2020

THE IMPACT OF HOMEWORK ON FAMILIES OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS AND PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ABILITIES TO HELP WITH HOMEWORK

Keri Murphy-Sabella
Saint John's University, Jamaica New York

THE IMPACT OF HOMEWORK ON FAMILIES OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS AND PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ABILITIES TO HELP WITH HOMEWORK

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

of

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

Keri Murphy-Sabella

Submitted Date March 12, 2020

Approved Date March 12, 2020

_____

Keri Murphy-Sabella

_____

Dr. Anthony Annunziato

ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF HOMEWORK ON FAMILIES OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS AND PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ABILITIES TO HELP WITH HOMEWORK

Keri Murphy-Sabella

The practice of giving homework to elementary aged children has been debated for a number of years. Much of the research on traditional homework completion does not show a positive relationship to academic achievement for this age group, yet the practice continues. The purpose of this convergent mixed method design was to investigate the differences in the views of homework, held by parents of K-5 students and educators of K-5 students, specifically their views of homework regarding its effectiveness. Furthermore, this study investigated the homework experiences of these families and explored parent perceptions of their abilities to effectively provide homework support, particularly mathematics homework. This study is framed by Bandura's social cognitive theory and Eccles' expectancy-value theory. K-5 caregivers/parents (n = 256) and educators (n = 64) completed the Elementary Level Homework Survey (Appendix C). Survey data was analyzed quantitatively for mean differences while interview data and open-ended question data were analyzed and coded using NVivo. Multiple t-tests were conducted. A significant difference was found between parents and educators that suggest that educators are more likely to agree that homework increases student achievement and increases work habits. Multiple ANOVAs were conducted to investigate parent responses based on parent education level, who oversees homework completion as well as the number of children living in the home. Parents with a master's degree felt significantly more capable to help their children compared to parents with

some high school/high school diploma, some college/associate's degree or bachelor's degree. This research found strong themes of parents causing confusion for children, only 37.4% of parents felt that they can adequately help with math homework; 60.2% of parents and educators felt that parents can't help with homework overall. In this research, 58% of parents felt that homework caused tension within their homes. Opportunities for future research are discussed as well as implications. Given this research, it is important that school districts investigate their homework practices.

DEDICATION

The successful completion of my dissertation would not have been possible without the considerable love and support from my family and friends, particularly my mother who always inspires me to push myself and taught me to love and value learning. My sincere gratitude for being a wonderful listener as I discussed my successes and struggles while balancing school, work, and family needs. Thank you to my friends and coworkers for being amazing listeners and cheerleaders. I would also like to acknowledge my St. John's cohort. We spent over two years together and helped push each other through some challenging times. This group of incredible, passionate educators have inspired me and made me laugh when things were tough.

I would like to acknowledge my mentor, Dr. Anthony Annunziato for sharing his deep knowledge with me. Thank you also to the other members of my committee. Dr. Ann Macalusco, thank you so much for your guidance and all the feedback that you provided and Dr. Stephen Kotok, thank you for asking provoking questions, forcing me to delve more deeply into my research. The combination of your expertise and feedback allowed me to successfully design this exploratory mixed method design. I must also thank the hundreds of families and educators who took time out of their busy schedules to participate in the study.

I must also express sincere thanks to the wonderful educators, administrators and families who took the time to participate in this study. This research would not have been possible without each of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Homework has been a part of school throughout our country's history, but is it beneficial? There is research that shows homework is not productive for early elementary students (Cooper 1989; Cooper, Robinson & Patell, 2006; Kohn, 2006). However, the practice continues mainly because it has historically been part of elementary school. With *A Nation at Risk* and *What Works* in the 1980's there was a big push for homework to support public education (Watkins & Stevens, 2013, p. 81). The question to consider is, however, is it really helping students? Cooper (1989) defines homework as any task that is assigned by the teacher intended to be carried out by students outside of the school day.

With the development of the Common Core Learning Standards, some areas of instruction have changed drastically. Particularly in math, many parents are frustrated because they cannot effectively help their children understand the content. This leads to frustration and unnecessary family stress (Katz, Buzukashvili & Feingold, 2012).

With activities and homework, family time is under attack. Research by Dudley-Marling (2003, p. 3) presents data indicating that homework seriously disrupts the lives of many families. His research shows that homework often reduces family leisure time, disrupts family relationships and denies families many of the pleasures of family life. This research is echoed by Cooper whose research suggests that homework decreases the time students have for family activities, leisurely activities, social life, and cultural or

religious enrichment (1989). Parents in Dudley-Marling's research described the damage to the family relationships due to tension and fighting caused by homework (2003).

Across Long Island, New York State and the country, there is great inconsistency regarding homework policies or guidelines. Some districts have homework policies or guidelines to help teachers. However, others do not. The United States Department of Education and the National Parent Teacher Association has recommendations when it comes to homework (PTA.org, 2016). Some districts closely follow these recommendations and lay out clear practices for teachers to follow regarding homework, and a few districts have eliminated traditional homework altogether.

Problem Statement

What is best for children when it comes to time spent outside of school? A 1999 Public Agenda Survey found that nearly half of parent's report that homework causes unnecessary arguments within the family and a third said that homework causes stress (Farkas, 1999). Cooper's 1989 meta-analysis found that homework had no significant effect on elementary school achievement. Most commonly, homework is intended to provide the student with the chance to practice or review material from school and to communicate with families (Cooper et al., 2006).

How do families feel about the school system controlling their time outside of the school day? Are their children still able to enjoy leisure and family time and get adequate rest? The findings from this research can have a direct impact on homework policies for elementary school children. There is considerable research on the amount of time students spend on homework. However, there is little research about the amount of support that elementary students need and even less research on how parents and

educators perceive parents' abilities to adequately assist elementary students with homework. This research can help school leaders to connect with families and ensure that students are becoming well-rounded citizens.

There are a limited number of studies that have focused on the impact of homework on daily family life. The majority of homework studies to date have focused mainly on amount of time students spend on homework and on the types of homework. This research helps to fill that void.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this convergent mixed method design was to investigate the differences between the views of parents of K-5 students and educators of K-5 students with regard to homework, specifically its effectiveness and to investigate the homework experiences of families with students in grades K-5. Furthermore, this study explored parent perceptions of their abilities to effectively provide homework support and increase student understanding of the material. This study focused on family experiences around homework, particularly mathematics homework. For the purposes of this study, "parent" means any guardian or caregiver that completes homework regularly with a particular child. For the quantitative component and statistical analysis, the perceived effectiveness of homework was the independent variable. The dependent variable was the Likert scale scores obtained from the researcher's survey. The quantitative survey focused on the differences between educator and parent perspectives of homework. Additional questions, answered by parents only, focused on the perceived impact of homework on extra-curricular activities, family time and tension in the home. Following the data collection, an independent samples *t*-test was run to look for significant differences

between the parent and educator perceptions of the effectiveness of homework. Additionally, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the effect of the number of children living in the home on perceived effectiveness of homework and its impact on leisure time and family dynamics. A one-way ANOVA was also conducted to compare the effect of parents' education level of on the mean scores of the various survey questions. Finally, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the person who oversees homework completion on the mean scores of the various survey questions.

This study included qualitative electronic interviews that focused on parent and family experiences with homework. Questions specifically asked parents to describe experiences related to parent views of effectiveness, parent perceptions in their abilities to adequately assist their children, as well as the impact homework has on the family dynamics and quality time together. This adds to the research of homework by providing more detailed perspectives from parents about the impact of homework. Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory was used to explore the impact of the child's environment and how it influences his or her development. Additionally, Jacquelynne Eccles' Expectancy-Value Theory was used to discuss differences in family experiences with homework as well as to discuss recommendations on how to improve homework.

Theoretical Framework

Albert Bandura is a Canadian-American psychologist who's work focused on how children learn. Bandura's social cognitive theory focuses on how behavior, learning and growth are affected by the cognitive operations that occur during social activities. The social cognitive theory encompasses self-efficacy, self-regulation and observational

learning (Bandura, 1993). In his research around this theory, he found that students with high self-efficacy tended to set higher goals and were more dedicated to achieving these goals. In 1997, Albert Bandura published the book Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control in which he describes the importance one's self-efficacy holds in regard to motivation. Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their own competence (Seifert, 2004). For students, it is their belief that they can control their learning and master their academic tasks (Bandura, 1993). This applies to the completion of homework. When children feel that they will be successful at completing the work, they are more motivated to do the work. Research on homework and self-efficacy has shown a connection, specifically the more efficacious a student feels, the better they can complete the homework and subsequently have higher achievement scores. Whereas, low self-efficacy leads one to perceive a task as even more difficult which then brings about negative emotions such as stress, frustration, anxiety and depression (Katz et. al, 2012). These negative feelings can cause one to give up, thereby having a negative impact on achievement (Kitsantas et. al, 2011).

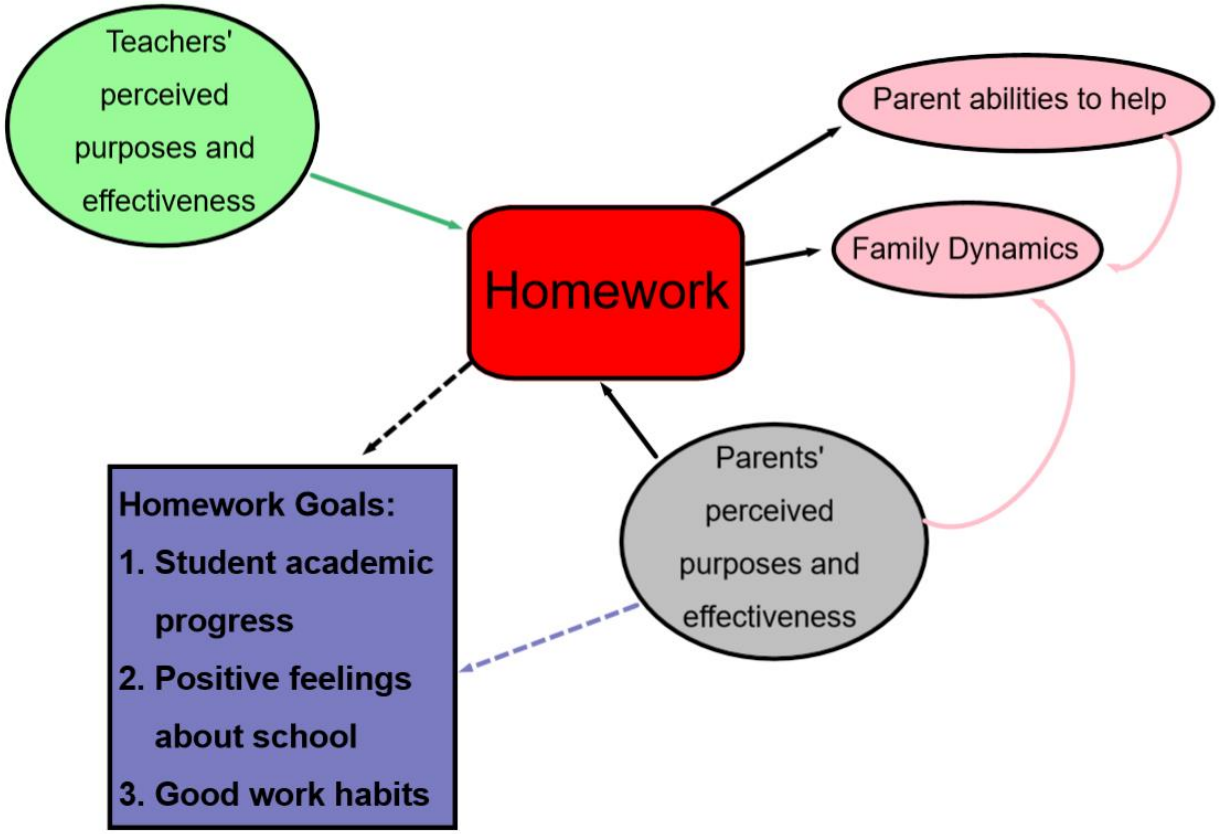
Parents' self-efficacy about their abilities to adequately assist their child, as well as their beliefs in their child's efficacy has also been found to impact the homework environment in either positive or negative ways (Gonida and Cortina, 2014). Similarly, Usher, 2009, found that parents' thoughts of their child's abilities may affect the child's own self-efficacy beliefs.

