 2019) and the family conflict that homework caused in general (Galloway, et al., 2013; Pressman et al., 2015). Provision of whole-family support by parents was another finding considered new to the current research field. Moreover, in comparison to Mathematics homework tasks, those on Humanities required more time in the views of both teachers and parents.

Both groups believed that regular homework improved student learning and academic performance (Huntsinger et al., 2000; Knight, 2017). This was believed to happen when the homework was meaningful in terms of its clarity, consistency, and competence (Cooper, 1989; Protheroe, 2009; Carr, 2013; Knight, 2017)

The next chapter will conclude this study revisiting its findings based on the research questions, highlighting implications and making recommendations for policy and practice.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

This chapter summarizes the results of this qualitative study aimed to explore elementary school teachers' and parents' perspectives about homework. This chapter comprises three sections. First, it revisits the findings based on the following research questions: 1) What are elementary school teachers' perspectives about out-of-class assignments, and 2) What are the attitudes of elementary school students' parents toward homework? The second section highlights the implications of the study and makes recommendations for policy and practice. The last section focuses on the limitations of the target study and makes suggestions for future research.

### **Revisiting the research findings**

#### **Elementary school teachers' perspectives about out-of-class assignments.**

Teachers saw homework as a valuable tool to enhance student learning and assigned homework for each lesson. Their main reasons for giving homework included reviewing new learning based on prior knowledge (Cooper, 1989; Carr, 2013), uncovering students' learning gaps (Sidhu & Fook, 2010), and developing students' independent study skills (Viljaranta, et al., 2018).

When designing homework tasks, teachers expected each assignment to be completed in 10-30 minutes. They developed homework using textbook materials, online resources, or adapting previously designed tasks. In this regard, teachers faced difficulties in finding relevant internet sources and didactic materials for homework development since they were mostly limited with insufficient textbook materials. Therefore, teachers sometimes developed shared homework tasks in cooperation with their colleagues. Teachers also struggled with designing differentiated homework due to their lack of competence in differentiated instruction. Since the challenges teachers encountered in their

homework practices could be considered new knowledge that was not investigated in the past, this finding requires detailed research.

Teachers considered homework vital to students' academic performance. They believed that regular homework accomplishment did not only develop students' independent learning habits but also supported them in achieving academic success. This finding supported some previous research that associated regular homework with students' positive academic outcomes (Huntsinger et al., 2000; Knight, 2017). However, another group of studies contradicted this finding highlighting the lack of students' self-study skills at younger ages (Cooper et al., 2006; Núñez, et al., 2015b). Teachers also held the view that homework was meaningful only when it was based on prior knowledge, directed to a certain learning objective covered in class, and pushed students to study independently.

#### **The attitudes of elementary school students' parents toward homework.**

Parents were actively involved in assisting their children with homework accomplishment. They shared teachers' views on homework and defined it as an integral part of student learning. Parents supported their children with their homework every day. In cases when parents did not feel academically capable enough, whole family support was provided on a regular basis.

In line with some existing research (Chen and Stevenson, 1989), parents perceived their children to be spending comparatively more time than was expected by teachers. Specifically, homework on Humanities occupied more time in comparison to mathematics homework. This was explained by the complex content of the updated curriculum and elementary students' lack of vocabulary to express their ideas. Due to the lack of research on homework duration across different subjects, this finding was new knowledge gained as a result of this study that required further in-depth research.

Transition from the first language to the second one and lack of competence in English were the main problems encountered by parents when assisting their children with homework. Most parents were not capable enough of providing relevant support for English homework as they did not understand this language at all. These challenges were believed to stem from the introduction of an updated curriculum and caused considerable family relationship issues during homework engagement. Consequently, it was suggested that teachers provide parents with the Kazakh or Russian translation of English homework (Thorne (2017)).

Disregarding these challenges, most of the parents supported the findings of previous research (Huntsinger et al., 2000; Knight, 2017). They believed that regular homework accomplishment improves student learning and results in better academic achievement. In parents' consideration, effective homework was one that helps students practice in-class learning and fosters their holistic development.

The theoretical framework of shared reality was clearly reflected in this research as both teachers and parents shared some common views about the main characteristics of effective homework and the way it fostered students' academic success. Furthermore, both groups of participants blamed the new curriculum and held it responsible for the challenges encountered in their homework practices. Consequently, all participants suggested a shared solution to review the curriculum.

### **Research implications and recommendations**

This study revealed numerous implications and recommendations for educational policymakers as well as for parents and teachers of the elementary school.

**Implications and recommendations to policymakers.** Almost all the research participants viewed homework as an essential part of teaching and learning. However, there was not any participant who demonstrated awareness of how much time homework should occupy at the elementary school level. Therefore, it was recommended that the Ministry of Education reviewed homework time regulations and explicitly specified the exact amount of time that should be devoted to homework completion at each elementary grade level. This regulation could be helpful in managing homework implementation at the district, school and classroom levels.

Teachers expressed their willingness to develop personalized homework assignments that were tailored according to the learning abilities and needs of certain groups of students. However, they were limited by assigning “one size fits all” homework tasks due to the lack of competence in designing differentiated homework assignments. Therefore, it was recommended that teachers be supported by ongoing professional development courses and training on differentiated instruction at the state, district, and school levels.

