

**NO ASSIGNMENT POLICY: A BOON OR A BANE?****Cherly C. Cordova<sup>1</sup>****Eduard A. Pagtulon- an<sup>2</sup>****Denis A. Tan<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1,2,3</sup>Central Mindanao University, University Town, Musuan, Bukidnon, 8710 Philippines

**Abstract:** Homework or assignment is widely known as an educational activity, which primary purpose is to help the students improve their performances however some studies showed that assignment has a negative impact on students' social lives and more assignment increases stress level and physical problems. In the Philippines, a "No Homework Policy" during weekends for all student levels was issued by President Rodrigo R. Duterte. This study explores the possible effect of having and not having assignments on weekends on the transmuted mean scores and performance of high school students. The study was conducted at Central Mindanao University Laboratory High School (CMULHS), in Maramag, Bukidnon using two sections of Grade 11 students. The data was treated using the descriptive statistics. ANCOVA was used to determine if a significant difference exist. Result of the study reveals that class with assignments had a higher transmuted mean scores as compared to those without assignments. An increased performance from midterm to final term was noted in the with assignment group however, there is no significant difference in the performance of the students with and without assignments. This shows that giving assignment on weekends is a boon to students' performance.

**Keywords:** homework/assignment, mean score, performance

**Introduction**

Homework or assignment has been around since the early 20th century and so has the debate of whether or not homework is a healthy policy for students. This research study explores the possible advantage or disadvantage of giving assignment to with and without assignment group during weekends in terms of: a) students' mean transmuted scores in the class standing where assignment is one of the components, b) students' performance in the term. A test for significant difference on the students' performance was conducted to confirm if giving of assignments during weekend is indeed a boon or a bane.

Homework is an educational activity that is of everyday importance for many students, parents, and teachers across countries. One of the main goals of homework assignments is to create opportunities for students to interact with their parents and take time to learn and master the concept while away from school. As each new school year approaches curriculum developers and stakeholders are evaluating the impact of giving assignments and they also tried to consider its impact on the students' performance.

Research has consistently shown that homework does not only bring positive impact to the students but also negative impact. Homework reinforces skills, concepts and information learned in class, prepares students for upcoming class topics, teaches students to work independently and develop self-discipline, encourages students to take initiative and responsibility for completing a task, allows parents to have an active role in their child's education and helps them to evaluate their child's progress and relate what is learned in school to children's lives outside of school and helps to connect school learning to the real world. The student's health, social life and grades can also be affected by homework. The hours spent inside the classroom, added by the hours spent assignment can lead to students feeling overwhelmed and unmotivated.

This study was done to explore the importance of homework in the field of education. First, this study was done to explore the possible effects of having and not having assignments on weekends on the transmuted mean scores and performance of high school students. Secondly, this study was done to document and to give research based answers to stakeholders with differing views regarding the "No Assignment Policy" mandate signed by President Rodrigo Duterte last September 25, 2017. There were diverse views and reaction to that mandate making this research a need in order to affirm or negate the views and opinions expressed by the different stakeholders.

The question on No assignment policy as a boon or bane is an important one considering the ultimate goal as a teacher is for students to learn and this learning is measured through performance.

## **Review of Literature**

Homework today continues to be a hotly debated and controversial topic of discussion in school districts across countries. The literature review describes homework: its definition, views of homework: teacher, parent and student, and the impact of homework on the students' performances, as well as positive and negative effects of homework.

## **Definition of Homework**

Homework was defined as an extended work assigned by educators for students to carry out during non- school hours Cooper (1989). It is frequently considered as an important instructional strategy that help improve students' academic achievement (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006; Corno & Xu, 2004).

## **Views of Homework**

The homework process includes the perceptions of the three main populations: the teachers, parents, and students, who played important roles in the educational and pedagogic

domain. And among these individuals their views of homework varies. Teachers see homework as a necessary expansion of daily instruction, parents expect it, principals view it as a catalyst to higher test scores, and students understand it as an inconvenient truth about their busy lives (Anderson, Mead, and Sullivan 1986). Though educators had the best intentions of assigning homework it may still be a cause of conflict between school and home (Anderson, Mead, and Sullivan 1986). The purposes and benefits of assigning homework may lack shared agreement between parents, students, and educators especially if its rationale is not well communicated. Views of students, parents, and teachers on homework in elementary school in a study by Davidovitch and Yavich (2017) show that they do not have congruent views on the aims and effectiveness of homework. Teachers are the most positive about homework, followed by students and finally parents. The findings also reveal that the teacher's years on the job and attitude towards homework assignment is found to have a significant negative correlation; such that the more experienced the teacher the more negative his or her attitude to homework.