Much of the research suggests that meaningful homework assignments are important to increase interest and motivation and are therefore a component for homework completion (Cooper, 1989). Jacquelynne Eccles' Expectancy-Value Theory

also takes into consideration the students' expectancies for success on the task (1983). In her model of motivation, the expectances for the task refer to the perceived importance, usefulness or enjoyment that the task will bring about. These factors influence performance, effort, as well as task persistence (Eccles, 1983). Many educators say they assign homework to increase non-academic skills such as self-discipline and responsibility. If students perceive their homework tasks as valuable, according to the expectancy-value theory, some of the non-academic skills of persistence and effort will increase.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Most educators assign homework. At the elementary level, studies have not shown a positive correlation between homework and student achievement (Cooper 1989; Cooper et. al, 2006; Kohn, 2006). In fact, Cooper (2006) found that elementary students receive no benefit or even a negative effect from homework. Many teachers believe that homework increases student progress and helps to foster good work habits and positive feelings about school. The parent perceptions of homework's effectiveness and purposes influence how they help their child. Much of the research also discusses the impact of homework, parent's ability to help with homework as well as the kind of help the

provide, on the family dynamics (Pressman et al., 2015). For the purposes of this study, family dynamics refers to the interactions between members within a family. Disagreements, disturbances to routines and disturbances to quality time spent as a family can negatively impact family dynamics. These disruptions can be brought on by homework and can last long after the homework assignment has been completed.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. How do elementary school parents and educators view the effectiveness of homework?
2. How confident do parents feel in their abilities to help their children in the area of mathematics homework?
3. To what extend does homework impact the following:
    a. Family time
    b. Extracurricular activities
4. How does homework impact the family dynamics?

Hypotheses

H_o: There will be no significant differences between the views of homework held by parents' and educators' regarding the effectiveness of homework.

H_1: There will be significant differences between the views of homework held by parents' and educators' regarding the effectiveness of homework.

H_o: The means of all parent education level groups will be equal.

H_1: The means of at least one parent education level group will be different.

Overview of Methodology

A quantitative survey was designed by the researcher and used specifically for this study. Six of the eleven questions (numbers 7-11 and 13) regarding educator and parent perceptions of homework were used in Hoeke's (2017) research. The remaining five questions were created by this researcher. After a preliminary pilot study of the five newly created questions was conducted with educators in an educational leadership doctoral class, the survey was modified based on feedback. The survey was created using Google Slides and was sent through the school district email system to educators (teachers and administrators) within the district. The researcher contacted each elementary schools' Parent Teacher Association (PTA) via phone to discuss the study. Each PTA distributed flyers containing survey information at their PTA meetings (Appendix B). In addition, each PTA posted the flyer with a link to the survey on their individual PTA website. Participants were invited to share the survey with other parents or educators of elementary school children within the district. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. This survey can be found in Appendix C. Additionally, table 3.1 aligns each survey item with corresponding research questions.

Following the survey, the researcher conducted qualitative electronic interviews, regarding participant views and experiences with homework. In order to identify participants, the researcher invited interested participants to send an e-mail to the researcher. The researcher collected preliminary demographic information, such as the home school and ages of the children, to ensure a representative sample of the community. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix D.

Rationale and significance

Homework has long been debated and researched in America and around the world. In fact, homework articles by Edward Bok can be found from as early as 1900. The majority of the homework research conducted has found little to no significant effect or even a negative effect for elementary students (Cooper 1989; Cooper et al., 2006; Kohn, 2006), however many educators see homework as a priority and the practice of homework continues. This study aimed to look deeper into parent perspectives of and experiences with homework in regard to their elementary school aged children. Some of the research discussed in the literature review focuses on the potential damage homework could inflict on the family dynamics. Through the use of surveys and electronic interviews, this study looked to further explore the experiences of families with homework.

The current research on the topic of homework is insufficient. There is very little research that looks closely on the impact of homework on the family dynamics, quality time together as a family and loss of free time to explore other interests. Many educators and educational resources will profess the potential benefits of homework, including a possible increase in responsibility or an increase in a love of learning and school (Cooper, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2003). However, there is limited research that investigates these beliefs. This study aimed to add to the research and help fill that gap.

Role of the researcher

The researcher is currently a second-grade teacher in a public school district on Long Island. The researcher is also a parent of two elementary school children within the school district included in both parts of the research.

Researcher assumptions

As a parent of two elementary aged children, the researcher's outlook on homework has changed. As a teacher, the researcher regularly assigned homework to primary aged students. However, once in the parent role, the researcher's position shifted and brought about questions of the efficacy of the practice of homework for elementary students.

Definition of key terminology

Elementary students: Students in kindergarten through fifth grades.

Family dynamics: interactions between members within the family

Homework: any task that is assigned by the teacher intended to be carried out by students outside of the school day (Cooper, 1989).

High school students: students in grades nine, ten, eleven or twelve.

Intermediate students: students in third, fourth or fifth grades.

Middle school students: students in grades six, seven or eight.

Parent: any caregiver who regularly completes homework with the student, outside of a school setting.

Primary students: students in kindergarten, first or second grades.

Organization of the dissertation

The first chapter of this dissertation introduces the topic of homework, outlines the problem and rationale for research. Chapter 1 also includes research questions to guide the study as well as definitions of important terms related to the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature around the topic of homework. The quantitative and qualitative methods used in the study are discussed in chapter 3. The results of the

research are presented in chapter 4 and finally in chapter 5, the conclusions and implications of this study as well as recommendations for future research are offered.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

History of Homework

Homework has been a part of American Education for more than 100 years, and throughout that time, it has been a source of debate. In the late 1800's into the early 1900's, there was a strong "anti-homework" movement in America (Eren & Henderson, 2011). Eren and Henderson cited a study by Rice from 1897, that "concluded that laborious devotion by children to their spelling homework bore no relation to later spelling ability and argued that time spent on homework could be better spent on other activities" (p. 950). Edward Bok was a journalist who criticized homework more than 100 years ago. In 1900, Bok (as cited in Roper, 2008) published an article in the Ladies Home Journal that called for parents to speak up against homework. In Bok's article, he warned that homework assignments could cause crooked spines, night terrors and nervous breakdowns. According to California's Civil Code of 1901, California's state legislature passed a law abolishing homework for children until the age of fifteen and homework was limited in high schools as well (as cited in Eren & Henderson, 2011). However, in the mid 1900's with the launch of Sputnik, the Cold War put a pressure on American students to keep up with Russian students and therefore a big homework push ensued (Eren & Henderson, 2011). The launch of Sputnik caused Americans of feel that there was a lack of rigor and American children would be unprepared to face a complex future (Cooper et al., 2006). In the 1960's there was yet another reversal, as homework was seen as putting too much pressure on students and questions were raised about the detrimental consequences for mental health (Cooper et al., 2006).

With the release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1984 and *What Works: Research about Teaching and Learning* there was another big push for homework. Politicians looked at the poor performance of America's schools as a risk to national security (Watkins & Stevens, 2013). *A Nation at Risk* was a plan to rehabilitate schools and create competent citizens that could compete globally (Watkins & Stevens, 2013). *What Works* provided broad information about homework finding that "achievement raises significantly when teachers regularly assign homework and students conscientiously do it" (Finn, 1986, p.41). Politicians then created *Goals 2000* which included eight broad goals for education reform that would assure all students in America would have the opportunity for a successful life (Watkins & Stevens, 2013). This was followed by another reform, *No Child Left Behind*. Each reform gained much support, as they were seen as a way to increase the academic achievement of American students, foster discipline, responsibility and initiative (Dudley-Marling, 2003; Kralovec, 2007).

The global comparison of American students to others around the world is a frequent impetus of the push for homework. The lack of an increase in math scores for fourth graders from the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to the 2009 results caused concern (Van Voorhis, 2011). Homework is often seen as a remedy.

Many critics of homework over the years have pointed to the need for young children to develop their minds and bodies in other ways. As early as 1900, critics argued that heavy book bags, the lack of fresh air and sunshine were unhealthy for young children (Kralovec, 2007). In the 1930's John Dewey's theories on progressive education fueled the anti-homework debate with its push for play time and free time, and family

time which homework encroached upon (Kralovec, 2007). In the late 1900's, families in some communities in America also "felt that homework is excessive and damages family life" (Kralovec, 2007 p.5). Critics of homework called for the creation of student problem-solving skills, interest-based learning and initiative rather than rote memorization (Call & Schlossman, 1996; Cooper, 1989).

Purposes of Homework

Cooper (1989), defines homework as tasks assigned by teachers intended for students to carry out during non-school hours. The majority of homework research focuses on homework purposes, level of homework problem difficulty, time spent on homework and feedback (Cooper, 2007). In 2006, Cooper et al. conducted a large synthesis of research on the topic of homework. They conducted a meta-analysis of studies of homework available between 1987-2003. Educators identify different purposes for elementary homework. These include skill practice, fostering student personal development skills (such as self-confidence, responsibility and time-management), and to inform parents of classroom activities (Cooper, 1989; Epstein, 1988; Van Voorhis 2004). Teachers may also assign homework as part of directives from administrators or district and school policies (Hoover-Dempsey & Bassler,1995; Van Voorhis, 2004). Epstein further points out that homework is sometimes used as a communication tool between home and school about what is being studied, as well as classroom and school events. Epstein and Van Voorhis, 2001, believe that homework can also help contribute to positive communications about school between parent and children. These conversations may reinforce the importance of school work and extend classroom learning to real-life situations.

Danielson, Strom and Kramer (2011) explored the types and frequencies of homework assignments that teachers made. The study attempted to assess whether existing types of homework are functional and informative. The researchers looked for evidence that homework assignments are valuable for student learning. A descriptive, qualitative approach and document analysis was used. There were 69 experienced teachers (preK-12) in the study, with between 5-15 years of experience. Data were collected at two points in the year. There was a focus group interview with 12 participating teachers (preK-12) as well as individual interviews with 8 teachers. Additionally, the researchers collected and reviewed the assignments given by teachers. The study found that 96% of elementary homework assignments fell in the "practice" category and 41% were considered "preparation" for upcoming lessons. "Integration" was the lowest type of assignment given, with only 16%. The researchers felt that the concrete type of homework given at the elementary level made sense given the cognitive development of the students.

Cooper et al. (2006) noted that not all homework has an academic purpose. In addition to enhancing the home-school connection, homework is seen by some to develop positive attitudes about school and learning as well as increasing self-discipline at the early elementary grades. Many homework critics discuss flaws with the nonacademic purposes of homework, such as self-discipline. These are difficult to measure and take away parental choice of how to spend time after school hours (Hoeke, 2017; Kohn, 2006). Kralovec and Buell (2000) point out that while the teacher may assign homework to the students, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to encourage, remind and assist the child to complete the work, therefore homework is not directly building student

responsibility. Corno and Xu (2004) connect homework with future job training in the areas of approach, time management and stamina as additional nonacademic benefits of homework. Specifically comparing the teacher to a worker's boss who controls the work load, time frame, goals and rewards. However, Kohn (2006) argues that these nonacademic reasons are not a sufficient to assign homework since there is no way to adequately measure these nonacademic benefits. In the 2007 MetLife Teacher Survey, half or more of the elementary teachers surveyed said that they use homework to develop good work habits (83%), develop students' critical thinking skills (67%), develop student interests and increase motivation to learn (65%). As cited in Hoeke, Bennett and Kalish raise the question of developmental readiness of elementary aged students in the areas of self-discipline.

Cooper et al. (2006) says that a primary purpose of homework is to raise academic achievement through the use of skill practice, preparation for new lessons or by extending learning. According to Cooper et al. (2006), homework rarely fulfills one single purpose. However, the most common instructional purpose of homework is to provide students the chance to practice or review material from the classroom. A 2007 MetLife Survey of the American Teacher found that half or more of elementary teachers surveyed, most frequently use homework to help students practice skills or prepare for tests (85%). Lee and Pruitt, 1979, discuss integrating separately learned skills as a further purpose of homework. Examples of these integrated types of assignments include book reports, science projects or creative writing. Rosario et al. (2015), found homework that focused on problem solving had the most impact on achievement. Rosario et al. theorized this was due to the students' interest in the challenging problems.

Amount of/Time spent on homework

Many different articles on the topic of homework, as well as organizations such as the National Parent Teacher Association and the National Education Association (NEA) and The United States Department of Education (2003) recommend the "10-minute rule" as the guideline for time spent on homework. Teachers assign 10 minutes of homework per grade. Therefore, assigning about 10 minutes of nightly homework for first graders, then increasing each year to 120 minutes for twelfth grade students. Although the origin of this 10-minute rule is not clear, it is cited in numerous articles on homework (Cooper et al., 2006; Pressman et al., 2015; Vatterott, 2010).

Homework is part of most school-aged children's daily lives, over two-thirds of all 9-year-olds and three-quarters of all 13-year olds have homework every day (Cooper et al., 2006). Cooper et al. found that the 10-minute rule is not always followed, finding 16% of 9-year-olds doing more than one hour of homework each day. This is echoed in the research of Pressman et al. (2015) who found that there was not a slow, systematic increase in the amount of homework, but rather parents of primary grade students were spending substantially more time on homework, first graders had three times the amount recommended by the NEA and twelfth graders had about half of the recommended amount.