Both teachers and parents agreed that the Kazakh updated curriculum negatively influenced the organization of the teaching and learning process both in class and at home. They perceived the new curriculum to be too complicated and intensive. Teachers claimed that students had no time to apply new learning in multiple contexts as they had to rush from one topic to another every lesson. Parents complained that the content of the Worldview and Natural Science subjects was way too hard to grasp for the students of elementary school. Consequently, it was recommended that the Ministry of Education and Science reviewed the content and complexity level of the new curriculum taking into account students' age differences.

**Implications and recommendations to school administration.** School administration plays an important role in generating and maintaining a shared understanding of meaningful homework among the stakeholders. In this regard, it is vital that the school administration organizes ongoing teacher-parent conferences where both groups' views, challenges, and needs in homework implementation are communicated. Besides, it is suggested that the school administration initiates professional development workshops and mentoring support for teachers at the school level to improve teachers' homework practices in terms of developing students' self-regulation skills.

**Implications and recommendations to teachers.** Regular homework assigned to students occupied a considerable amount of students' out-of-class time as parents reported their children to be spending about 20-40 minutes on each task. Given that the Ministry of Education confirmed nightly homework engagement time not to exceed 50-70 minutes at elementary school, it was suggested that teachers designed homework tasks taking into account the number of subjects students had every day and the amount of homework they had on each subject.

**Implications and recommendations to parents.** The level of autonomy that parents gave to their children when assisting them with homework was a sensitive matter that each parent needed to think of. As it was stated by the majority of teachers, homework was a tool that reflected students' learning gaps. If parents provided too much support and did not let students do homework by themselves, timely identification of students' weaknesses and providing relevant support could be hard for teachers. Thus, it was recommended that the homework support that parents provided their children be at a moderate level. This could be done by raising parental awareness of positive and moderate homework assistance through various face-to-face and online teacher-parent conferences.

### **Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research**

Even though this study reflected thoughtful ideas about elementary school teachers' and parents' attitudes toward homework, there were numerous limitations in this research in terms of its scope, methodology, and participants involved.

Firstly, the scope of the research was not large enough as only five teachers and five parents volunteered to be interviewed. Moreover, the study was conducted only at one mainstream school, meaning that its findings may not reflect the perspectives of teachers and parents at other schools. Hence, expanding the research sample by involving more stakeholders from different mainstream schools for future research would help generalize the research findings within the context of the whole district or the country.

In addition to the insufficient number of research participants, this study disclosed elementary school teachers' and parents' homework practices based on interviews only. Supporting qualitative information with some quantitative data could have strengthened the reliability and objectivity of the participants' responses.

The study was limited in the number of stakeholders included in the research as well. In other words, the study interpreted only elementary school teachers' and parents' self-reports, while students' voices were not heard. Consequently, involving school administration and adding group discussions with students could be beneficial in generating a holistic overview of the homework issue.

The purpose of this study was fulfilled allowing for the emergence of evidence about teachers' and parents' perspectives about homework in elementary schools that answered the research questions developed. While the study had a number of limitations, it did accomplish its purpose by allowing me to develop recommendations for improvement in Kazakh policies and practices at the elementary level. In addition, it has helped me as an emerging researcher to open the door for future research in this field.



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## **Appendix A**

### **Informed consent form for parents**

Dear Participant,

**DESCRIPTION:** You are invited to participate in a research study aimed at exploring parents' and teachers' attitudes towards homework at a selected primary school in Kazakhstan.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** You will be asked a series of questions about your attitudes toward homework. Additionally, you will be asked to spend some time for follow-up interview questions in order to be sure that I understand your viewpoint. The interview will last for approximately half an hour and take place anywhere and at any time you find convenient to be interviewed.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** There may be minor psychological risks. Since you are going to be interviewed about your child's homework related experiences, there might be some sensitive questions that will probably cause some negative feelings. In order to avoid such risks you have the rights to reject or stop the interview at any time whenever you feel any pressure from the researcher side or you are uncomfortable with the interview or its questions. Please, be informed that the purpose of the researcher is studying your perceptions about homework. Your responses will not influence the relationship with your child's school, your child's teacher or the relation between you and the researcher. You will have an opportunity to take a copy of this form.

To maintain your anonymity and avoid your being identified a number of methods will be used. Your names will be anonymized by giving pseudonyms (e.g. your names will be coded as teacher 1, teacher 2 and so on). The researcher will disclose that the findings will

be read by the supervisor and presented in the final thesis paper and in conferences or publications potentially. However your name will not be disclosed in any reports of the project. After transcribing, the researcher will keep all the audio-recording and transcripts in her password-secured personal computer and delete them in July, 2020. Moreover, to keep confidentiality of the interviewee, all the raw data will be kept separately at the researcher's home. And for the site, the researcher will not disclose any information that may identify the participant or the site. The collected information will be used only for the purpose mentioned above and will not be used in any other purposes. Your name and any other personal information will not be acknowledged in any data reported.

**PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS:** If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Additionally, your responses will not influence the relationship with the school that your child attends and Nazarbayev University in the future in case if you decide to apply for Master Degree or PhD. The alternative is not to participate. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work at,

**Independent Contact:** If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your

rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone independent of the research team at +7 7172 709359. You can also write an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz)

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

**Research topic:** "Parents' and teachers' attitudes towards homework at one primary school in Kazakhstan".

- I agree to participate in this research study voluntarily.
- I am informed that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I have been explained the purpose and nature of the study and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I am aware that participation involves answering the researcher's questions regarding my child's homework related experience.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity.

- I am aware that signed consent forms will be kept in a place considered safe by the researcher and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's password-secured personal computer.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained till the end of the current research.
- I know that I can access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I know that I can contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of research participant

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Signature of participant      Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

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Signature of researcher      Date

**Ата-аналарға арналған зерттеу жұмысы келісімінің ақпараттық формасы**

**Құрметті қатысушы,**

**СИПАТТАМА:** Сіз Қазақстандағы бастауыш сынып мұғалімдері мен ата-аналарының үй тапсырмасына деген көзқарасын анықтауға бағытталған зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға шақырылып отырсыз.

**ЗЕРТТЕУ УАҚЫТЫ:** Сізге үй тапсырмасына деген көзқарасыңыз туралы бірқатар сұрақтар қойылады. Сонымен қатар, сіздің көзқарасыңызды дұрыс түсінетіндігіме сенімді болу үшін сізден қосымша сұхбат сұрақтарына бірнеше уақыт жұмсауыңызды өтінемін. Сұхбат шамамен жарты сағатқа созылады және басқа адамдардың ойыңызды бөлмеуі немесе естіп қалмауы үшін сұхбат сізге ыңғайлы жер мен уақытта өзіңізге оңтайлы формада (бетпе-бет немесе орлайн) жүзеге асырылады.

**ЗЕРТТЕУ ҚАУІПТЕРІ ЖӘНЕ АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ:** Ата-ана ретінде сұхбат сұрақтарына жауап беру барысында сізге кішігірім психологиялық қауіп төнуі мүмкін. Сіздің балаңыздың үй тапсырмасына қатысты тәжірибесі туралы сұхбаттасатындықтан, кейбір сұрақтар ыңғайсыздау сезімдер тудыруы ықтимал. Осындай қауіп-қатерлердің алдын алу үшін, егер де сіз зерттеуші тарапынан қандай да бір қысым сезінсеңіз немесе оның сұрақтарын ыңғайсыз деп тапсаңыз, кез-келген уақытта сұхбат беруден бас тартуға немесе кейбір сұрақтарға жауап бермеуге құқығыңыз бар. Зерттеушінің мақсаты - үй тапсырмасы туралы сіздің көзқарастарыңызды зерделеу. Сіздің жауаптарыңыз сіздің балаңыздың мектебімен және мұғалімімен қарым-қатынасыңызға немесе сіз бен зерттеуші арасындағы қарым-қатынасқа әсер етпейді. Сізге осы сұхбаттың транскрипт көшірмесі беріледі.

Анонимділікті сақтау және өзгелер сізді танып қалмау үшін бірқатар әдістер қолданылады. Сіздің есімдеріңіз жасырын аттармен құпия түрде жасалады (мысалы, сіздің есіміңіз 1-мұғалім, 2-мұғалім және басқалар ретінде кодталады). Зерттеу нәтижелерін ғылыми жетекші оқып, қорытынды тезисте және конференцияларда немесе баспаларда жариялауға ұсынылатын болады. Алайда сіздің есіміңіз жобаның ешбір есебінде жарияланбайды. Транскрипциядан кейін зерттеуші барлық аудио-жазбалар мен транскрипттерді парольмен қорғалған дербес компьютерде сақтайды және оларды 2020 жылдың шілдесінде жояды. Сонымен қатар сұхбат алушының құпиялығын сақтау үшін барлық бастапқы деректер зерттеушінің үйінде бөлек сақталады. Жиналған ақпарат жоғарыда аталған мақсаттарда ғана пайдаланылады және басқа ешқандай мақсаттарда пайдаланылмайды. Сіздің атыңыз бен кез-келген басқа жеке мәліметтеріңіз ешқандай мәліметтерде көрсетілмейді.

**ҚАТЫСУШЫНЫҢ ҚҰҚЫҚТАРЫ:** Егер сіз осы құжатты оқып, аталмыш жобаға қатысуға шешім қабылдаған болсаңыз, онда сіздің қатысуыңыз ерікті екенін түсінуіңізді өтінеміз, және де сіз келісімді кері қайтарып алуға немесе қатысуды кез келген уақытта еш айыппұлсыз тоқтатуға құқылысыз. Бұған қоса, сіздің жауаптарыңыз болашақта сіздің балаңыз оқитын мектеппен және Назарбаев Университетімен қарым-қатынасыңызға еш әсер етпейді. Ұсынылған балама таңдау ретінде зерттеу жұмысына қатыспауға еріктісіз. Сіздің нақты сұрақтарға жауап беруден бас тартуға құқығыңыз бар. Осы зерттеу жұмысының нәтижелері ғылыми немесе кәсіби жиналыстарда ұсынылуы немесе ғылыми журналдарда жариялануы мүмкін.

**БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ:**

Сұрақтар: Егер сізде осы зерттеу жұмысының өту барысына, қауіптері мен артықшылықтарына қатысты сұрақтарыңыз немесе арыз-шағымдарыңыз болса, магистрлік тезис жетекшісіне хабарласыңыз.

**Тәуелсіз байланыс:** Егер сіз осы зерттеудің қалай жүргізілетініне қанағаттанбасаңыз, немесе сізде зерттеуге қатысты мәселелер, шағымдар я жалпы сұрақтарыңыз туындаса, +7 7172 709359 нөмірі бойынша NUGSE Зерттеу Комитетімен байланысыңыз. Сондай-ақ, gse\_researchcommitet@nu.edu.kz мекен-жайы бойынша электрондық поштаға хат жазуға да болады.

**Осы зерттеуге қатысуға келіссеңіз, мына келісімге қол қойыңыз.**

**Зерттеу тақырыбы: «Қазақстандағы бастауыш сынып мұғалімдері мен ата-аналарының үй тапсырмасына деген көзқарасы».**

- Мен осы зерттеу жұмысына өз еркіммен қатысуға келісемін.
- Мен қазір зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісімімді берсем де, кез келген уақытта келісімімді қайтарып ала алатыным немесе кез-келген сұраққа ешқандай салдарсыз жауап беруден бас тарта алатыным туралы хабардармын.
- Маған зерттеудің мақсаты мен сипаты түсіндірілді және зерттеу жұмысы туралы сұрақтар қою мүмкіндігіне ие болдым.
- Зерттеуге қатысудың түпкі мәні баламның үй тапсырмасына қатысты тәжірибесі төңірегіндегі сұрақтарға жауап беруді көздейтінін білемін.
- Мен осы зерттеуге қатысудың өзіме тікелей пайдасы болмайтынын түсінемін.
- Мен сұхбатымның аудио жазбаға жазылуына келісемін.



- Мен осы зерттеуге берген барлық ақпаратым құпия түрде сақталатынын түсінемін.
- Осы зерттеу нәтижелері туралы кез-келген есепте менің жеке басым туралы ақпарат жасырын болатындығын түсінемін. Бұл менің атымды өзгертіп, сұхбаттағы менің жеке басымды анықтайтын кез-келген мәліметтерді жасыру арқылы жүзеге асырылады.
- Қол қойылған келісім қағаз зерттеуші қауіпсіз деп тапқан жерде, ал сұхбаттың аудиотаспасы зерттеушінің құпия сөзбен сақтандырылған жеке компьютерінде сақталатынын білемін.

Менің барлық жеке ақпаратым құпия сақталған сұхбат транскрипциясы ағымдағы зерттеу жұмысы аяқталғанға дейін сақталатынын түсінемін.

- Мен берген ақпаратқа кез келген уақытта қол жеткізе алатынымды білемін.
- Қосымша ақпарат алу мақсатында, мен зерттеуге қатысқан кез-келген адамға хабарласа алатынымды білемін.

Зерттеуге қатысушының қолы

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Қатысушының қолы

Күні

Зерттеушінің қолы

Қатысушы осы зерттеуге қатысуға саналы түрде келісім береді деп сенемін

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Зерттеушінің қолы

## **Appendix B**

### **Informed consent form for teachers**

Dear Participant,

**DESCRIPTION:** You are invited to participate in a research study aimed at exploring parents' and teachers' attitudes towards homework at a selected primary school in Kazakhstan.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** You will be asked a series of questions about your attitude toward homework. Additionally, you will be asked to spend some time for follow-up interview questions in order to be sure that I understand your viewpoint. The interview will last for approximately half an hour and take place in an allocated classroom in order to avoid any cases of being interrupted or overheard by other people.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** There may be minor psychological risks. Since you are going to be interviewed at school, there is the risk of information leak and being identified. In order to avoid such risks you have the rights to reject or stop the interview at any time if you feel any pressure from the researcher side or if you are uncomfortable with the interview or its questions. Please, be informed that the purpose of the researcher is studying your perceptions about homework. Your responses will not influence the relationship with your school or the relation between you and the researcher. You will have an opportunity to take a copy of this form.

To maintain your anonymity and avoid your being identified a number of methods will be used. Your names will be anonymized by giving pseudonyms (e.g. your names will be coded as teacher 1, teacher 2 and so on). The researcher will disclose that the findings will be read by the supervisor and presented in the final thesis paper and in conferences or

publications potentially. However your name will not be disclosed in any reports of the project. After transcribing, the researcher will keep all the audio-recording and transcripts in her password-secured personal computer and delete them in July, 2020. Moreover, to keep confidentiality of the interviewee, all the raw data will be kept separately at the researcher's home. And for the site, the researcher will not disclose any information that may identify the participant or the site. The collected information will be used only for the purpose mentioned above and will not be used in any other purposes. Your name and educational institution will not be acknowledged in any data reported.

**PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS:** If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Additionally, your responses will not influence the relationship with your colleagues and administration at your current job (school) and Nazarbayev University in the future in case if you decide to apply for Master Degree or PhD. The alternative is not to participate. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work at,

**Independent Contact:** If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone

independent of the research team at +7 7172 709359. You can also write an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz)

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

Research topic: "Parents' and teachers' attitudes towards homework at one elementary school in Kazakhstan".

- I agree to participate in this research study voluntarily.
- I am informed that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I have been explained the purpose and nature of the study and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I am aware that participation involves answering the researcher's questions regarding my child's homework related experience.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity.

- I am aware that signed consent forms will be kept in a place considered safe by the researcher and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's password-secured personal computer.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained till the end of the current research.
- I know that I can access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I know that I can contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of research participant

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Signature of participant      Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

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Signature of researcher

**Мұғалімдерге арналған зерттеу жұмысы келісімінің ақпараттық формасы**

**Құрметті қатысушы,**

**СИПАТТАМА:** Сіз Қазақстандағы бастауыш сынып мұғалімдері мен ата-аналарының үй тапсырмасына деген көзқарасын анықтауға бағытталған зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға шақырылып отырсыз.

**ЗЕРТТЕУ УАҚЫТЫ:** Сізге үй тапсырмасына деген көзқарасыңыз туралы бірқатар сұрақтар қойылады. Сонымен қатар, сіздің көзқарасыңызды дұрыс түсінетіндігіме сенімді болу үшін сізден қосымша сұхбат сұрақтарына бірнеше уақыт жұмсауыңызды өтінемін. Сұхбат шамамен жарты сағатқа созылады және өзге адамдар оны естімеуі немесе бөгет болмауы үшін сұхбат оқшауланған оңаша сыныпта өтеді.

**ЗЕРТТЕУ ҚАУІПТЕРІ ЖӘНЕ АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ:** Сұхбаттасу барысында біршама психологиялық қауіптер болуы мүмкін. Сұхбаттасу мектепте орын алатындықтан, ақпараттың тарап кету қаупі бар және сұхбат беруші ретінде сіздің жеке мәліметтеріңіз анықталуы мүмкін. Осындай қауіп-қатерлердің алдын алу үшін, егер де сіз зерттеуші тарапынан қандай да бір қысым сезінсеңіз немесе оның сұрақтарын ыңғайсыз деп тапсаңыз, кез-келген уақытта сұхбат беруден бас тартуға немесе кейбір сұрақтарға жауап бермеуге құқығыңыз бар. Зерттеушінің мақсаты - үй тапсырмасы туралы сіздің көзқарастарыңызды зерделеу. Сіздің жауаптарыңыз сіздің мектептен қарым-қатынасыңызға немесе сіз бен зерттеуші арасындағы қатынасқа әсер етпейді. Сізге осы сұхбаттың транскрипт көшірмесі беріледі.

Анонимділікті сақтау және өзгелер сізді танып қалмау үшін бірқатар әдістер қолданылады. Сіздің есімдеріңіз жасырын аттармен құпия түрде жасалады (мысалы,

сіздің есіміңіз 1-мұғалім, 2-мұғалім және басқалар ретінде кодталады). Зерттеу нәтижелерін ғылыми жетекші оқып, қорытынды тезисте және конференцияларда немесе баспаларда жариялауға ұсынылатын болады. Алайда сіздің есіміңіз жобаның ешбір есебінде жарияланбайды. Транскрипциядан кейін зерттеуші барлық аудио-жазбалар мен транскрипттерді парольмен қорғалған дербес компьютерде сақтайды және оларды 2020 жылдың шілдесінде жояды. Сонымен қатар сұхбат алушының құпиялығын сақтау үшін барлық бастапқы деректер зерттеушінің үйінде бөлек сақталады. Жиналған ақпарат жоғарыда аталған мақсаттарда ғана пайдаланылады және басқа ешқандай мақсаттарда пайдаланылмайды. Сіздің атыңыз бен кез-келген басқа жеке мәліметтеріңіз ешқандай мәліметтерде көрсетілмейді.

**ҚАТЫСУШЫНЫҢ ҚҰҚЫҚТАРЫ:** Егер сіз осы құжатты оқып, аталмыш жобаға қатысуға шешім қабылдаған болсаңыз, онда сіздің қатысуыңыз ерікті екенін түсінуіңізді өтінеміз, және де сіз келісімді кері қайтарып алуға немесе қатысуды кез келген уақытта еш айыппұлсыз тоқтатуға құқылысыз. Бұған қоса, сіздің жауаптарыңыз болашақта сіздің балаңыз оқитын мектеппен және Назарбаев Университетімен қарым-қатынасыңызға еш әсер етпейді. Ұсынылған балама таңдау ретінде зерттеу жұмысына қатыспауға еріктісіз. Сіздің нақты сұрақтарға жауап беруден бас тартуға құқығыңыз бар. Осы зерттеу жұмысының нәтижелері ғылыми немесе кәсіби жиналыстарда ұсынылуы немесе ғылыми журналдарда жариялануы мүмкін.

**БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ:**

Сұрақтар: Егер сізде осы зерттеу жұмысының өту барысына, қауіптері мен артықшылықтарына қатысты сұрақтарыңыз немесе арыз-шағымдарыңыз болса, магистрлік тезис жетекшісіне хабарласыңыз.

**Тәуелсіз байланыс:** Егер сіз осы зерттеудің қалай жүргізілетініне қанағаттанбасаңыз, немесе сізде зерттеуге қатысты мәселелер, шағымдар я жалпы сұрақтарыңыз туындаса, +7 7172 709359 нөмірі бойынша NUGSE Зерттеу Комитетімен байланысыңыз. Сондай-ақ, gse\_researchcommitet@nu.edu.kz мекен-жайы бойынша электрондық поштаға хат жазуға да болады.

**Осы зерттеуге қатысуға келіссеңіз, мына келісімге қол қойыңыз.**

**Зерттеу тақырыбы: «Қазақстандағы бастауыш мектептердің біріндегі ата-аналар мен мұғалімдердің үй тапсырмасына көзқарасы».**

- Мен осы зерттеу жұмысына өз еркіммен қатысуға келісемін.
- Мен қазір зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісімді берсем де, кез келген уақытта келісімді қайтарып ала алатыным немесе кез-келген сұраққа ешқандай салдарсыз жауап беруден бас тарта алатыным туралы хабардармын.
- Маған зерттеудің мақсаты мен сипаты түсіндірілді және зерттеу жұмысы туралы сұрақтар қою мүмкіндігіне ие болдым.
- Зерттеуге қатысудың түпкі мәні баламның үй тапсырмасына қатысты тәжірибесі төңірегіндегі сұрақтарға жауап беруді көздейтінін білемін.
- Мен осы зерттеуге қатысудың өзіме тікелей пайдасы болмайтынын түсінемін.
- Мен сұхбатымның аудио жазбаға жазылуына келісемін.
- Мен осы зерттеуге берген барлық ақпаратым құпия түрде сақталатынын түсінемін.
- Осы зерттеу нәтижелері туралы кез-келген есепте менің жеке басым туралы ақпарат жасырын болатындығын түсінемін. Бұл менің атымды өзгертіп, сұхбаттағы



менің жеке басымды анықтайтын кез-келген мәліметтерді жасыру арқылы жүзеге асырылады.

- Қол қойылған келісім қағаз зерттеуші қауіпсіз деп тапқан жерде, ал сұхбаттың аудиотаспасы зерттеушінің құпия сөзбен сақтандырылған жеке компьютерінде сақталатынын білемін.

Менің барлық жеке ақпаратым құпия сақталған сұхбат транскрипциясы ағымдағы зерттеу жұмысы аяқталғанға дейін сақталатынын түсінемін.

- Мен берген ақпаратқа кез келген уақытта қол жеткізе алатынымды білемін.
- Қосымша ақпарат алу мақсатында, мен зерттеуге қатысқан кез-келген адамға хабарласа алатынымды білемін.

Зерттеуге қатысушының қолы

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Қатысушының қолы

Күні

Зерттеушінің қолы

Қатысушы осы зерттеуге қатысуға саналы түрде келісім береді деп сенемін

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Зерттеушінің қолы

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview protocol for parents**

#### **Interview Script:**

Hello! First of all, let me introduce myself. My name is, \_\_\_\_\_, and I am studying at Nazarbayev University at Master Degree course on Leadership in Education and currently conducting research for my master thesis. I am happy to have you as an interviewee and to see your willingness to contribute to the research of teachers' and parents' perceptions about homework in Kazakhstan. Thank you for dedicating your time to help me. Our interview will take about 30minutes. Please, feel free to share your experiences and opinions, as all of your responses will be kept confidential and your name will be anonymized. If you feel pressure from my side or do not wish to answer a specific question, do not hesitate to either skip that question or stop me at any time. If you have read the information and decided to participate in the current research, please sign the consent form. In case you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Please, tell me about your views and experience with homework assigned to your child.

- How old is your child?
- Can you describe to me yours and your child's experience with homework?
  - o How long does it take your child to complete the homework task for each subject?
  - o How much time does your child spend on doing homework every day?
  - o Do you support your son/daughter while doing homework? How?  
Can you give me examples?

- Are homework assignments usually clearly explained? If no, how does your child accomplish it?
- How does your child mostly feel when doing homework?
- What is your feeling when assisting your child in doing homework?
- What is the extent to which your child is challenged when doing homework? Can you give me examples of these types of tasks?
- As a parent, are you always capable enough of supporting your child for homework accomplishment? If not, what are the reasons for that?
- As a parent, are you facing any challenges to assist your child for homework completion? If yes, what could you suggest for further improvements?
- What is quality homework in your understanding?

“Thank you again for spending these 30 minutes with me. Your contribution will be highly appreciated. Please, be informed that I will send you the transcript with your responses where you may do any changes in case if you feel that I have interpreted your words incorrectly”.