The research by Hughes and Green Hough (2002) reveals a diversity of views about homework at Key Stage Two (children aged seven to eleven); some parents strongly support it and see value in it while others see it as making excessive demands on their children's time and energy. Their research also shows that for many parents and head teachers the value of homework is symbolic: it is a sign of a good school rather than having any intrinsic value as a learning experience. Deveci, Önder, Çepni (2013) studied parents' views regarding homework given in science courses which aims to explore parents' opinions about homework assignments given in science and technology courses. Result showed that there was no significant difference in parents' scores on attitude and behavior subscales of the instrument regarding gender, educational background, occupation, and average monthly income.

According to (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2007), the reasons usually quoted by educators for assigning homework include to help students practice skills, prepare for exams, develop good work habits, life skills and critical thinking, and motivate them to learn. (Gajria & Salend, 1995) also cited that educators generally consider homework as an important pedagogical tool that can be used to promote academic and personal skills regardless of students' grade levels and abilities. Letterman (2013) found out about half of the students in classes who agreed that instructor's recognition of doing a good job on homework assignments was important to them. The length of the homework assignments as well as time permitted to complete such assignments effect student motivation to complete homework. The findings also indicate that students recognize the importance of homework assignments in understanding course material.

Another significant research by Vandenbussche, Griffiths, and Scherer (2014) revealed that respondents of the study strongly favored policies to which they were accustomed, over 90% of students surveyed do prefer that homework contribute to their course grade. Also the result of the study find interesting indication that grading homework for completeness is thought by the students to be more motivating than grading for correctness.

### Impact of giving homework

On the same year, Nunez, Epstein, Suarez, Rosario, Vallejo and Valle (2017) investigated how students' prior achievement is related to their homework behaviors (i.e., time spent on homework, homework time management, and amount of homework), and to their perceptions of parental involvement in homework (i.e., parental control and parental support). The results of their study indicated that students' prior academic performance was significantly associated with both of the students' homework variables, with direct and indirect results linking achievement and homework behaviours with perceived parental control and support behaviours about homework. Low achieving students, in particular, perceived more parental control of homework in the secondary grades. Cordova, Tan and Uchang 2018, results revealed that there is no significant difference on the performance of students for both with assignment and without assignment group. Findings also showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the mean achievement of male and female students exposed to with assignment.

On the other hand, Perceptions of the effects of homework on student achievement at a suburban middle school: A Program Evaluation studied by Huisman (2016) found out that many students received failing grades in classes, primarily due to missing homework, their conclusion revealed a need for homework policies that would support student learning without punishing students' grades. Teachers shared feelings of how subjective homework policies and grading can be, and they agreed that policies should be designed with students learning in mind. The recommendations made were for policies that are more consistent, and that grading policies do not put too much emphasis on homework as part of an overall grade.

Teachers assume students understand the concept when their homework is successfully completed. They also assume students need additional practice or assistance if students do not complete homework correctly. These assumptions may not always be accurate because each student's situation is different and teachers cannot predict exactly why homework is or is not completed. It is important for teachers to observe the feedback as soon as possible to make effective instructional adjustments for future learning (Miller, Duffy, & Zane, 1993).

Stevenson of Weber State University studied on, "Does Collecting and Grading Homework Assignments Impact Student Achievement in an Introductory Economics Course? The findings of the study indicated that the practice of collecting and grading assignments cannot be shown to positively impact student achievement. (Emerson & Taylor 2004) However, this opposed to the study by Valle, Regueiro, Nunez, Rodriguez, Pineiro, and Rosario (2016) on their study about Academic Goals, Student Homework Engagement, and Academic Achievement in Elementary School. Their findings show that: (a) academic achievement was positively associated with the amount of homework completed, (b) the amount of homework completed was related to the homework time management, (c) homework time management was associated with the approach to homework, (d) and the approach to homework, like the rest of the variables

of the model (except for the time spent on homework), was related to the student's academic motivation (i.e., academic goals).

Buijs and Admiraal (2012) studied homework assignments to enhance student engagement in secondary education. Results revealed an increased student engagement in an assignment using jigsaw, preparing analytical skills and the fragmented assessment. In the year 2013, a study was conducted by Sharma on the impact of homework on academic achievement of students with severe emotional disabilities in a non- public school setting. A significant difference between test scores after the homework week versus the non-homework weeks was shown. Time spent on homework and the amount of correct homework submitted also impacted achievement.

