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## Homework as a Pedagogical Practice and Its Influence on Family Life in Nigeria: Implications for Social Studies

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### **Abstract:**

*This study is titled 'homework as a pedagogical practice and its influence on family life in Nigeria: Implication for Social Studies'. The purpose of the study is to x-ray the pedagogical use and misuse of homework, its impact on family life and its implications for Social Studies Education in Nigeria. The purposive population of the study comprises of parents, teachers and Upper Basic Education students of public and private schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample one hundred and fifty respondents each from parents, teachers, and from Upper Basic class to tallying 450 respondents. The statistical weighted average mean was used to answer research question. t- test statistics was used to test the formulated hypothesis. It was found that home work as a pedagogical practice has influence on family life and relationships. There is significant difference between home work as a pedagogical practice and family life regarding the owner of the schools. Based on this findings, it is recommended among others that Policy makers should organise workshops and seminars on the modus operandi of home work in our educational system, standard should be set by government for all stakeholders on how to go about home work in our schools, Social Studies should be reorganised to teach family values and teachers should not use home work to replace the quality of their works during classroom pedagogy.*

**Keywords:** Homework, pedagogical practice, family life, social studies

### **1. Introduction**

Homework is a phenomenon that is common among students, parents and teachers in our educational system in Nigeria. Most schools in Nigeria especially private schools do teach the students for five hours of normal classroom teaching and three hours for extra lessons. The parents also do engage the students in home lesson for between two and three hours a day. Students were engaged in about ten hours of teaching per day struggling to do several home works. Some teachers are hiding under the canopy of homework for their inability to do quality teaching and finish their scheme of work. Some ignorant parents appreciate home work at the expense of quality classroom teaching. It should be noted that extra- curricular activities are also important to the total wellbeing of students. Parents are left with little or no time to teach their children family values. Kralovec and Buell (2000) found that home work often disrupts family life, interferes with what parents want to teach their children and punishes students in poverty for being poor. Perhaps more significantly for educators are the serious limitations of homework's pedagogical prowess. This article intends to x-ray the pedagogical use and misuse of homework, its impact on family life and its implications for Social Studies education in Nigeria.

#### *1.1. Theoretical Framework*

##### 1.1.1. Family Stress Adaptation Theory

This theory was an offshoot the work of many psychologists. Reuben Hill one of them worked on Hill's ABCX model of family stress and adaptation. He discovered agents that cause stress in the family. Stress comes from internal and external sources. Internal sources have to do with the behaviours of members of the family such as alcohol abuse, divorce, overwork, sickness, homework and lack of rest etc., while external sources are economic crisis, natural disaster such as flooding, ethnic violence, terrorism etc. In Hill's model A-refers to events that distinguishes family equilibrium, B-refers to protective factors, whereas C and B includes internal and external family sources and social support through church and other social settings, C refers to perception and X refers to family crisis.

If the family does not adapt to stressful event and cope with it, it will lead to crisis. The family should adopt coping strategies such as relaxation and rest to escape or adapt to stress. It is relevant to this study in that homework is a stress to children and parents as the case may be. Coping with the stress by the children is predicated on the children having enough time to play, rest and relax.

## 1.2. Conceptual Analysis

### 1.2.1. Homework

Homework has to do with the extension of the learning activities of what has been done in the class or what is to be done. It can be referred to as pre learning activities, learning activities and post learning activities. There are several definitions for the concept of homework. It is generally referred to as assigned task given to the students by the teacher to do at their own time. It is an extension of classroom activities. According to Cooper (1989) homework is defined as any task assigned by the school teachers intended for students to carry out during non-school hours. There is little or no empirical evidence suggesting the value of home work on child's academic performance. Countries like Finland, South Korea, Czech Republic and others adopted little or no homework education policy yet their students are among the best in the world.

### 1.2.2. Pedagogical Practice

Pedagogy according to Bruner cited in Wikipedia (2015) is defined as the discipline that deals with theory and practice of teaching. Pedagogy includes how the teacher interacts with the students and the social and intellectual environment the teacher seeks to establish (Bruner, 1971). The pedagogical practice connotes the teaching strategies, methods, judgment and assessment of students in the teaching learning classroom process. The aim is to engage behavioural changes in the students based on the lesson and societal objectives.