Harris Cooper, seen as an expert on the topic of homework, suggests some adjustments to that 10-minute rule. In 1989 Cooper recommended that homework never be assigned for kindergarten, and students in grades 1-3 should not have more than 1-3 assignments per week, totaling 15 minutes per week and for students in grades 4-6, not more than 15-45 minutes per week. This is drastically different than the widely accepted

suggestion of the 10-minute rule. Following the 10-minute recommendation, a third grader could have 30 minutes each day, totaling 150 minutes per week. Cooper's recommendation does not exceed 45 minutes. According to the 2007 MetLife American Teacher survey, four in ten elementary students (37%) spend at least one hour a day on homework, while 9% spend more than two hours or more on daily homework.

There is research to support that time spent on homework is helpful for students, but the majority of those findings are associated with the secondary level (grades 6-12). Cooper (1989) conducted a meta-analysis of 120 studies on the effects of homework in the 1960's-1980's. In 20 of the studies, 14 found positive effects of homework, while 6 found positive effects without homework. Of the high school students who completed homework, 69% of them outperformed the students not completing homework on standardized tests and class grades. However, there was not association with achievement gains found at the elementary level. In this meta-analysis, Cooper found 50 studies that correlated the amount of time spent on homework with student achievement. Forty-three of these correlations found positive correlations between homework and student achievement. However, this was only at the secondary level. For elementary students, the correlation was close to r=0. Cooper et al. (2006) conducted an updated meta-analysis and found six new experimental design studies, each that produced a positive effect of homework on unit tests. However, Cooper et al. also found methodological flaws with each study which compromises the ability to draw strong causal inferences.

In a study that included the amount of time spent on homework by 15-year-old students and math achievement, Kitsantas, Cheema and Ware (2011), found a negative

association (r = -.06, p, .001). The researchers used mathematics data from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). They chose a sample of 5,456 participants from 274 participating schools across the United States chosen through a multi-stage stratified random sampling. The researchers concluded that increased proportions of time spent on mathematics homework actually decreased mathematics scores. The researchers hypothesized that this surprising finding could be the result of a lack of understanding of the subject matter which could in turn result in decreased effort and motivation in the area of mathematics.

As cited in Cooper (2001) Ratnesar found that students in 1990 spent twice as much time on homework than their 1981 counterparts, however they were not more advanced which leads to the conclusion that homework did not significantly correlate with academic achievement. Since that time, comparisons over the amounts of homework for students have continued. In 2003, Gill and Schlossman reported that time spent on homework had declined from 1981 to 1997, excluding students aged 6 to 8, where it appeared that homework had actually increased. Loveless, 2014, also concluded that students in grades kindergarten through second had experienced an increase in the amount of homework and in fact they were often working three times longer than the recommended 10-minute rule. There is no time recommendation for kindergarten students, however in a study conducted by Pressman et al. (2015), the researchers found that kindergarteners had an average of 25 minutes per day. The researchers noted the stress that this put on both children and parents and theorized that the overload of homework at this age could negatively impact children's abilities in other ways.

Specifically, the decreased playtime could decrease fine motor skills and opportunities for socialization (Pressman et al., 2015).

In a study to compare the beliefs of families, students and teachers regarding homework for elementary school children, Wright, 2010, found that fourth grade students who were interviewed complained that homework negatively impacted their time for activities they enjoyed such as sports and music. One of the elementary students included in the study noted that she had to rush to get her homework completed so that she could still have time some time to spend with her family. The fourth-grade parents interviewed in this study also agreed that homework did interrupt family activities, but they felt that homework was important. The parents interviewed had different opinions about the value of the time spent on homework, some felt it was a positive bonding time, while others felt that it often disrupted activities and family harmony. All five of the families interviewed reported that they had experienced stress as a result of homework at different times. Each family was able to recount times when extra-curricular activities were cancelled so the child could finish homework, or students got up early to finish homework.

Ginsburg (2007) notes that play is so important for child development that it's been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right for all children. Ginsburg credits the No Child Left Behind Act with the intense academic demands that have been placed upon students., which has led to a decrease in the amount of time for children to play or have some sort of free time. In order to develop fully, children need play as an integral part of their cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being (Ginsburg, 2007). According to Ginsburg, through play children develop new

competencies, resiliency, the ability to work in groups, negotiate, resolve problems, practice decision making and more. Free time also helps children deal with the pressures of a busy schedule and the academic pressures of school by decreasing anxiety and stress.

Parent involvement and attitudes of homework

As previously discussed, there are many different purposes for homework. There are also a variety of ways in which homework is expected to be completed. According to Cooper et al. (2006) assignments can be intended to be completed independently by the student, with another student or group of students or with the assistance of another person such as a parent, sibling or friend. Especially at the elementary level, parent involvement has long been assumed and encouraged (Murray et al., 2006). In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act included parental involvement as one of the six areas in need of reform in education. Many parents of elementary and middle school students report a desire to help their child complete their schoolwork, but they do not have adequate guidance of ways to help (Van Voorhis, 2011). Most parents say they want to help their children with homework because they feel it leads to school success (as cited in Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001). However, they want their investments in homework to be productive and not too time consuming (Van Voorhis, 2011). Consistent with this idea, the MetLife Homework Experience Survey (2007) found that 84% of elementary school parents have reviewed their child's homework over the year and 79% of elementary school parents have helped with a project during that same year.

Parental involvement has been studied in relation to homework and the research shows that parent involvement and supervision varies widely (Corno and Xu 2004). There are a number of factors that go into the homework experience for a child and their

parent. Gonida and Cortina (2014) identified parent support, interference, the age of the child as well as overall student ability and subject area as some important considerations on the topic of parent involvement. Parent involvement can also include setting up structures and rules for homework completion, such as where and when homework should be completed, providing guidelines and reinforcing positive homework behavior. Such structures have shown a positive relationship with academic achievement (Patall, Cooper & Robinson, 2008). According to Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001), parents' education levels and teacher attitudes are also factors in the level and amount of parental involvement.

Hoover-Dempsy and Bassler, 1995, interviewed 69 parents of students in grades 1-5, across two schools. Overall, parents felt that they had an active role in their children's homework and through analysis they identified five major themes. Parents often were concerned about how their child(ren)'s unique characteristics balanced with school demands, parents questioned the appropriate levels of independent work expected by children and the level of structured homework activities. The researchers also found that the level of parental involvement varied, and parents reflected on their own perceived success and failure in helping their children. This research highlights the complex nature of homework for families and found that often parents do not feel prepared to help their children. In their interviews, parents identified lack of time, knowledge and energy as some of the reasons for not being better able to assist their children.

In addition to homework's connection to academic achievement, some studies have focused on the social-emotional impact of homework. Studies have produced both positive and negative effects on children as well as their families (Van Voorhis, 2011).

Van Voorhis conducted a two-year longitudinal study of the effects of the Teachers Involve Parents (TIPS) homework program, for elementary students. There was a control group, a group with one year of TIPS and a group with two years of TIPS. TIPS homework differs from traditional homework in that it is not assigned nightly, rather students have days or weeks to complete it so that it fits into their schedules. Also, TIPS is meant to be completed with someone at home. Games, interviews and conversations based on the curriculum are some examples of TIPS assignments. For the study, teachers were randomly assigned to either TIPS or the control group and every effort was made to ensure that students within the classrooms were similar. Van Voorhis used data and surveys to gather information about time spent on homework, attitudes about homework, family involvement as well as achievement outcomes (report cards, classroom test grades, standardized test scores). Students and parents in the TIPS group reported significantly more positive feelings about their homework experiences and fewer frustrating experiences than the control group. The students in the TIPS program also had significantly higher scores on standardized tests than the control group (Van Voorhis, 2011).

Parents across all socioeconomic levels vary in their opinions about homework, ranging from the desire for excessive homework to the belief that there shouldn't be any work outside of school (Vatterott, 2018). For some families, academics are more important than other physical, intellectual, religious and psychological development and homework is seen as the way to set their child on a strong academic path. Others value downtime and its value to overall development of children. In their open-ended interviews with parents of third grade students in 1998, Xu and Corno found that

although parents value homework's role in learning, homework can cause tension and interferes with quality family time as well as limits children's abilities to participate in other activities. Parents who have ideas of homework similar to those in Xu and Corno's study tend to believe that parents, not schools control their child's time outside of the school day (Vatterott, 2018).

Impact on Families

Homework is often a nightly practice for elementary school students, who largely need adult support. Although there is a large amount of research related to purposes of homework and the amount of time devoted to homework, there is little research about how homework impacts families' stress levels. As cited in Katz, Buzukashvili and Feingold (2012) interactions based on homework are a major source of conflict and stress for families. These negative interactions have lasting impressions on the relationship between children and their parents. Katz et al. used the Child's Inventory for Homework Stress and the Parent's Inventory for Homework Stress to better understand the stress around homework. Parents generally describe their time spent on homework as straining, stress producing and burdensome and unwanted (Katz et al., 2012). As cited in Katz et al. (2012), homework forces parents into unwanted roles as tutors and enforcers. These roles increase tension within the family (Vatterott, 2018).

Another important consideration with work outside of school is the speed at which each individual child works. Children work at varying speeds and with varying abilities, yet the same homework is typically given to all children in the class. As Cowan (1998) says, given the same homework, weaker students will find it more challenging and they may be confronted with information or exercises that they are not ready to independently

work on. This creates an increased level of stress for the family since now the parents need to take on the role of the teacher, explaining the work to the child and how to complete it. Homework that involves skills that have not yet been acquired by the student are inappropriate and should not be assigned (Vatterott, 2018). Vatterott (2010) believes that homework that students cannot complete independently discourages students.

In the study conducted by Katz et al. (2012) the researchers analyzed the correlation between students with diagnosed learning disabilities and stress around homework. As expected, students with learning disabilities reported heightened levels of stress during homework ($M = 5.9$, $SD = 2.9$) over students without learning disabilities ($M = 3.7$, $SD = 2.0$). Pressman et al. (2015) found similar results for families whose primary language is not English. Homework led to increase levels of stress. Aside from academic differences, socioeconomic differences also impact homework. Some families may not be able to get the supplies needed to complete the homework (Vatterott, 2018). As cited in Vatterott (2018) 7 in 10 teachers assign homework that requires Internet access, which may be limited in households of lower socioeconomic families. Additionally, affluent parents are more likely than less affluent parents to help with homework (Vatterott, 2018).

Patall et al. (2008) conducted a meta-analysis to examine the relationship between parent involvement in homework and achievement. They searched databases for studies related to homework and parents and contacted various colleges to look for additional studies they may have overlooked. The findings in much of the research is contradictory. Much of it says that parent involvement with traditional homework is harmful to student

learning, other research points out that certain types of involvement can be helpful. The authors discussed different parent involvement strategies such as proving space and materials for homework; interacting with the teacher about homework; providing general oversight or monitoring of completion; making rules about when it is completed, where or how homework is done; responding to questions about homework, giving feedback; or providing direct instruction. The research did find that the overall effect of parent involvement in homework was small and often not significant. Some of the studies analyzed included parent training. The meta-analysis showed that most students whose parents were trained had a higher completion rate of homework and had fewer problems during homework, this was particularly true of students in grades 2 through 5. Younger students also benefited more from parent involvement possibly due to their immature study habits and because of the parent's knowledge of the subject matter.

Additionally, family tension, frustration, stress, embarrassment, confusion and inappropriate support were all identified by Patall et al. (2008) as some of the negative experiences brought on by parental involvement in homework. Homework can increase tension between the parent and child, especially when the parent does not have adequate skills to help the child or when the parent does not have the time or energy to help complete the homework (Patall et al., 2008). According to the MetLife 2007 Survey, 43% of parents of K-12 students, 29% of elementary parents, feel unprepared, or minimally prepared to help their children with homework. Parents without a college degree are even less prepared to help their children with homework (Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 2007).

Pressman et al. (2015) used surveys to gather information from over 1,100 participants regarding their experiences with homework. Pressman et al. found a significant correlation between parent's perceived ability to help with homework and the perceived family stress and tension (r (df) = -.021, $p < 0.001$). As parent's abilities to help with homework decreased, there was an increase in tension and stress. These participants also were more likely to say that homework has a negative impact on their family. Additionally, Pressman et al. found for children who dislike homework, there was increased tension and stress in the home. Therefore, Pressman et al. concluded that the negative sociological, emotional and educational consequences outweigh the need for parents to be involved as instructors during homework.

Gonida and Cortina (2014) found that the type and quality of support from families is more important than the amount of support. Students whose parents focused on mastery versus performance or social comparison were more successful students. Furthermore, the beliefs the parents held about their child's academic capabilities affected the type of support they provided their child. Parents who held lower beliefs about their child's abilities were more controlling and interfered with learning, which led the child to feel less competent as well. Parents who viewed their child as academically weak could have a negative impact on their child's learning due to the type of involvement in regard to homework. These non-positive beliefs about a student's academic efficacy decrease the child's own academic efficacy belief (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). Parents provide more positive involvement, such as autonomy support, when they have positive academic efficacy beliefs for their child. For these situations, parents were also found to provide more cognitive stimulation thereby enriching their minds

beyond homework. "The expectation that parents provide instructive guidance to a child with his homework, would be, through no fault of the child, a benefit to some children and a detriment to others" (Pressman et al., 2015, p. 309). According to Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the environment in which a child develops influences his or her behavior and learning (1993). Bandura particularly notes that the caregiver's mindset affects the environment and therefore directly impacts the child's development.