On the year 2016, a longitudinal Evaluation of the Importance of Homework Assignment Completion for the Academic Performance of Middle School Students with ADHD was studied by Langberg, Dvorsky, Molitor, Bouchtein, Eddy, Smith, Schultz, and Evans. Results showed that agreement between teachers with respect to students' assignment completion was high, with an intra-class correlation of 0.879 at baseline. These findings demonstrate that homework assignment completion problems are persistent across time and an important intervention target for adolescents with ADHD.

Another research entitled Testing the homework model among the Filipino school learners. This study is anchored on the homework quality model of Dettmers, Trautwein, Ludtke, Schnyder, and Baumert (2010). The model revealed that participants' performance in mathematics achievement was supported by well selected homework tasks and their high levels of cognitive ability.

### **Effects of no homework policy**

Verbra (2018) study was entitled "Homework policy review: A case study of a public school in the Western Cape Province". The study found that no homework has left a more positive effect on learners. However, the study argues that no homework will be a disadvantage in the future. Homework Policy and Student Choice: Findings from a Montessori Charter School a study by Scott and Glaze (2017) indicated that, although students enjoyed the proposed homework change, it lacked sufficient structure for parents, and students needed support from teachers and parents to engage in meaningful homework tasks.

### **Other factors that affects the students' performance other than homework**

A study conducted by Tan and Balasico (2016), entitled predictors of performance among students in Central Mindanao University Laboratory High School: basis for policy revision found out that CMULHS students performed well in English, Mathematics and Science in their

elementary years. Their parents were actively involved in their children's school activities. They have slightly positive attitude towards schooling, fairly good study habits, highly motivated to study, and attributed their achievement for their efforts.

Another study by Saligumba and Tan (2018), Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Model: Effects on the Students' Mathematics Performance and Self-Efficacy found that the level of mathematics performance of the students in the pretest, posttest and retention test when exposed to GRRIM and those exposed to non-GRRIM varies from very low to very high level. There was a highly significant difference in the posttest scores of those students exposed to GRRIM compared to those exposed to non-GRRIM. On the contrary, there was no significant difference in the mathematics performance of the students when exposed to GRRIM and non-GRRIM in terms of their retention test scores.

Moreover, the study of Pagtulon-an and Tan (2018) entitled students' mathematics performance and self-efficacy beliefs in a rich assessment tasks environment found that RATE group with a mean of 30.93 performed statistically comparable to the non-RATE group with a mean of 30.72, thus, there is no significant difference found in their performance. The results imply that even if there is no significant difference that exist between the two groups, rich assessment tasks effectively bridge the gap between the two groups.

Other researchers identified different variables that influence student's performance like mother's educational qualification (Cordova & Tan, 2018), attitude towards mathematics and conceptual understanding (Andamon & Tan, 2018). Teaching pedagogies were identified to have effect on students' performance as well, namely, metacognitive scaffolding in cooperative learning (Dagoc & Tan, 2018), flipped learning (Segumpan & Tan, 2018), dyad cooperative learning (Aguanta & Tan, 2018), reciprocal learning (Guita & Tan, 2018), mathematics communication strategies (Ciubal-Fulgencio & Tan, 2018), process-oriented guided inquiry learning (Tan-Ucang & Tan, 2013), concrete-pictorial-abstract approach (Salingay & Tan, 2018) and many others.

## **Methodology**

The study was conducted at Central Mindanao University Laboratory High School (CMULHS) a secondary science high school in Musuan, Maramag, Bukidnon, Philippines . It follows a science curriculum with two (2) mathematics and two (2) science subjects per level. CMULHS is a CHED-supervised school. The respondents of the study were the 115 Grade 11 senior high school students of Central Mindanao University Laboratory High School of the school year 2016-2017. Among respondents, 58 students were taken from the cream class, who were not given assignment and 57 students were taken from the second sections, who are given assignment. This study is a descriptive type of research, where the data were gathered through



the records of the teachers handling the subject. The data was treated using the descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to analyze the data for answering the research questions raised in this study.

## Findings

The presentation of the results of this study is arranged logically as it appears in its objectives

Table 1 presents the mean scores between with assignment and without weekend's assignment in the varied assessment made by the teachers. Result showed that the group with assignment had a higher mean, 91.1930 compared to the group without assignment having a mean of 86.3966 for the transmuted scores in the class standing for the final term. The class standing comprises quizzes, assignments and seat works.