### 1.2.3. Family Life

The family according to Affih in Akinola (2014) is defined by a sex relationship, sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children. Human family has two aspects, the biological and social aspects. Akinola (2014) opined that a family consists of members of households who are related to a specific degree by blood, adoption, marriage and other criteria. Family life is a process whereby the family performs its functions to the family members. This is done through socialization process. The family life teaches the core values of the society to the members. Akinola (2010) discovered that among Nigeria, these family values are highly cherished among the family members in Nigeria; respect, family tolerance, family care, togetherness, love etc. These can be instilled to children through family members. Parents need enough time to teach their wards family and societal values.

### 1.2.4. Social Studies

Social Studies is derived from two Latin words "socius" and "studium" socius means an associate, companion, a bond between people or collective existence whereas studium means examine in details or acts of behaviour or interest or a person's character to investigate predicament (Dolwick, 2009)

From the above, Social Studies has to do with the study of human behaviour or character and solution to the challenges faced in the course of interacting with others in the environment. Social Studies is the study of people in relation to each other and to their world. It is an interdisciplinary subject that draws upon history, geography, economics, law, political science and other disciplines. Social Studies focuses on people's relationships with their social, physical, spiritual, political, technological and cultural environments (Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, 2002).

According to Kissock as cited in Ogundare (2010) Social Studies is a programme of studies which a society uses to instil in their children knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions it considers important concerning the relationships human beings have with each other, their world and themselves. In the related development, Ogunsanya in Ogundare (2010) defined Social Studies as a discipline in which the teaching and learning of attitudes and skills overshadows the acquisition of facts and information.

The wellbeing of citizens is not a chance affair. It is achieved through the interactions of human beings in the environment. Parents and teachers need to instil societal values to the children. School alone cannot teach all the values through pedagogical practice. Family, society, peers, religious associations have roles to play in the complete or total socialization of a child. Teachers should not intrude into the time that the child needs to learn family life through home work.

## 1.3. Appraisal of the Use of Homework

There are different opinions as to the use of homework. Parents press on the teachers to give homework. Teachers give homework to please the parents and other stakeholders in education industry. Some of the students grumble and do it anyway to avoid teachers' punishment.

The values of homework according to Cooper (1994) are better retention of factual knowledge, increased understanding, better critical thinking and greater self-discipline and self-direction. Homework is invaluable to the students, teachers and parents. It helps the students to learn and develop skills of problem solving, time management, reading, study, learning, co-operation, group work, communication, writing and tolerance. Homework is useful to help students improve on their reading and learning adventures. Homework reduces the teaching load of the teachers. The activities that cannot be covered due to time constraint would be given to the students as homework. Homework helps parents to partner with teachers in teaching learning process. According to Horsley & Walker (2013) homework tends to focus on three things: student learning and achievement; the development of student learning skills and parental

involvement. In addition, homework is beneficial to teachers in the area of helping them to cover the approved syllabus by the education authorities.

#### *1.4. Misuse of Home Work*

Cooper (1999) gave the negatives of home work as loss of interest in academic, material, physical and emotional fatigue, cheating and the increase in differences between students from affluent and low income families. Cooper went further to state that older students benefited the most from doing homework.

Homework according to Conner, Pope and Galloway (2013) is a dominant or significant source of stress and anxiety for students. It gives students little or no time for rest and relaxation. The students used to sleep for about seven hours which is lower than prescribed by health agencies. Other co-curricular activities are also part of what make up the total education or total wellbeing of the child but excessive homework deprived them of balance education. Head (cognitive), Heart (affective), Hand (psychomotor) and Health (psychosocial) are all integral part of learning. The parents see homework as a way of keeping their children at home while they look for alternatives to make ends meet. This is common among low income earners who prefer teachers to engage their wards so as to prevent them play away in their absence. This is a common scenario in Nigeria.

Kohn (2006) argued that homework can create family conflict and reduce student's quality of life. Homework in Nigeria, as it were is being done by parents, other siblings or home teachers. It is essentially not showing the true picture of child's performance. Teachers are fond of giving homework that is above the knowledge level of students. This may be attributed to the ignorance level of both the teachers and the parents. The use of homework has been grossly misused in Nigerian context. There is no empirical evidence to prove the effectiveness of homework in academic achievement of the child. Some of the homework exercises are never marked or assessed by the teacher.

#### *1.5. Homework as a Pedagogical Practice in Nigeria and Its Influence on Family Life in Nigeria*

Homework is a popular evaluation tradition in Nigeria educational process. Kohn (2006) wondered why teachers and parents should continue to insist on overloading students with homework when it is believed to have no definite evidence proving the overall learning benefit of homework to children's academic performance. He went on to argue that home work can be detrimental to children's development. Kohn said it robs families of quality evening time together, not allowing children enough time to rest and that constant busy work only turns them off school work and kills their interest for schooling.