Regardless of the family stress and tension described in some studies. Bempechat (2004) strongly believes in the need for homework at the elementary level as a way for parents to positively their children and develop positive attitudes about homework and learning. Bempechat posits that homework at the elementary level gives children the chance to develop adaptive learning behaviors that they will need in the future to tackle the academic demands that they will encounter.

Teacher perceptions

One reason that homework is assigned is to comply with district policies or guidelines or to follow directives from school administrators (Cooper et al., 2006). According to Van Voorhis (2011) 80% of teachers' report that doing homework is important. In 2007, The MetLife Survey or the American Teacher focused on homework and surveyed 1100 teachers nationally. In this survey, teachers reported using homework to practice skills or prepare for tests (85% of teachers), increase responsibility, develop good work habits (83% of teachers), motivate them to learn and develop students' interests. There are some classic beliefs surrounding homework by educators. Many teachers believe that they are obligated to give homework and that it is an extension of the learning outside of the classroom (Vatterott, 2018). According to Vatterott, some

teachers assign homework because it helps keep the children busy on productive tasks, rather than watching television, or playing video games.

In the 2007 MetLife Survey, researchers found that 98% of teachers (elementary and secondary) believed that homework develops students' sense of responsibility. Teachers reported that homework helps to increase skills important to succeeding in school and in life such as responsibility and critical thinking (Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 2007). This is a commonly referenced reason to give children homework (Vatterott, 2018). Educators, and some parents, believe that homework promotes responsibility, time management and discipline. However, there is no actual research to support nonacademic arguments in favor of homework. In fact, research points out how difficult homework research is because of this inability to control for the numerous factors that influence homework and achievement (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). These factors include type of homework, type of support, grade level, ability of the student, subject matter, home environment, level of parental education as well as parental academic efficacy beliefs of the student.

Some educators and parents view a large amount of homework as a sign of a more challenging academic program (Vatterott, 2018). However, this is not the case. As Vatterott points out, more homework may seem like increased rigor however the quality of the task including the level of complexity and challenge are not included. Similarly, teachers who give a lot of homework, are often viewed as "good teachers" (Vatterott, 2018, p.15). In 2007, 63% of elementary teachers surveyed believed that homework makes learning more fun (Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 2007). However, 20% of

elementary students reported that homework is just "busywork" (Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 2007).

Theoretical Framework

Educators that assign homework should assign meaningful tasks that they know the students are able to complete with minimal adult support (Vatterott, 2018). Albert Bandura is a Canadian-American psychologist who's work focused on how children learn. Bandura's social cognitive theory focuses on how behavior, learning and growth are affected by the cognitive operations that occur during social activities. The social cognitive theory encompasses self-efficacy, self-regulation and observational learning. In his research around this theory, he found that students with high self-efficacy tended to set higher goals and were more dedicated to achieving these goals. In 1997, Albert Bandura published the book *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control* in which he describes the importance one's self-efficacy holds in regard to motivation. Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their own competence (Seifert, 2004). For students, it is their belief that they can control their learning and master their academic tasks (Bandura, 1993). This applies to the completion of homework. When children feel that they will be successful at completing the work, they are more motivated to do the work.

In a study of the role of homework and self-efficacy beliefs on math achievement, Kitsantas et al. (2011) found a significant correlation between 15-year-old students' mathematics self-efficacy beliefs and mathematics achievement (r = ,54, p < .001). In their study, Kitsantas et. al found that achievement gaps diminished between gender and race, when students had higher levels of mathematics self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is also tied to stress levels (Katz et al., 2012). Katz et al. (2012) described how one's belief in his or her abilities impacts the individual's thought processes and emotional reactions and even influences one's career, social relationships and physical health. Low self-efficacy leads one to perceive a task as even more difficult which then brings about negative emotions such as stress, anxiety and depression (Katz et al., 2012).

As previously discussed, Gonida and Cortina (2014) found that parents' belief's in their child's efficacy as well as their own self-efficacy about their abilities and knowledge of the subject, impacted the homework environment in either positive or negative ways. Similar findings come from Usher (2009) who found that parents' thoughts of their child's abilities may affect the child's own self-efficacy beliefs.

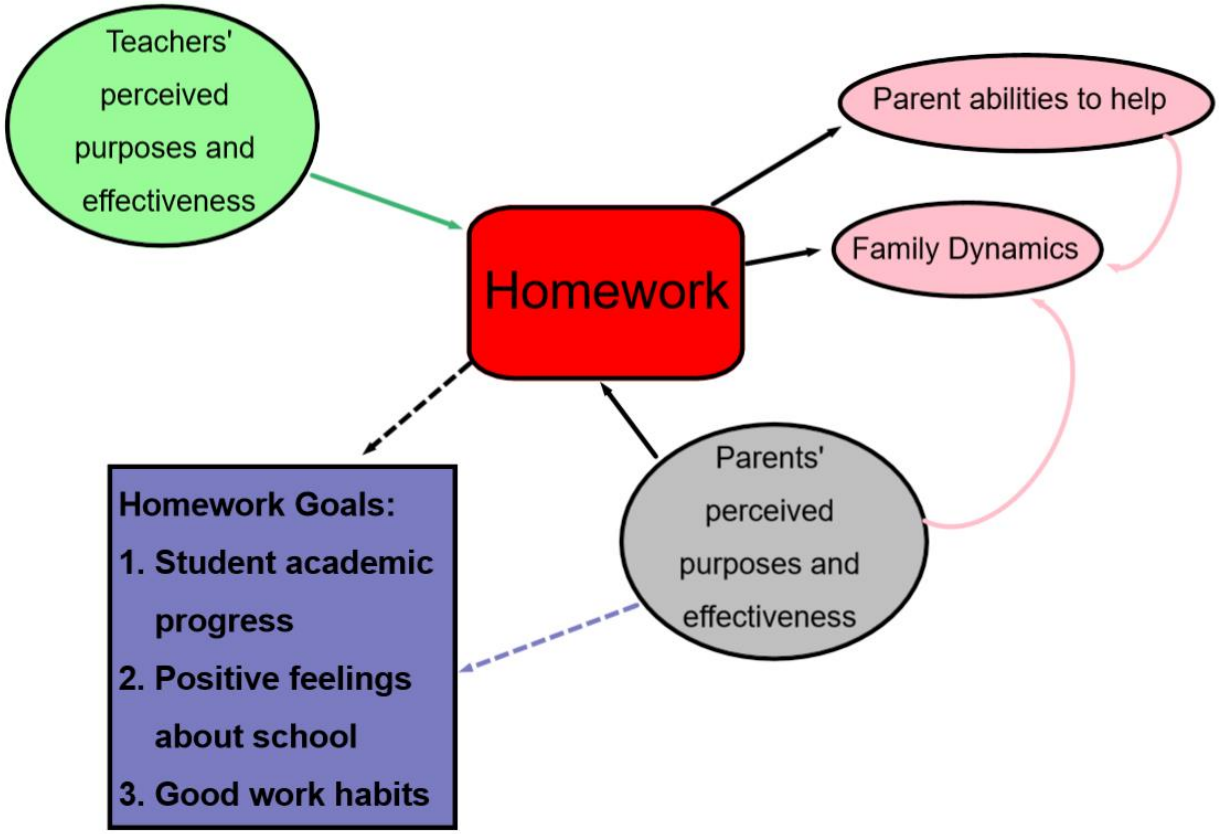
In regard to homework, parent's self-efficacy is equally important. If parents do not believe that their child(ren) is capable of the work, this impacts learning and the dynamics within the family. Additionally, if parent's do not believe that their help will increase understanding, this could also impact learning.

In addition to one's perceived success with a task, Jacquelynne Eccles' Expectancy-Value Theory also takes into consideration the student's expectancies for success on the task (1983). In her model of motivation, the expectances for the task refer to the perceived importance, usefulness or enjoyment that the task will bring about. These factors influence performance, effort, as well as task persistence (Eccles, 1983). Many educators say they assign homework to increase non-academic skills such as self-discipline and responsibility. If students perceive their homework tasks as valuable,

according to the expectancy-value theory, some of the non-academic skills of persistence and effort will increase.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Most educators assign homework. At the elementary level, studies have not shown a positive correlation between homework and student achievement and some have in fact shown a negative effect. Many teachers believe that homework increases student progress and helps to foster good work habits and positive feelings about school. Parent perceptions of homework's effectiveness and purposes, influence how they help their child. Much of the research also discusses the impact of homework, parent's ability to help with homework as well as the kind of help the provide, on the family dynamics. Family dynamics refers to interactions between family members. Family dynamics can be

affected by tension, disagreements, disturbances to routines or quality time spent as a family. These disruptions can be caused by homework and last long after the homework assignment has been completed.

Summary

Homework has been part of American education for more than a century. During that time, there has been a cyclical pattern where there is great stress put on increased homework, then a push for less homework. The launch of Sputnik brought education and the need for students to achieve, to the national level. Since that time, there have been many federal regulations about education, all of which have included a section about the importance of homework.

However, child development experts have tried to counteract the homework push by touting the importance of play and free time, especially for young children. This free time helps young children to develop their minds and bodies in other ways. Play and free time help children to decompress, develop social skills, bond with their families and develop fine motor skills.

Parents and educators who support homework, identify a variety of purposes for each assignment. The majority of assignments are for skill practice or to prepare for a test (Cooper et al., 2006; Cooper, 2007; Epstein 1988). For elementary students, homework supporters also say that homework increases the home to school connection. Many proponents of homework believe that homework increases personal development skills such as responsibility, self-confidence and a love of learning (Cooper, 2006; Epstein, 1988). Some educators also assign homework because of a directive from school administrators or district policies (Hoover-Dempsey & Bassler, 1995).

A great deal of the research on the topic of homework focus on the amount of homework students are given and the amount of time students spend on homework. A number of educational organizations such as the National Education Association and the National Parent Teacher Association, recommend the "10-minute rule" as a guideline for the amount of time students should spend on homework (Cooper et al., 2006; Pressman et al., 2015; Vatterott, 2010). Following this rule, students are expected to complete 10 minutes of homework per grade. For example, a first grader would have 10 minutes of homework, a second grader would have 20 minutes of homework and so on. Cooper et al., (2006) found that the 10-minute rule is not always followed. There were many cases of elementary aged students completing a substantial amount more homework than recommended, yet twelfth graders were completing approximately half of the 10- minute guideline (Cooper et al., 2006; Pressman et al., 2015).

Cooper (1989) found some positive effects for homework at the secondary level. However, at the elementary level, there was not a positive correlation found between homework and achievement. The amount of time spent on homework impacts children's ability to develop in other ways. Pressman et al. (2015) found that kindergarteners had an average of twenty-five minutes of homework per day and theorized ways in which this stress could negatively impact children's abilities with regard to physical and social development. Play is a crucial component for children to fully develop (Ginsburg, 2007).

At the elementary level, it is assumed and encouraged that parents (or other caregivers) will assist children with homework activities (Murray et al., 2006). In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act included parental involvement as one of the six areas in need of reform in education. There is much variety when considering parent involvement

in homework. Gonida and Cortina (2014) identified parent support, interference, the age of the child as well as overall student ability and subject area as some important considerations on the topic of parent involvement. Parent involvement can also include setting up structures and routines for homework completion. Such structures have shown a positive relationship with academic achievement (Patall et al., 2008). Parents' education levels and teacher attitudes are also factors in the level and amount of parental involvement (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001).

Some families feel that their involvement in homework increases tension within the family and that homework interferes with quality family time and children's abilities to participate in other activities. (Xu & Corno, 1998). Homework forces parents into the unwanted roles of tutors and enforcers which can result in stressful interactions (Katz et al., 2012; Vatterott, 2018). For many families, homework results in frustration, stress, embarrassment, confusion and inappropriate support (Patall et al., 2008). These feelings increase when children are struggling to complete the work, or when parents do not have adequate skills, time or energy to help complete the homework (Patall et al., 2008). Pressman et al. (2015) found a significant correlation between parent's perceived ability to help with homework and the perceived family stress and tension around homework.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand the perceived effectiveness of homework held by educators, compared to parents. Additionally, this study aimed to investigate the impact of homework on the relationships of parents, their children and families in general. The researcher used a quantitative survey as well as qualitative electronic interviews to better understand parents' perceived abilities to assist their elementary aged children with homework, the family experiences with homework and the influence of homework on family dynamics. The researcher was also interested in understanding the impact of homework on the daily activities of families. This chapter describes the research design, participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. In addition, this chapter identifies issues related to validity and any ethical issues connected to the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do elementary school parents and educators view the effectiveness of homework?
2. How confident to parents feel in their abilities to help their children in the area of mathematics homework?
3. To what extend does homework impact the following:
    a. Family time
    b. Extracurricular activities

4. How does homework impact the family dynamics?

Hypotheses

H_o: There will be no significant differences between the views of homework held by parents' and educators' regarding the effectiveness of homework.