### Ата-аналармен сұхбаттасу хаттамасы

Сәлеметсіз бе! Алдымен өзімді таныстыруға рұқсат етіңіз. Менің атым \_\_\_\_\_, мен Назарбаев Университетінің «Білім беру саласындағы көшбасшылық» факультетінің екінші курс магистрантымын және қазіргі уақытта магистрлік диссертациям үшін зерттеу жұмысын жүргізудемін. Сіздің сұхбат беруге келіскеніңізге және Қазақстандағы мұғалімдер мен ата-аналардың үй тапсырмасы туралы көзқарастарын зерттеуге үлес қосуға дайын екендігіңізді білгеніме қуаныштымын. Маған көмектесуге уақыт бөлгеніңіз үшін рахмет. Біздің сұхбатымыз шамамен 30 минут болады. Сіздің барлық жауаптарыңыз құпия сақталып, атыңыз жасырын болады, Егер сіз менің тарапымнан белгілі бір деңгейдегі қысым сезінсеңіз немесе нақты сұраққа жауап бергіңіз келмесе, бұл сұрақты өткізіп жіберуге немесе кез-келген уақытта мені тоқтатып, сұхбаттасудан бас тартуға толық құқылысыз. Егер сіз ақпаратты оқып, аталмыш зерттеуге қатысуға шешім қабылдаған болсаңыз, келісім формасына қол қойыңыз. Егер сізде қандай да бір сұрақтар туындаса, менен сұрауға қымсынбаңыз.

Сіздің балаңызға берілген үй тапсырмаларын орындау тәжірибеңіз туралы айтып беріңізші.

- Сіздің балаңыз неше жаста?
  - Сіз өзіңіздің және балаңыздың үй тапсырмасын орындау тәжірибесін сипаттай аласыз ба?
    - Әр пән бойынша үй тапсырмасын орындау үшін сіздің балаңызға қанша уақыт қажет?
    - Балаңыз үй тапсырмасын орындауға күніне қанша уақыт жұмсайды?

- Үй тапсырмасын орындау кезінде сіз ұлыңызға / қызыңызға қолдау көрсетесіз бе? Қалай? Мысалдар келтіре аласыз ба?
  - Үй тапсырмалары әдетте нақты түсіндіріледі бе? Егер түсіндірілмесе, балаңыз тапсырманы қалай орындайды?
  - Үй тапсырмасын орындау кезіндегі балаңыз көбіне қандай сезімде болады?
  - Балаңызға үй тапсырмасын орындауға көмектескенде сіз қандай сезімде боласыз?
- Үй тапсырмасын орындау кезінде сіздің балаңызға қаншалықты қиналады? Тапсырмалардан бірнеше мысалдар келтіре аласыз ба?
  - Ата-ана ретінде, сіз әрқашан балаңызға үй тапсырмасын орындауға қолдау көрсете аласыз ба? Егер қолдай алмасаңыз, оның себептері қандай?
  - Ата-ана ретінде, балаңызға үй тапсырмасын орындауға көмектесу үшін қандай да бір қиындықтар туындайды ма? Егер қиналсаңыз, мәселені оңтайландыру үшін не ұсына аласыз?
  - Сіздің ойыңызша, нағыз сапалы үй тапсырмасы қандай болу керек?

«Осы 30 минут уақытыңызды менімен бөліскеніңіз үшін тағы да рахмет. Қосқан үлесіңіз үшін алғысым шексіз. Сізге жақын арада осы сұхбатымыздың транскриптің жіберемін. Егер мен сіздің ойыңызды толық жеткізе алмадым деп ойласаңыз, транскриптке қандай да бір өзгерістер енгізуіңізге болатындығын хабарлаймын ».

## **Appendix D**

### **Interview protocol for teachers**

#### **Interview Script:**

Hello! First of all, let me introduce myself. My name is, \_\_\_\_\_, and I am studying at Nazarbayev University at Master Degree course on Leadership in Education and currently conducting research for my master thesis. I am happy to have you as an interviewee and to see your willingness to contribute to the research of teachers' and parents' perceptions about homework in Kazakhstan. Thank you for dedicating your time to help me. Our interview will take about 30 minutes. Please, feel free to share your experiences and opinions, as all of your responses will be kept confidential and your name will be anonymized. If you feel pressure from my side or do not wish to answer a specific question, do not hesitate to either skip that question or stop me at any time. If you have read the information and decided to participate in the current research, please sign the consent form. In case if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me.

1. Tell me about yourself and what you do at this school.
  - What is your teaching background –how long they have been teaching?
  - How long have you been at this school?
  - What your previous teaching experience?
2. Can you tell me about your use of homework?
  - What is your purpose of assigning homework?
  - How often do you assign homework?
  - How long do you think it takes students to accomplish the assigned homework?
  - How do you design homework tasks, are there any strategies used?

- Do usually assign homework to consolidate previous learning or push students' thinking to analyze synthesize and apply their knowledge?
- How do you review homework in the classroom?
- How do you cooperate with other teachers on the staff to develop homework assignments?
- How do you discuss homework with your parents? Do you like parents helping kids with homework? Why or why not?
- Are there any challenges you encounter when designing homework? If there are any, what are your suggestions for further improvements?
- What is quality homework in your understanding?

“Thank you again for spending these 30 minutes with me. Your contribution will be highly appreciated. Please, be informed that I will send you the transcript with your responses where you may do any changes in case if you feel that I have interpreted your words incorrectly”.