In Nigeria, pre-colonial educational system was informal in nature. It was referred to as traditional education which emphasized character and vocational training. The essence is to teach family, community and societal values. The parents had enough time during moonlight at home and pleasure to teach children to be of good character. It may be through stories, folklores, norms proverbs etc. It was directed at character training but western education coupled with economic recession; the parents have to meet up with economic needs of the family. The little time that remains after work is being competed with doing homework, operate internet facilities and watch home video which are common phenomena in modern Nigeria. Children especially from private schools have little or no time for leisure, play and sleep as they have to cope with barrages of homework and projects just to maintain status quo and please ignorant parents.

The family is impacted negatively when large amount of homework is given to the children to complete at home. Homework is actually affecting the relationships between parents and children. Instead of helping parents to cook and run errands, they are busy writing their homework. There are several house chores but homework has replaced it. Parents now engaged maids or house boys to do house chores. The implications are that maids are prepared to be better house wives in the future, whereas their children do not know how to cook and do other things that encapsulate into character and total education.

## **2. Methodology**

The purposive population of the study comprises of parents, teachers and Upper Basic education students of public and private schools in cosmopolitan Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was to sample 150 respondents each from parents, teachers and Upper Basic school students totaling 450 respondents.

The 16 items questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the sampled respondents. The statistical weighted average mean was used to answer only research questions of the study. Mean score rating of 2.50 and above is accepted while mean score below 2.50 is rejected. The t-test statistic is used to test the only formulated hypothesis for the study

### *2.1. Research Question*

- What is the influence of home work as a pedagogical practice on family life in Nigeria?

S/N	Items	Sa	A	D	Sd	Total Responses	N	X	Remarks
1	Homework is a common practice in our school system	1200 300	300 100	60 30	20 20	1580	450	3.51	Accepted
2	Homework is a source of stress to students.	900 225	75 25	300 150	300 150	1325	450	2.94	Accepted
3	Homework robs families of quality time together.	884 221	87 29	286 143	57 57	1314	450	2.92	Accepted
4	Homework influences the time to teach family and societal values.	764 191	606 202	62 31	26 26	1458	450	3.24	Accepted
5	Home work forces parents to engage home boy or maid, to take care of house chores.	716 179	501 167	126 63	41 41	1384	450	3.07	Accepted
6	The fear of punishment for failure to do homework makes pupils restless.	436 109	141 47	402 201	41 93	1020	450	2.27	Rejected
7	Some teachers give the work they supposed to do in the class.	608 152	12 04	406 203	91 91	1117	450	2.48	Rejected
8	Due to numerous home-work, parents do not have enough time to teach the children good character and value.	1212 303	447 149	4 2	0 0	1663	450	3.69	Accepted
9	The students do not have enough time to rest after school hour.	444 111	111 37	432 216	86 86	1073	450	2.38	Rejected
10	Parents are ignorant about the use of home work by the teachers.	612 153	51 17	340 170	110 110	1113	450	2.47	Rejected
11	The family life is influenced negatively when large amount of home-work is given to the children to do at home.	1164 291	465 155	6 3	1 1	1636	450	3.63	Accepted
12	Home-work affects relationships between children and other family members.	524 131	609 203	150 75	41 41	1324	450	2.94	Accepted
13	The functions of children at home, is affected at home due to large amount of home-work.	1192 298	303 101	44 22	29 29	1568	450	3.48	Accepted
14	Students who engages, in home work every day do not perform better than those who do not.	552 138	366 122	182 91	99 99	1199	450	2.66	Accepted
15	Due to commitment to home-work, children may not be prepared to be good husbands or good wives in future.	804 201	72 24	52 26	199 199	1127	450	2.50	Accepted
16	Home work in Nigeria are being done by parents, home teachers' and other siblings, it does not reflect the child's intelligence	976 244	411 137	18 9	60 60	1465	450	3.25	Accepted

Table 1: The Influence of Home Work as a Pedagogical Practice on Family Life in Nigeria  
Grand Mean 21,366 / 7200 2.96

From table 1 above, only items 6, 7, 9 and 10 were rejected all other items were accepted. Item 8 has the highest mean of 3.69. It should also be noted that the grand mean is 2.96 which means acceptability. Therefore from the foregoing homework as a pedagogical practice has influence on family life and relationships.