H_1: There will be significant differences between the views of homework held by parents' and educators' regarding the effectiveness of homework.

H_o: The means of all parent education level groups will be equal.

H_1: The means of at least one parent education level group will be different.

Research Design

In order to better understand homework's perceived effectiveness from the viewpoint of educators as well as parents and homework's impact on families and family life, the researcher used a mixed method study. According to Creswell, 2015, "Mixed methods designs are procedures for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a multiphase series of study." (p. 22) The researcher used a quantitative survey about homework to gather many responses to different aspects of homework and how homework impacts the participants' families. In order to better understand the experiences of families around homework, the researcher expanded on the survey and develop a protocol for electronic interviews and invited parents of elementary aged students to participate. Therefore, the design of this study was a convergent mixed method design. "The purpose of a convergent (or parallel or concurrent) mixed methods design… is to simultaneously collect both quantitative and qualitative data" (Creswell, 2015, p. 543). The researcher chose this design so "that one

data collection form supplies strengths to offset the weaknesses of the other form and that a more complete understanding of the research problem results" (Creswell, 2015, p. 543).

The Sample and Population

Sample:

The target population of this study consisted of parents and educators of elementary students in a suburban community in Nassau County of Long Island in New York. For the purposes of this study, "parent" means any guardian or caregiver that completes homework regularly with a particular child. With the use of the Internet, participants were able to complete the survey in a variety of locations and therefore there was not one research site. The demographics of families in this community vary greatly and therefore this should help to gather a broader perspective on the topic of homework. Additionally, education is highly regarded in this district. According to New York State Department of Education, the district's 2019 high school graduation was 95%, compared to New York State's 83%.

The type of sampling method employed in this study was convenience sampling, non-random. Convenience sampling "is when the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied" (Creswell, 2015, p. 144). However, convenience samples are not considered representative of the population. Participants received a link with the survey and were able to share the link with other potential members of the sample. Therefore, snowball sampling was also used (Creswell, 2015). Participants were able to share the survey with other potential participants, who fit the criteria.

The United States Census 2010 data indicates that there were 1.86 children per family (census.gov). According to district administrators, in the 2019-2020 school year, there were 3,283 students in the school district, grades K-5. This results in approximately 1,765 families in the targeted school district. With a population of 1,765 families, a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error established, the adequate sample size is 316.

Participants for the electronic interview portion of the research, were chosen using convenience sampling. The researcher invited participants to send a letter of interest via email. The researcher collected initial information, such as grade levels of children and home school. This information allowed the researcher to select 8 to 10 participants that were representative of the various grade levels as well as the different elementary schools.

Population:

The suburban school district that was chosen was a diverse school district with six elementary (K-5) schools. According to Data.Nysed.gov, there were a total of 3,145 elementary (K-5) students in the school district for the 2017-2018 school year. This was the most recent demographic information available at the time of this research. Of these students, 29% students were identified as white, 10% of the students were identified as Hispanic or Latino, 1% of the students were identified as African American or black, 5% of the students were identified as Asian, native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and 1% of students were identified as multiracial. Two percent (128 students) of the K-5 students were identified as English Language Learners, 5% were considered students with disabilities and 8% were economically disadvantaged.

Procedures for Collecting Data

Instrument: Survey

A survey, "Elementary Level Homework Survey," was designed by the researcher and used specifically for this study (see Appendix C). Part A of the survey gathered informed consent and general demographic information. Six of the eleven questions (numbers 9-13 and 15) regarding educator and parent perceptions of homework came from Hoeke's 2017 research. Permission was obtained to use the six questions. Hoeke conducted a preliminary pilot study of the full survey in order to increase validity and reliability. The remaining questions from the current research (numbers 14 and 16-19), were created by this researcher based on themes found in the research. After a preliminary pilot study of the newly created questions was conducted with educators in an educational leadership doctoral class, the survey was modified based on feedback. The survey was created using Google Forms and was sent from the researcher to the Assistant Superintendent of the targeted school district. The Assistant Superintendent from the school district emailed the survey link to all elementary educators within the school district, which represents the "educator" group in the survey.

The researcher met with Parent Teacher Association (PTA) representatives from all elementary schools within the district and informed them of the survey and its purposes. The researcher created an information flyer with a Quick Response code (QR code) as well as the website address that links directly to the survey (see Appendix B). This flyer was given to the PTA representatives and copies were provided to PTA members within each elementary school at the PTA meeting. Each schools' PTA also posted the flyer and link to the survey on their PTA Facebook page and website.

Using a web-based survey is preferred because this "survey can gather extensive data quickly…and take advantage of the extensive use of the Web by individuals" (Cresswell, 2015, p. 386). Convenience and snowball sampling were used. Convenience sampling is when "the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied" (Creswell, 2015, p. 144). Additionally, snowball sampling was used since the researcher will invite participants to identify other parents within the school district to become members of the sample as well (Creswell, 2015). The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete and be made available to participants for two weeks. The self-reported questionnaire, "Elementary Level Homework Survey" can be found in Appendix C.

It is assumed that all survey participants have elementary children or educate elementary children and therefore the instrument is appropriate for the intended sample. The data will be collected electronically from an online tool, Google Forms. The instrument meets the guidelines for protecting human subjects. Confidentiality will be maintained, as this is an anonymous survey. No identifying participant information will be used in the survey.

Questions 1-8 on the survey collected demographic information from the participants. For example, their role (parent or educator), ethnicity and grade level of child(ren). These demographics will be used for statistical analysis purposes. No individually identifying items will be included in the survey. Survey questions 9-13 address research question number 1, pertaining to perceptions of homework's effectiveness. For example, "It is important to assign homework to students to enhance learning." and "Homework is an effective way to increase student achievement." Survey

questions 14 and 19, address research question number 2, regarding parents perceived abilities to assist with homework. Survey questions 15, 17 and 18 address research question 3, pertaining to the impact of homework on family time and extracurricular activities. Question 16 addresses the fourth research question regarding the effect of homework on family dynamics. For example, "Homework causes tension in our home." The alignment of research questions and survey items can also be found in Table 3.1. The final item, survey question 20, was an optional, open-ended response area in which participants could provide any explanations or additional information. Responses to this open-ended question were used as additional qualitative data for this study.

Data Analysis Methods

An independent samples *t*-test was used to find significant differences between the parent and educator perceptions of the effectiveness of homework. The assumptions tests of independent observations, the Shapiro-Wilk normality and homogeneity were conducted. The alpha level for the independent samples *t*-test will be .05. The independent samples *t*-test was used to analyze the Likert scale data.

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests the significance of group differences between two or more groups. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the person overseeing homework completion on perceived effectiveness of homework and perceived impact on family dynamics and leisure time. In addition, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of parents' education level of on the mean scores of perceived effectiveness of homework. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the number of children living in the home on the perceptions of homework effectiveness and influence on family dynamics.

The survey questionnaire, with a Likert scale for responses, was appropriate for examining the first research question in order to test the hypothesis. The survey was sent electronically using a Google Forms survey link to participants. The Google Forms link was shared through school district email, as well as through the Parent Teacher Associations at each of the elementary schools. Participants were able to complete the form at their leisure during a two-week time frame. The Google Forms survey collected the data electronically and produced a list of results. The data was exported into Excel and cleaned. Data cleaning is a process where the researcher inspects the data for visible errors such as values that are outside the accepted range or missing values that might impact the data analysis (Creswell, 2015). On Google Forms, questions 1-19 were required before participants could move on. The data were cleaned and uploaded into SPSS and Jasp for analysis. No personally identifiable information was collected during the survey process. The researcher was the only person with access to the data from Google Forms.

Table 3. 1

Survey Instrument: Elementary Level Homework Survey

Independent Variables	Items	Number of Items	Research Question
Effectiveness of homework	9 - 13	5	RQ 1
Confidence in parental abilities	14, 19	2	RQ 2
Impact on family time	15, 17	2	RQ 3
Impact on extra-curricular	18	1	RQ 3
Family Stress	16	1	RQ 4

Dependent Variable	Research Questions
Likert Scale Responses	RQ 1, 2, 3, 4

Instrument: Interviews

The second part of the research included electronic qualitative interviews. The electronic interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions regarding participants' views and experiences with homework. "A qualitative interview occurs when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers" (Creswell, 2015, p. 216). Open ended questions allowed participants to best voice their views and experiences, since they were not limited to pre-determined answers. E-mail interviews were preferred because they provide "rapid access to large numbers of people and a detailed, rich text database for qualitative analysis" (Creswell, 2015, p. 218).

The researcher used the same school district and PTA Facebook pages for the quantitative and qualitative research parts, to make the community aware of the extended research. The researcher clearly outlined the requirements to be a participant in the study. Homogeneous and convenience sampling were used since the participants will be chosen based on residence in the school district being studied and each participant will have at least one elementary school child at the time of the interview (Creswell, 2015). The Facebook invitation asked parent participants to send an email of interest to the researcher and to include the grade levels of their children, as well as their home school. Participation in the interviews was completely voluntary.

Butin (2010) notes one possible threat to validity with interviews is "response effect bias." Response effect bias is when interviewees tell the interviewer what they want to hear and perhaps alter their true beliefs (Butin, 2010, p. 97). In order to minimize this effect, the researcher developed an interview protocol with neutral questions. Also, through the use of electronic interviewing, nonverbal cues or body language from the

interviewer were not able to impact the interviewee's answers. The interviews did not protect anonymity and therefore, participants may be uncomfortable voicing their full concerns or views on the topic. To help control for this, the cover letter included with the interview explained to participants that their name and email address would not be shared or viewed by anyone other than the researcher. Participants were provided with an informed consent document that included all of the needed information to make an informed decision about participating in the research.

One other possible threat is that "interviewee's responses may not be articulate, perceptive or clear" (Creswell, 2015, p. 217). Using electronic interviews, the researcher was able to ask clarifying or follow up questions as needed to extend the understanding of the participant's views or experiences and therefore increased the researcher's understanding of the topic.

A pilot test was conducted to ensure that the questions are constructed in a way in which the individuals in the sample will be able to understand and adequately answer each question. A pilot test of "an interview survey is a procedure in which a researcher makes changes in an instrument based on feedback from a small number of individuals who complete and evaluate the instrument" (Creswell, 2015, p. 393). This test group consisted of acquaintances of the researcher who fit the criteria for participation in the study because they were parents of elementary school children. However, these participants did not have children in the targeted setting. The results from this pilot test are not included in the study. Following the pilot test, the researcher modified questions and created a Google Forms interview. Each question was required before participants could move to the next slide (Appendix D).

The interview began with an informed consent cover letter explaining the study and the purpose of this interview (Appendix D). The interview consisted of some demographic information, such as, gender, level of participants' education, grade levels of the participants' children, ethnicity, perceived academic levels of the children and number of children in the home.

The questions used relate to the quantitative survey instrument and were based on the major themes of homework found in the literature. Interview questions 10, 11, 16, 18 and 21 are from Wright's Family Interview Questions (2010). Permission was obtained to use the questions (Appendix J). Wright's 2010 research focused on elementary children and family experiences while doing homework. Therefore, many of the questions used in Wright's study were a good basis for this study. Questions 19 and 20 were open-ended questions in this interview, based on the Likert type statements from Katz et al. (2012). The study by Katz et al. (2012) focused on the stress put on families from homework. The quantitative research conducted by Katz et al. included participants in fourth grade. The questions selected from the Katz et al. questionnaire helped this researcher attain more insight into homework stress. The interview questions in the present study are open-ended and often based on specific homework experiences, see Appendix D, "Elementary Level Homework Interview Protocol."

The questions selected from Wright (2010), modified from Katz et al. (2012) and created by this researcher, address each of the research questions. Interview questions 9-11 address the first research question regarding parent perceptions of the effectiveness of homework. Questions 12-14 provide parents with an opportunity to discuss their level of comfort in assisting their child(ren) with homework, which corresponds with research

question 2. For example, "If your child(ren) needs help with homework, are you confident that you can provide helpful support?" Questions 15-17 asks how homework is related to their child(ren)'s extracurricular activities and ability to have quality time as a family, corresponding with research question 3. For example, "Does homework affect family extracurricular activities (i.e. sports, religion, free time, playtime)?" Questions 18-21 relate to research question 4, regarding the perceived relationship between homework and stress within the family, which would relate to the family dynamics (see Table 3.2). At the end of the interview, participants were given a chance to share any additional information about their thoughts or experiences with homework.

The participants typed their responses into the Google Forms format. The researcher was able to see each participant's responses. Each response was uploaded to NVivo12 for analysis. The researcher read, coded and analyzed the responses in order to look for themes and trends. In addition to interview responses, the researcher read, coded and analyzed participant responses to the open-ended question on the quantitative survey.