The findings of this study is supported by Valle, et al. (2016) when they found out that academic achievement was positively associated with the amount of homework completed. Similarly, Sharma's (2013) result showed a significant difference between test scores after the homework week versus the non-homework week. Eren and Henderson (2017) also supported the findings of this study when they found out that homework has a larger and more significant impact on test scores. On the other hand, Emerson & Taylor (2004) indicated that the practice of collecting and grading assignments cannot be shown to positively impact student achievement.

Table 1. Mean scores of with assignment and without assignment group

Groups	Mean	SD	N
With Assignment	91.1930	3.3057	57
Without Assignment	86.3966	5.0954	58
Total			115

Table 2 shows the performance of students with and without assignment. Performance comprises class standing and summative exam. The result implies that mean performance of the without assignment group is higher than that of the with assignment group. It must be noted though that the students belonging to the without assignment group are the top 58 students and the with assignment group belong to the 59<sup>th</sup> rank and below.

Huisman (2016) stated that students received failing grades in classes, primarily due to missing homework and further recommends a grading policy that do not put too much emphasis on homework as part of an overall grade. However it is noteworthy to mention that the mean of the midterm grade for with assignment group is 80.6100 and increased to 86.8900 for the final

term, on the other hand, the group without assignment had a mean midterm grade of 89.9300 and decreased to 88.0500 in the final term. This shows that an improvement is evident in the mean performance of the with assignment group. The additional assignments given to them on weekends had its advantage as communicated by the increase in students' performance.

Table 2. Students' mean performance in midterm and final term

Groups		Mean	SD	N
With Assignment	Midterm	80.6100	3.4400	57
	Final Term	86.8947	3.19421	
Without Assignment	Midterm	89.9300	3.2300	58
Total		88.0517	3.47771	115

Table 3 is a test of difference between with and without assignment group. This result indicates that there is no significant difference on the grades of the students between with assignment and without assignment. This implies that the group with assignment having a mean of 86.8947 performed statistically comparable to the group without assignment having a mean of 88.0517, thus, there is no significant difference found in their performance. This is noteworthy since the group given assignments on weekends is the low performing group.

Moreover, the result of the descriptive statistics reveals that the mean score of the final grade of those students without assignment is greater than those students with assignments, indicating that without assignments had a better performance compared to that of with assignments but not significantly different.

Groups	Mean	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
With Assignment	86.890	17.116	1.180	.280
Without Assignment	88.052	14.502		

Table 3. Test for Difference between with and without assignment group

\*significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 presents the analysis of students' general weighted average (GWA). The above result indicates that there is a significant difference on the GWA of the students between with assignment and without assignment. This implies that the performance based on the GWA of the without assignment group is significantly higher than that of the with assignment group after additional assignments were given during weekend. The result shows that students with assignments during weekends were able to cope and be at par with the without assignment group



after receiving additional assignments during weekend. This result agrees with Garia and Salend (1995) and Letterman (2013), in which homework or assignment is indeed an important pedagogical tool that can be used to promote academic performance.

Table 4. Test for difference in the general weighted average of students

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	MS	F-value	Sig.
Group	387.491	1	387.491	38.832	.000*

\*significant at 0.05 level

## Conclusion

On the bases of the findings of this study, the following initial conclusions were drawn:

Our results indicate that the students' transmuted mean score in the with assignment group is higher than that of the without assignment group. The students' performance in the without assignment group is higher than that of the with assignment group however, an increased student performance from the midterm to final term was noted in the with assignment group and a decrease of students performance was evident in the without assignment group. This shows that removing assignments during weekend has a negative effect on students' performance and adding assignments during weekends has a positive effect on performance. There is a significant difference in the general weighted average of with and without assignment group attributed to the higher midterm grade of the without assignment group.

## Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were given:

Teachers must consider the value of the homework they have to give on their students. Some of the best types of homework assignments are those that help the students apply what they are learning, or challenge them within the range of their actual abilities and resources.

A revisit to the executive order mandated by President Rodrigo R. Duterte on "No Assignment Policy" maybe in order. A more comprehensive study including all levels and all subjects may be done.

Offer students choices to engage their autonomy and individual learning preferences.

Adapt teaching strategies and activities which are proven helpful in planning the homework or assignment that you will be giving to the students.

Taking a stand to implement a no homework policy should be based on the needs of the students and not the opinions of fellow teachers or parents. Based on the result of this study, it is

recommended that students be given homework during weekends for it has a positive impact on their performance.

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