## 2.2. Testing of Null Hypothesis

The study was guide by the formulated hypothesis

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between homework as a pedagogical practice and family life regarding the owner of schools

## 3. Results

Gender	N	X̄	S.D	d.f	t-value	Std.Error	Sig.@0.05	Decision
Public Schools	4000	3.135	1.005	7198	0.234	0.240	0.815	Not Significant
Private Schools	3200	3.14	1.020					

Table 2: Two-Tailed T-Test Result in Respect F Homework as a Pedagogical Practice and Family Life Regarding the Owners of Schools

Results on Table 1 showed that there was no significant difference in the opinion of Sample250 and Sample200 ( $p = 0.815$  which is greater than 0.05 level of significance). As a result, the hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) 1 was accepted. In other words, public and private schools did not differ significantly in their opinion regarding homework as a pedagogical practice and family life.

#### 4. Summary of Findings

These are the findings of this study agreed that; homework as a pedagogical practice has influence on family life and relationships, homework influences the time to teach family and societal values, the family life is influenced negatively when large amount of home-work is given to the children to do at home, homework is a source of stress to students, homework robs families of quality time together, homework influences the time to teach family and societal values. homework forces parents to engage home boy or maid, to take care of house chores, the fear of punishment for failure to do homework makes pupils restless, some teachers give the work they supposed to do in the class, due to numerous home-work, parents do not have enough time to teach the children good character and value, home-work affects relationships between children and other family members, the functions of children at home, is affected at home due to large amount of home-work, students who engages, in home work every day do not perform better than those who do not, due to commitment to home-work, children may not be prepared to be good husbands or good wives in future, homework in Nigeria are being done by parents, home teachers' and other siblings, it does not reflect the child's intelligence. It was also discovered that the majority of respondents disagreed with the following; fear of punishment for failure to do homework makes pupils restless, some teachers give the work they supposed to do in the class as homework, the students do not have enough time to rest after school hour, and that parents are ignorant about the use of home work by the teachers.

#### 5. Discussion of Findings

The study found out that homework as a pedagogical practice has influence on family life and relationships and that there is no significant difference between homework as a pedagogical practice and family life regarding the owner of schools. This study discovered that due to numerous home-work, parents do not have enough time to teach the children good character and value and also the functions of children at home, is affected at home due to large amount of home-work. This is in line with the discovery of Kralovec and Buell (2000) who out found that home work often disrupts family life, interferes with what parents want to teach their children and punishes students in poverty for being poor. This study also found out that the family life is influenced negatively when large amount of home-work is given to the children to do at home, homework is a source of stress to students, homework robs families of quality time together, homework influences the time to teach family and that the fear of punishment for failure to do homework makes pupils restless. These agreed with the discovery of Conner, Pope and Galloway (2013) that homework is a dominant or significant source of stress and anxiety for students. It gives students little or no time for rest and relaxation. This idea is in line with Kohn (2006) who argued that homework can create family conflict and reduce student's quality of life. There is no empirical evidence to show that homework enhances the performance of children, lead to breakdown in family values. This study found out that homework is a common practice in our school system. This support the opinion of Cooper (1994) who agreed that homework leads to better retention of factual knowledge, increased understanding, better critical thinking and greater self-discipline and self-direction. Also, Horsley & Walker (2013) supported the idea that homework tends to focus on three things: student learning and achievement; the development of student learning skills and parental involvement.

#### 6. Implications for Social Studies

Social Studies in Obilo as cited by Akinola (2014) aims at ensuring the acquisition of relevant body of knowledge and information which is an essential pre-requisite to personal and societal development. Akinola (2014) opined that Social Studies is the process by which an individual acquires value, attitudes, skills and knowledge which will make him/her useful to him/herself and the society at large.

Social Studies has to do with total wellbeing of the learners. Social Studies will help the teachers and parents to design an educational package that is total and comprehensive. According to Uche (1980) Social Studies general objectives are citizenship, value, intellectual and humanistic education. The home work should not tamper with value system of the society.

#### 7. Conclusions

Homework is a tradition in Nigeria educational system. The homework children bring home are increasing by the day especially on weekends and during the holidays. Teachers always use home work to complement their work during classroom pedagogy; home work has not proven to improve the academic achievement of children. It is not essentially beneficial to the wellbeing of the child. While it may add value to learners at higher level of education, it may not be to basic education students. Homework has negative effects on family life and social relationships of the child. Social Studies is a value laden subject to teach family and societal values to the learners.

#### 8. Recommendations

- Policy makers should organise workshops and seminars on the modus operandi of homework in our educational system.
- Standard should be set by government for all stakeholders on how to go about homework in our schools.

- Social Studies should be reorganised to teach family values.
- Teachers should not use Homework to replace the quality of their work during classroom pedagogy.

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