Table 3. 2

Interview Protocol

Independent Variables	Items	Number of Items	Research Question
Effectiveness of homework	9-11	3	RQ 1
Confidence in parental abilities	12-14	3	RQ 2
Relation to Family time	15	1	RQ 3
Relation to Extracurricular	16, 17	2	RQ 3
Family Stress	18-21	4	RQ 4

Issues of trustworthiness

In order to increase validity and reliability, the researcher used multiple sources of data. In the quantitative part of this study, the researcher collected survey data from both

parents as well as educators. The participants for interviews consisted solely of parents from the identified school district, however, some may also be educators in their daily work.

Limitations and delimitations

This study lacked random assignment and explicit treatment manipulation; and therefore, these are threats to internal validity. Another possible internal threat is the history of the participants, particularly with respect to their experiences with homework. Selection is another possible threat. The quantitative survey as well as the interview invitation will be sent through email to the educators and through PTA meetings, Facebook pages and websites for parents, however there was no incentive to complete the survey and no way to know for certain that the participants fit the criteria for participation. Some participants with stronger opinions might be more inclined to provide their opinions. In order to minimize threats, participants received the same electronic survey and electronic interview protocol and were able to complete it at a convenient time and location. Since the survey and interview are sent through the Internet and were able to be shared, there is a chance that some participants do not meet the criteria of having children in elementary school or teaching elementary school. In order to control for this possibility, the researcher included a brief introduction letter to participants at the start of the survey, informing them of the target population. However, the interview link was shared with 8 families and received 8 responses. Finally, volunteer participants for interviews may also have stronger opinions of homework and therefore might have been more inclined to participate.

Additionally, since both parts of this research involved the use of computers and the Internet, there might have been people within the population that did not have access to this technology. There also could have been some parents of elementary students living within the community that were not members of the PTA groups that were used in this study and therefore did not have the opportunity to participate. Finally, since this research was conducted in one suburban school district, generalizability may be an issue. Transfer to other districts or districts in urban or rural areas may not be possible.

Summary

A survey was given to educators and parents in one school district in Nassau County on Long Island. An introductory letter accompanied the electronic survey, which was disseminated to faculty through their school emails and through the PTA to parents within the district. The survey was anonymous and voluntary. Participants were able to share the survey with other potential members of the sample. Statistical analysis was performed to compare the views and perceptions of homework's effectiveness and perceptions of parents' abilities to assist with homework, between the group of parents and the group of educators. Statistical analysis were also be performed to look at the different levels within the parent group to compare their views of homework. Using these same PTA groups, the researcher identified 8 participants for electronic interviews.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

The purpose of this convergent mixed method design was to investigate the differences between the views of homework effectiveness held by parents and the views of educators of K-5 students. Additionally, the researcher set out to further investigate the homework experiences of families with students in grades K-5. Specifically, this study explored parent perceptions of their abilities to effectively provide homework support and increase student understanding of the material. This study focused on family experiences around homework, particularly mathematics homework. The researcher analyzed quantitative survey responses on the perceived effectiveness of homework among parents and teachers. The researcher further analyzed the parent data in relation to research questions 2, 3, and 4, according to education level of the parent, the person overseeing homework completion, as well as the number of children living in the home. Participants in the study included a total of 320 participants; 64 educators and 256 parents from six elementary schools within a suburban school district on Long Island in New York. For the purposes of this study, "parent" means any guardian or caregiver that completes homework regularly with a child.

In this chapter, data are presented and analyzed to answer four research questions. For one part of the research, data were collected through an anonymous online survey that was distributed to school district participants via the school email system and to parent participants through PTA flyers, PTA meetings and PTA Facebook pages and websites. Participants were given the option to answer an open-ended question on the topic of homework at the end of the quantitative survey. The Likert based survey

questions were statistically analyzed in SPSS and Jasp computer software and the open-ended question was analyzed through NVivo12. Appendix E provides a summary of demographics for participants for the quantitative survey.

Participants for the electronic interviews were chosen using convenience sampling. The researcher invited participants to send a letter of interest via email. The researcher collected initial information, such as grade levels of children and home school. This information allowed the researcher to select 8 participants that were representative of the various grade levels as well as the six different elementary schools. Appendix F provides a summary of demographics for participants in the electronic interview.

The suburban school district that was chosen is a diverse school district with six elementary (K-5) schools. According to the New York State Department of Education, there were a total of 3,145 elementary (K-5) students in the school district for the 2017-2018 school year. This is the most recent demographic information available. Of these students, 29% students were identified as white, 10% of the students were identified as Hispanic or Latino, 1% of the students were identified as African American or black, 5% of the students were identified as Asian, native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and 1% students were identified as multiracial. Two percent (128 students) of the K-5 students were identified as English Language Learners, 5% were considered students with disabilities and 8% were economically disadvantaged.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

The second part of the convergent design involved the analysis of the qualitative data. In the follow-up design, the qualitative data helps explain the quantitative results. Interviews were conducted to answer the second, third and fourth research questions,

regarding confidence in parent abilities to help their children with homework, the relationship between homework and family time, extracurricular activities and the family dynamics. The interview questions were carefully constructed to employ questioning strategies that allowed the participants opportunities to elaborate on the topic of homework as well as to allow the interviewer to elicit responses regarding homework experiences. The final question of the quantitative survey was an open-ended response, where participants could include any additional thoughts on homework. These responses were also analyzed to look for themes. The qualitative data analyzed and presented in this chapter includes the data from the interviews and the one open-ended question from the quantitative survey.

As described in the preceding chapter, the qualitative data was uploaded into NVivo12 software to be coded and analyzed. First, a preliminary exploratory analysis was conducted, which consists of exploring the data to obtain a general sense of the data (Creswell, 2015). Initial notes and thoughts were noted in the memo section of NVivo. Upon subsequent rereading of the qualitative data, the coding process began. "Coding is the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data (Creswell, 2015). Codes were then analyzed for overlap and redundancy. When overlap existed between codes, the coded lines of text were combined into more broad themes, also known as categories (Creswell, 2015). The use of themes is a core element in qualitative data analysis. Word frequency queries as well as matrix queries were utilized within the NVivo software to allow for themes and relationships to be identified. The following themes were extrapolated from the analysis of the interviews and responses to the open-ended homework question: homework causes stress to children

and/or families, parents are put in a tutor-like position which can cause confusion, parents find homework helpful in three ways: reinforcing lessons, growing personal development skills and communication with the teacher.

Findings of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Research Question 1

How do elementary school parents and educators view the effectiveness of homework?

Hypothesis

H_0: There will not be significant differences between the views of homework held by parents' and educators' regarding the effectiveness of homework.

H_1: There will be significant differences between the views of homework held by parents' and educators' regarding the effectiveness of homework.

Data were cleaned and no participants were removed from the study. One educator listed "High School Diploma" as education level. This is considered to be an error since in New York State all educators must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree. Two educators also listed the number of persons living in their households; educators should have selected "Not Applicable." However, since educator responses will not be analyzed within these categories, the data were not removed. All categorical variables were coded correctly. A total number of 320 participants, 256 K-5 parents and 64 K-5 educators, participated in this study. The current research question was analyzed with regard to each individual question about homework effectiveness from the survey, where both parents and educators provided data. As such, the hypotheses became specific to each area of homework effectiveness; homework maximizes time spent on learning,

homework increases student achievement, homework enhances learning, homework increases positive attitudes about learning, and homework promotes good work habits.

Independent samples *t*-tests were used to find significant differences between parent and educator perceptions of the effectiveness of homework. The researcher analyzed each survey question where both educators and parents provided data on their perceptions of homework efficiency, survey questions 9-13. For each question, an independent samples *t*-test was chosen because the researcher was looking for differences between two different groups of participants, by comparing the means from the data. For each question, the assumptions test of independent observations was met. However, the Shapiro-Wilk normality and homogeneity were not met and therefore the Mann-Whitney U test was used. According to Science Direct, this test is more reliable when the two samples have unequal variances and/or unequal sample sizes. The alpha level for the independent samples *t*-test was .05. The Mann-Whitney test was used to analyze the Likert scale data.

There was a significant difference in scores for "homework increases student achievement" between the parents ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.16$) and educators ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.21$) groups; $t(318) = 9456$, $p = .05$. For this test, the assumption of homogeneity of variance holds. The significant result had an effect size of Cohen's $d = .23$, which is classified as small. These results suggest that educators are more likely to see homework as increasing student achievement than parents. The null hypothesis is rejected. Looking at the data from all participants, 50% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that homework increases student achievement, 16.6% neither agreed nor disagreed and 34.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed that homework increases student achievement.

There was a significant difference in scores for "homework promotes good work habits and responsibility" between the parents (M = 3.61, SD = .98) and educators (M = 4.00, SD = 1.04) groups; $t(318) = 10273$, p = .001. The significant result had an effect size of Cohen's d =.38, which is classified as small to medium. These results suggest that educators see homework as more efficient at promoting good work habits for students, than parents. The null hypothesis is rejected. Together, 15% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that homework promotes good work habits and responsibility, 14.4% neither agreed nor disagreed and the majority, 70.6%, of participants agreed or strongly agreed.

There was not a significant difference in scores for "homework enhances student learning" between the parents (M = 3.26, SD = 1.18) and educators (M = 3.39, SD = 1.18) groups; $t(318) = 8695$, p = .43. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. However, 53% of participants (parents and educators combined) either agreed or strongly agreed that homework enhances student learning, while 29.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

There was not a significant difference in scores for "homework maximizes time on learning outside of school" between the parents (M = 2.84, SD = 1.09) and educators (M = 2.91, SD = 1.07) groups; $t(318) = 8443.5$, p = .69. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. However, 43% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that homework maximizes time spent on learning outside of school, 23.7% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 33.7% agreed or strongly agreed.

There was not a significant difference in scores for "homework creates positive attitudes about learning" between the parents (M = 2.59, SD = 1.13) and educators (M = 2.69, SD = 1.04) groups; $t(318) = 8674$, p = .45. The null hypothesis is retained. Most

participants, 52.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed that homework creates positive attitudes about learning. Twenty-three percent neither agreed nor disagreed and 24.1% agreed or strongly agreed that homework creates positive attitudes about learning.

The researcher also conducted numerous ANOVAs to look for differences among groups of parents. The test for equality of variances was met. There was a significant effect for perceptions that homework maximizes time spent on learning outside of school at the $p < .05$ alpha level for the five conditions of the person who oversees homework completion, $F(4, 251) = 3.59$, $p = 0.007$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for homework completion in the "Afterschool Program" (M = 2.29, SD = 1.19) was significantly different than the "myself" condition (M = 2.94, SD = 1.02). However, there was no significant differences between the other conditions. These results suggest that parents whose children complete homework in the afterschool program are more likely to disagree that homework maximizes time spent on learning.

The researcher ran additional ANOVAs, based on the data from parents, for the condition of who oversees homework completion. The test for equality of variances was not met and therefore the Welch's correction test was run. There was not a significant effect at the $p < .05$ alpha level, for homework enhances student learning, $F(4, 251) = 1.97$, $p = .21$, or homework increases student achievement, $F(4, 251) = 1.81$, $p = 0.24$). The test for equality of variances was met for the ANOVA looking at parent perceptions that homework creates positive attitudes toward learning. There was not a significant effect at the $p < .05$ alpha level, for the perception that homework creates positive attitudes toward learning for the five conditions, $F(4, 251) = 0.98$, $p = 0.42$. The test for

equality of variances was not met in the ANOVA to compare the effect of the perception that homework promotes good work habits in the person who oversees homework completion condition. Therefore, the Welch's correction test was run. However, the data was considered not testable. Together, these results suggest that person overseeing the homework completion is not related to parents' perceived homework effectiveness.

The researcher conducted one-way ANOVAs based on the condition of number of children living in the home. The only data used was provided only by parents for each of the research questions that addressed the perceived effectiveness of homework. There was not a significant effect of homework's ability to enhance learning at the $p < .05$ level, $F(4, 251) = 0.52$, $p = 0.72$, homework increases student achievement, $F(4, 251) = 0.88$, $p = 0.47$, homework maximizes time spent on learning outside of school, $F(4, 251) = 0.58$, $p = 0.66$, homework creates positive attitudes toward learning, $F(4, 251) = 0.21$, $p = 0.94$, or homework promotes good work habits, $F(4, 251) = 0.20$, $p = 0.94$. Taken together these results suggest that the number of children does not impact parent perceptions of homework's effectiveness.

Additionally, one-way between-subjects ANOVAs were conducted based on parent education levels. There was not a significant effect at the $p < .05$ alpha level, for perceptions of homework's ability to enhance learning, $F(4, 251) = 1.84$, $p = .12$, homework increases student achievement, $F(4, 251) = 1.82$, $p = 0.13$, homework creates positive attitudes toward learning, $F(4, 251) = 1.05$, $p = 0.38$, homework promotes good work habits, $F(4, 251) = 1.84$, $p = 0.12$. In the ANOVA to compare the effect of the perceptions of homework's ability to maximize time spent on learning outside of school in the parent education level conditions, the test for equality of variances was not met and

therefore the Welch's correction test was run. There was not a significant effect of perceptions that homework maximizes time spent on learning at the $p < .05$ alpha level for the five conditions, $F(4, 251) = 1.25$, $p = 0.33$. These results suggest that the parent education level is not related to parent perceptions of homework's effectiveness.