### Мұғалімдермен сұхбаттасу хаттамасы

Сәлеметсіз бе! Алдымен өзімді таныстыруға рұқсат етіңіз. Менің атым \_\_\_\_\_, мен Назарбаев Университетінің «Білім беру саласындағы көшбасшылық» факультетінің екінші курс магстрантымын және қазіргі уақытта магистрлік диссертациям үшін зерттеу жұмысын жүргізудемін. Сіздің сұхбат беруге келіскеніңізге және Қазақстандағы мұғалімдер мен ата-аналардың үй тапсырмасы туралы көзқарастарын зерттеуге үлес қосуға дайын екендігіңізді білгеніме қуаныштымын. Маған көмектесуге уақыт бөлгеніңіз үшін рахмет. Біздің сұхбатымыз шамамен 30 минут болады. Сіздің барлық жауаптарыңыз құпия сақталып, атыңыз жасырын болады, Егер сіз менің тарапымнан белгілі бір деңгейдегі қысым сезінсеңіз немесе нақты сұраққа жауап бергіңіз келмесе, бұл сұрақты өткізіп жіберуге немесе кез-келген уақытта мені тоқтатып, сұхбаттасудан бас тартуға толық құқылысыз. Егер сіз ақпаратты оқып, аталмыш зерттеуге қатысуға шешім қабылдаған болсаңыз, келісім формасына қол қойыңыз. Егер сізде қандай да бір сұрақтар туындаса, менен сұрауға қымсынбаңыз.

1. Өзіңіз және осы мектептегі қызметіңіз туралы айтып беріңіз.

- Жұмыс тәжірибеңіз туралы айтып өтсеңіз.
- Бұл мектепте қанша уақыт еңбек етіп келесіз?
- Сіздің бұған дейінгі оқыту тәжірибеңіз қандай?

2. Үй тапсырмасын қолдану тәжірибеңіз туралы айта аласыз ба?

- Үй тапсырмасын даярлаудағы мақсатыңыз неде?
- Сіз үй тапсырмасын қаншалықты жиі бересіз?



- Оқушыларға күнделікті үй тапсырмасын орындау үшін қанша уақыт кетеді деп ойлайсыз?
- Сіз үй тапсырмасын қалай құрастырасыз, қандай стратегиялар қолданасыз?
- Әдетте үй тапсырмасын өтілген сабақты бекіту үшін бересіз бе немесе тапсырма арқылы оқушыларды түрлі ақпаратты талдау, жинақтау және алған білімдерін қолдануға талпындырасыз ба?
- Сыныптағы үй тапсырмасын қалай тексересіз?
- Үй тапсырмаларын әзірлеу үшін сіз әдістемелік бірлестігіңіздегі басқа мұғалімдермен қалай бірлесе жұмыс жасайсыз?
- Сіз үй тапсырмасын ата-аналармен қалай талқылайсыз? Ата-аналардың балаларға үй тапсырмаларын орындауға көмектескенін қолдайсыз ба? Неліктен?
- Үй тапсырмасын даярлау кезінде сізде қандай да бір қиындықтар болады ма? Егер бар болса, мәселені шешу жолында не ұсынар едіңіз?
- Сіздің ойыңызша, нағыз сапалы үй тапсырмасы қандай болу керек?

«Осы 30 минут уақытыңызды менімен бөліскеніңіз үшін тағы да рахмет. Қосқан үлесіңіз үшін алғысым шексіз. Сізге жақын арада осы сұхбатымыздың транскриптің жіберемін. Егер мен сіздің ойыңызды толық жеткізе алмадым деп ойласаңыз, транскриптке қандай да бір өзгерістер енгізуіңізге болатындығын хабарлаймын ».

**Appendix E**

**WhatsApp request message for parents**

Good day dear parents,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am studying at Nazarbayev University Master Degree course on Leadership in Education and currently conducting research for my master thesis. I would like to ask you to participate in a research study aimed at exploring your attitudes towards homework. This study is of huge importance since it will help the whole school community including teachers and parents to inform homework related practice and experience. All of your responses will be kept confidential and your name will be anonymized. Those who volunteer to participate may contact me at .....

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Ата-аналарға арналған WhatsApp өтініш хат**

Қайырлы күн, қымбатты ата-аналар.

Менің атым \_\_\_\_\_, мен Назарбаев Университетінің «Білім беру саласындағы көшбасшылық» факультетінің екінші курс магистрантымын және қазіргі уақытта магистрлік диссертациям үшін зерттеу жұмысын жүргізудемін. Сізден үй тапсырмасына деген көзқарасыңызды анықтауға бағытталған зерттеу жұмысына қатысуды сұраймын. Бұл зерттеу өте маңызды, себебі ол бүкіл мектеп қауымдастығына, соның ішінде мұғалімдер мен ата-аналарға үй тапсырмасына байланысты тәжірибелерді зерделеуге көмектеседі. Сіздердің барлық жауаптарыңыз құпия, есімдеріңіз жасырын болады. Қатысуға ерік білдірген жандар менімен ..... хабарласуына болады.

Уақыт бөлгендеріңіз үшін рақмет.