The qualitative interviews showed variety among participants. Six out of 8 participants felt that homework was important. The responses referenced reinforcement, responsibility, strengthening the home and school connection, and a review of homework. "Reinforce" or "renew" topics they learned in school that day was referenced 17 times by parents and 5 times by educators in the open-ended survey question. On the interviews, 6 of the 8 participants stated that homework is important because it "reinforces" or "reviews" school material. Two participants did not feel that homework was important. One participant said, "they do enough in school."

Research Question 2:

How confident do parents feel in their abilities to help their children in the area of mathematics homework?

Hypothesis

H_0: The means of all parent education level groups will be equal.

H_1: The means of at least one parent education level group will be different.

To answer the second research question, researcher included two questions on the quantitative survey regarding parents' confidence in their abilities to help their children, "Parents can adequately help children understand ALL homework?" and "Do you feel confident that you can help your child(ren) if they struggle with math homework?" Parent results can be found in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2.

Table 4. 1

Survey Question: Parents can adequately help children understand ALL homework.

Answer Choices	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	18.8%
Disagree	41.4%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	14.0%
Agree	23.4%
Strongly Agree	2.3%

Table 4. 2

Parent Only Survey Question: Do you feel confident that YOU can help your child(ren) when they struggle with math homework?

Answer Choices	Percentage
Yes	37.4%
No	30.3%
A Little	32.2%

The researcher conducted an ANOVA to compare the effect of parents' perceived abilities to help with mathematics homework in the parent education levels condition. The test for equality of variances was met. There was a significant effect for parents' perceptions in their abilities to help with mathematics homework at the $p < .05$ alpha level for parent education level condition, $F(4, 251) = 7.75$, $p < 0.001$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the combined "some high school and high school diploma" condition ($M = 1.81$, $SD = .83$) was significantly different than the "master's degree" condition ($M = 2.41$, $SD = .79$), $p = .04$.

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the combined "some college and associate's degree" condition (M = 1.81, SD = .74) was significantly different than the "master's degree" condition (M = 2.41, SD = .79), p = <001. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the "bachelor's degree" condition (M = 1.92, SD = .78) was significantly different than the "master's degree" condition (M = 2.41, SD = .79), p = .001. There were no significant differences between the other conditions. These results suggest that parents with higher levels of education feel more confident in their abilities to help their children with mathematics homework. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Two other one-way ANOVAs indicated that the difference in perceptions of parents' abilities to help with mathematics homework was not significant, at the $p < .05$ alpha level, based upon number of children living in the house condition (F (4, 251) = .71, p = .59) or the person overseeing homework completion condition (F (4, 251) = .62, p = .65). The test for equality of variances was met for each test. The null hypothesis is retained. These results suggest that the number of children living in the house as well as the person overseeing the homework, is not related to parent perceptions of their abilities to help with mathematics homework.

Several one-way ANOVAs indicated that the difference in perception of parents' abilities to help with overall homework was not significant, at the $p < .05$ alpha level, based upon parental education level (F (4, 251) = .95, p = .44), number of children living in the house (F (4, 251) = .66, p = .62), and person overseeing homework completion (F (4, 251) = .60, p = .66). The test for equality of variances was met for each test. Taken together these results suggest that the parent education level, number of

children living in the house as well as the person overseeing the homework, is not related to parent perceptions of their abilities to help with overall homework understanding and completion. The null hypothesis is retained.

An independent samples *t*-test was used to find significant differences between the parent and educator perceptions of parent abilities to help their child(ren) understand homework. The researcher analyzed survey question number 14, where both educators and parents provided data on their perceptions of parents' abilities to help. An independent samples *t*-test was chosen because the researcher was looking for differences between two different groups of participants, by comparing the means from the data. The assumptions test of independent observations was met. However, the Shapiro-Wilk normality and homogeneity were not met and therefore the Mann-Whitney U test was used. The Mann-Whitney U test is a nonparametric test that allows two groups to be compared without making the assumption that values are normally distributed. It is more reliable when the two samples have unequal variances and/or unequal sample sizes. There was not a significant difference, at the $p < .05$ level, in scores for "parents can help children understand ALL homework" between the parents (M=2.49, SD=1.11) and educators (M=2.55, SD=1.27) groups; $t(318) = 8247$, $p = .93$.

Additionally, the researcher used qualitative data obtained from the open-ended response question on the "Elementary Level Homework Survey." Interviews were also conducted to gain parent perspectives of the homework experiences with their children. The data were uploaded to NVivo coding software as described above. Two themes emerged, which are linked to parental abilities and confidence with homework. The first theme was, "Parents cause confusion for children." One parent responded, "I can NOT

help math because of the changes that have been made with the way it is taught." Another writes, "Common Core way of learning has made it difficult to help my children with the math." These both fit with the theme, that "Parents cause confusion for children," by trying to assist with homework. Another participant says, "The only thing I can do is give her the final answer. But I know it's not the way she's learning it, so I don't think I'm helping at all. I'm probably making it more confusing." This theme of parents causing confusion for their children was also found in the qualitative data from educators. One educator writes, "Parents have difficulty particularly helping with mathematics in the age of Common Core and as a result more students are struggling now." Another educator stated, "Many times the homework comes back to school with wrong answers…the child says, 'my dad told me I was wrong and made me change it,' meanwhile the student was correct." Appendix G contains additional quotes from participants that represent the theme, parents are confusing children.

A second theme around parent abilities emerged, "Parents must act like tutors." Many parents referenced mathematics as being most challenging when trying to help their children with homework. "Math" was referenced as a struggle during homework 23 times by parent participants in the combined qualitative data. Parents stated that their elementary mathematics abilities made them capable of completing the mathematics and arriving at the correct final answer, but it is the way students are expected to show their work or understand that gives them such difficulty. One participant wrote, "I often look for lessons on YouTube pertaining to the [math] topic. I cannot solve the problem using the steps, techniques and strategies they were taught to use in class." Another participant writes, "I have to look back in their workbooks to see how they learned it…I have to

teach myself how they learned and explain it in that way." Additional examples for the theme "parents must act like tutors" can be found in Appendix G.

Research Question 3

To what extend does homework impact the following:

a. Family time

b. Extracurricular activities

Hypothesis

H_0: The means of all parent education level groups will be equal.

H_1: The means of at least one parent education level group will be different.

An independent samples *t*-test was used to find significant differences between the parent and educator perceptions of the amount of homework given. The researcher analyzed survey question number 15, where both educators and parents provided data on their perceptions of an appropriate amount of homework. An independent samples *t*-test was chosen because the researcher was looking for differences between two different groups of participants, by comparing the means from the data. The assumptions test of independent observations was met. However, the Shapiro-Wilk normality and homogeneity were not met and therefore the Mann-Whitney U test was used. The Mann-Whitney U test is a nonparametric test that allows to groups to be compared without making the assumption that values are normally distributed. There was not a significant difference, at the $p < .05$ level, in scores for "I give/My child(ren) get an appropriate amount of homework" between the parents ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.05$) and educators ($M = 3.641$, $SD = .90$) groups; $t(318) = 8790$, $p = .31$.

The majority of educators and parents combined, 66%, agreed or strongly agreed that their child(ren) gets/they give an appropriate amount of homework. Fourteen percent did not agree or disagree, while 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Several one-way ANOVAs were conducted using the data from the parents only. The first indicated that the difference in parent perceptions of appropriate amount of homework was not significant, at the $p < .05$ alpha level, based upon parental education level (F (4, 251) = 1.00, p = .41). The test for equality of variances was met. For the condition of person overseeing homework completion, the test for equality of variances was not met and therefore the Welch's test was run, (F (4, 251) = 1.37, p = .34). For the condition of number of children living in the house, the test for equality of variances was not met, and the Welch's test indicated that the data was not testable. These results suggest that the parent education level, number of children living in the house as well as the person overseeing the homework, are not related to parent perceptions of an appropriate amount of homework. The null hypothesis is retained.

The majority of parent participants agreed (58.6%) or strongly agreed (7%) that their child receives an appropriate amount of homework. However, when specifically asked about homework's impact on family time, the majority of the parent participants agreed (33.6%) or strongly agreed (23.8%) that homework negatively impacts family time. For the purposes of this study, family time is defined as time spent together as a family, for example family outings, family games, family meals or other family leisure activities. Regarding homework's relationship to extra-curricular activities, 14.8% of participants strongly agreed that homework impacted their child's ability to participate in such activities and 32% agreed.

Several one-way ANOVAs indicated that the difference in perception of homework's relationship to family time was not significant, at the $p < .05$ alpha level, based upon parental education level (F (4, 251) = .35, p = .85) or the number of children living in the house (F (4, 251) = .28, p = .90). The test for equality of variances was met. For the condition of person overseeing homework completion, the test for equality of variances was not met and therefore the Welch's test was run, F (4, 251) = 1.37, p = .34. Taken together these results suggest that the parent education level, number of children living in the house as well as the person overseeing the homework, is not related to parent perceptions of homework's impact on family time. The null hypothesis is retained.

Several one-way ANOVAs indicated that the differences in parent perceptions of homework's impact on extra-curricular activities was not significant, at the $p < .05$ alpha level, based upon parental education level (F (4, 251) = .69, p = .60) or number of children living in the house (F (4, 251) = .88, p = .50). The test for equality of variances was met. For the condition of person overseeing homework completion, the test for equality of variance was not met and therefore the Welch's correction test was run, F (4, 251) = .3.17, p = .10. Taken together these results suggest that the parent education level, number of children living in the house as well as the person overseeing the homework, are not related to parent perceptions of homework impacting extra-curricular activities. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained.

The qualitative responses about homework's impact on family time and extracurricular activities varied on the interviews. Three out of the 8 participants did not find homework to ever interfere with their family time or extra-curricular activities. These families had children in grades K, 1 and 2. The 5 other interview responses

described other experiences. One participant with a fifth-grade child stated, "[Homework] impacts the entire evening. We're always rushing to get home to get it started and there are definitely times that she goes to bed right after she's finished without having any sort of down time." Through the qualitative research, the theme of "time constraints make homework completion difficult" emerged. Another participant said, "It is extremely difficult to juggle working full time, raising two kids, dinner, homework and after school activities in a 4-hour time period. I often feel something is compromised; dinner, family time, homework, social activities or physical fitness." Between the coded interviews and open-ended question data, the issue of time was referenced seventeen times by parents, making it the fourth most referenced category within homework. Although a few parents did indicate that homework does not impact family time or after school activities, many more respondents indicated at least some effect due to homework requirements. Appendix H provides additional examples of responses from participants within the theme of "time constraints make homework completion difficult."

This qualitative data corresponds to the quantitative data. Fifty-seven percent of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that homework impacts time spent as a family and 48% agreed or strongly agreed that it impacts their child's extra-curricular activities.

Research Question 4

How does homework impact the family dynamics?

Hypothesis

H_0: The means of all parent education level groups will be equal.

H_1: The means of at least one parent education level group will be different.

Using the parent quantitative data, several one-way ANOVAs indicated that the difference in perceived tension caused by homework was nonsignificant, at the $p < .05$ alpha level, based upon parental education level (F (4, 251) = .12, p = .98), and person overseeing homework completion (F (4, 251) = .33, p = .89). The test for equality of variances was met. For the condition of number of children living in the house, Levene's test for equality of variances was not met, therefore the Welch's correction test was run, F (4, 251) = 1.06, p = .44. Taken together these results suggest that the parent education level, number of children living in the house as well as the person overseeing the homework, does not impact parents' perceived tension levels in the home around homework. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. Although differences in the parent data were not found in these three conditions, 58.6% of parent participants agreed or strongly agreed that homework causes tension in their home, as shown in table 4.3.

Table 4. 3

Survey Question: Homework causes tension in our home.

Answer Choices	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	7.3%
Disagree	21.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12.7 %
Agree	33.6%
Strongly Agree	25.0%

In the qualitative data obtained from the surveys, many participants noted significant stress brought on because of homework. There were two main categories of stress: stress from time constraints and stress felt by the parent, child or both. Sixty-six

percent of parents in this research felt that their child(ren) gets an appropriate amount of homework, however, a lack of time each day was referenced as a major cause of stress by 17 participants in the qualitative data. Similar data was found in the quantitative survey data, as shown in table 4.3.

On the interviews and open-ended question responses, many respondents referenced the effect that homework has on the family dynamics. The codes of "child upset/stressed" and "family stress" were the top two coded references of all the qualitative data. "Child upset/stressed" was coded 41 times, "Family stress" was coded 27 times. The theme of homework causing stress for families clearly emerged. The majority of the participant responses noted that the Common Core style of math instruction, caused the most stress for children and parents, it was referenced 17 times in connection with stress. Many parents cite fighting with their children often over homework. One participant writes, "I spend more time fighting with my [son] and it adds to his stress and anxiety which is unnecessary for his age." Another writes, "We have times of tears of frustration. I try to show her how to do it, but she will tell me they learned if different in school and the teacher will mark her wrong if it is not done the right way." Appendix I includes more evidence from the qualitative data around the theme, "Homework causes stress to children and families."

Summary

In this chapter, the quantitative and qualitative research methods were described to answer the four research questions. The researcher described the instrument applied and the analyses conducted as a result of the survey. All statistical results were provided in addition to the themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis. Analysis of the

quantitative data collected through a survey of 64 educators and 256 parents led the researcher to observe that educators and parents differ in their perceived effectiveness of homework in two ways. First, educators are more likely to agree that homework increases student achievement. Second, educators are more likely to agree that homework promotes good work habits. Seventy-one percent of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that homework produces good work habits.

Further statistical analysis identified significant differences in parent abilities to help with mathematics homework depending on parent education level. Specifically, parents with a master's degree felt significantly more comfortable in their abilities to adequately help their child(ren) with math homework, when compared to parents with other education levels. Most parent participants, 62.5% did not feel comfortable helping with mathematics homework. Significant differences were also found between parents who oversee homework versus parents of children who complete their homework in the after-school program, regarding homework maximizing time spent on learning.

Through the qualitative research, four major themes emerged: homework causes stress to children and/or families, parents are put in a tutor-like position which can cause confusion, time constraints make homework completion difficult and parents find homework helpful in three ways: reinforcing lessons, growing personal development skills and communication with the teacher. Discussion of both the quantitative and qualitative data will be explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Introduction

The central purpose of this study was to better understand the perceptions of homework held by educators and parents of elementary school children. A second purpose was to understand the homework experiences of families with elementary school children. As described in chapter three, a mixed methods convergent design was used to answer the research questions. This included collecting quantitative data from 64 educators and 256 families within one suburban school district on Long Island. Data collected focused on the perceived effectiveness of homework, parental confidence in their abilities to help with homework, homework's impact on family time, extracurricular activities and family dynamics. Demographic information was also gathered as part of the survey. To further understand the homework experiences of families, the researcher used an electronic interview protocol with 8 participants. The participants were asked to describe their experiences with elementary school homework, level of comfort with mathematics homework, their child's overall feeling toward homework and the impact homework has on family time, extra-curricular activities and tension in the home.

This chapter will describe the conclusions of the study as they relate to the research questions and prior research on the topic. The findings that emerged from this study will be discussed. Additionally, this chapter will include limitations of the study and implications of the findings. Finally, this chapter will suggest recommendations for educators, as well as suggestions for future study.

Implications of Findings

Cooper (2007) found that both positive and negative outcomes can be associated with homework, and that often these outcomes can occur simultaneously. This research does not seek to answer all questions regarding homework at the elementary level. However, after conducting this research and analyzing the data obtained, the researcher would like to provide some possible implications to be considered.

This study is grounded in two theories, Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory and Jacquelynne Eccles' Expectancy-Value Theory. Bandura's social cognitive theory focuses on how behavior, learning and growth are affected by the cognitive operations that occur during social activities. The social cognitive theory encompasses self-efficacy, self-regulation and observational learning (Bandura, 1993). This applies to the completion of homework. When children feel that they will be successful at completing the work, they are more motivated to do the work. Research on homework and self-efficacy has shown a connection, specifically the more efficacious a student feels, the better they can complete the homework and subsequently have higher achievement scores. Whereas, low self-efficacy leads one to perceive a task as even more difficult which then brings about negative emotions such as stress, frustration, anxiety and depression (Katz et. al, 2012). These negative feelings can cause one to give up, thereby having a negative impact on achievement (Kitsantas et. al, 2011).

All the interview participants, regardless of child's abilities, were able to describe examples of tears and frustration when thinking about math homework. These experiences are not daily occurrences for all participants, however they certainly cause stress. Many of the participants quote their children as saying, "that's not how we

learned it" or "you're not doing it the right way." The participants say that their children see homework as a chore, or that they feel negative about it. As mentioned in the previous chapter, 52.5% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that homework creates positive attitudes about learning. One participant wrote, "I find homework is more harmful than helpful. It has negatively impacted my child's attitude toward school."

Bandura's self-efficacy theory can also be extended to parents. Specifically, their self-efficacy about their abilities to adequately assist their child, as well as their beliefs in their child's efficacy has also been found to impact the homework environment in either positive or negative ways (Gonida and Cortina, 2014). Similarly, Usher, 2009, found that parents' thoughts of their child's abilities may affect the child's own self-efficacy beliefs. The current research survey showed that only 31.2 % of educators believe that parents can adequately help their children with the homework and 60% of parents do not feel that they can adequately help their child with homework. Interview and survey respondents often referenced the need to further investigate the math concepts contained on the homework before being able to help their children. Parents often said that they can solve the math and provide an answer, but had trouble understanding or teaching their child the strategy that the homework was using. Parents said they had to look through the classwork, use videos from the lesson or even videos found on the Internet to help them understand the work and explain it to their children, yet often the children still did not adequately understand and often became frustrated.

Jacquelynne Eccles' Expectancy-Value Theory also takes into consideration the students' expectancies for success on the task (1983). In her model of motivation, the

expectances for the task refer to the perceived importance, usefulness or enjoyment that the task will bring about. A few participants in the survey indicated that their children enjoy doing homework, therefore these is little to no tension. The survey answers from these participants reflected support for homework. These participants tended to select "agree" or "strongly agree" to statements regarding the benefits of homework. Furthermore, they selected "disagree" or "strongly disagree" to statements about homework interfering in family life, extra-curricular activities and homework causing tension in the home. Enjoyment of the task would increase motivation. One interviewee said that her child is "compliant and just gets the homework done because she knows that there is no playing or going to after school activities until it is done." This does provide some motivation because the child is looking forward to the reward after the homework. However, the majority (52.5%) said that they do not feel homework creates a love of learning, therefore it is not an enjoyable task. Five of the 8 interview participants said that homework makes their child more negative about learning and school.

As shown in the Conceptual Framework, many educators say they assign homework to increase personal development skills such as self-discipline and responsibility. Kohn (2006) states that such skills were difficult to measure and attribute to homework. Kralovac and Buell (2001) point out that it is often the parents reminding children to complete their work and therefore it is the parents' responsibility, not necessarily the children's. This research found that 71% of participants believe that homework to helps develop such skills. This is similar to the 2007 MetLife survey where 83% of elementary educators indicated that increasing work habits is an important part of homework.

If students perceive their homework tasks as valuable, according to the Expectancy-Value Theory, when motivated by the assignment or task, some of the non-academic skills of persistence and effort will increase. As mentioned in previous chapters there is research that suggests meaningful homework assignments are important to increase interest and motivation and are therefore a component for homework completion (Cooper, 1989). In the current research, many participants, both parents and educators cited the need for homework to be meaningful. One parent wrote, "busy work makes my blood boil." The majority of educators and parents in this research that support homework, believe that it could enhance learning if the work is meaningful and connected to what is being learned at school. With regard to "meaningful" homework, one educator wrote:

> When considering homework as an extension of or extra practice with a classroom activity, it is pointless. If the student did not understand the activity at school, they will not be able to do it at home. If a parent doesn't understand the activity or misunderstands how to complete the activity, and the student, who didn't understand it in the first place, is unable to correctly explain it, then it just becomes a huge stressor. On the flip side, if a student understood the activity at school, doing it at home isn't going to improve their understanding, it is just busy work. As much as possible, I try to give meaningful long-term assignments for homework.

According to the Expectancy-Value Theory, "meaningful" homework should increase student motivation. As early as 1989, Cooper was citing the need for "meaningful" homework. The participants in this research often referenced this idea as

well. One participant writes, "I don't mind books reports or projects, when it adds worth to what they have learned." As one principal, and parent of two points out, "homework needs to be well thought out. Mostly there's too much of it and it is not enhancing their learning."

Most educators assign homework. At the elementary level, studies have not shown a positive correlation between homework and student achievement Cooper 1989; Cooper et. al, 2006; Kohn, 2006). In fact, Cooper (2006) found that elementary students receive no benefit or even a negative effect from homework. As shown in the Conceptual Framework and discussed in chapter 2, educators and schools assign homework because they believe it to be effective at increasing student achievement, increasing personal development skills such as responsibility and time management and creating positive feelings about school. The current research showed that 51.1% of parents and educators believe that homework enhances learning. The parent perceptions of homework's effectiveness and their ability to help their child may influence how they help their child as well as the family dynamics during homework. The majority of parents, 58.6%, said that homework does cause tension in the home.

As mentioned in chapter 2 and shown in the Conceptual Framework, another purpose of homework is to create positive attitudes about school and learning. This research shows a very different reality. Only 25% of educators and 24% of parents thought that homework helps to create these positive attitudes. Most of the parents interviewed said that they see the opposite effect from homework. From their experiences, their children seem more negative about learning and school because of the frustration caused by homework. There were three children referenced by interviewees

whose parents felt that homework helped them to have more positive feelings of school. This again shows the variability between families and children. From one respondent, the parent writes that homework "frustrates my 5th grader but does not really phase 3rd grader." One parent writing this about her two different children shows the complexity of homework. Since each child is unique, each influence can impact children differently.

Relationship to Prior Research

Research Question 1:

How do elementary parents and educators view the effectiveness of homework?

As indicated in the research, teachers assign homework for several reasons. The majority of the educator responses to the survey were consistent with the literature. Homework is often assigned for skill practice, fostering student personal development skills (such as self-confidence, responsibility and time-management), to inform parents of classroom activities and to contribute to positive communications about school between parents and children (Cooper, 1989; Epstein, 1988; Van Voorhis 2004).

In the current study, many of the open-ended responses from educators identified these reasons as purposes for assigning homework. There were three main reasons parents felt homework was important. First, they felt that it provided reinforcement of materials learned in school, this was referenced by 15 different parent responses in the qualitative data. For example, one respondent wrote, "Homework should reinforce what was learned in school, not consist of new material." These feelings were echoed in many of the responses obtained from parents. Cooper (2006) reported this purpose of reviewing or practicing a skill is the most common reason educators assigned homework.

In this current research, quantitative data showed that educators are more likely to see homework as increasing student achievement than parents. However, educators are not active participants in homework completion and therefore are unaware of the time it took to be completed or the level of support that was needed or provided when completing assignments. Therefore, without further research, it is hard to say that homework completion really does impact student achievement.

As discussed in chapter 2, another key reason educators assign homework is to increase the home-school connection and communication (Cooper, 1989; Epstein, 1988; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Van Voorhis 2004). The findings of this research align with the previous research and parent participants often referenced that the communication provided by seeing daily homework was helpful. Communication between home and school was referenced by 9 parent participants in this research. One respondent wrote, "homework should act as a form of communication between school and home."

The final reason that respondents felt homework could be helpful was in the expansion of personal development skills, such as responsibility, time management and work ethic. Cooper et al. (2006) found some nonacademic purposes for homework in the meta-analysis that was conducted. However, Kohn (2006) and other critics believe that these skills are hard to measure and should not be considered as a reason to assign homework. In this research, these personal development skills were identified as being connected to homework by 7 parents and 7 educators in the open-ended question of the survey. In the 2007 MetLife Survey, 83% of elementary school teachers said they assign homework to increase good work habits. In this research 71% of participants agreed or

strongly agreed that homework helps to grow positive work habits in elementary students. In the 2007, MetLife survey, 65% of elementary educators identified increasing students' motivation to learn was an important reason to assign homework. In this research, 52.5% of participants indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that homework helps to increase positive feelings about learning and school.

Research Question 2:

How confident to parents feel in their abilities to help their children in the area of mathematics?

Homework can force parents into the unwanted roles of tutors and enforcers which can result in stressful interactions (Katz et al., 2012; Vatterott, 2018). For many families, homework results in frustration, stress, embarrassment, confusion and inappropriate support (Patall et al., 2008). These feelings increase when children are struggling to complete the work, or when parents do not have adequate skills, time or energy to help complete the homework (Patall et al., 2008). Pressman et al. (2015) found a significant correlation between parent's perceived ability to help with homework and the perceived family stress and tension around homework.

In this research, mathematics homework was referenced most frequently by parents as being the most difficult type of homework to help their child complete. It seems evident from this research that parents are most unsure of how to help in the area of mathematics and the concepts children are expected to practice and learn as part of the Common Core standards. In this research many participants said that they can solve the mathematics problems, but they need to use resources such as videos and classroom workbooks to understand the way in which the problem should be completed. The

educators in this research also noted parent difficulty with being able to adequately help their child with math homework. As mentioned in chapter 4, parents are often confusing their children. One educator provided an example of the parent telling their child to change the correct answers to incorrect ones.

The quantitative data analysis showed that participants with master's degrees felt significantly more confident in their abilities to help with math homework than parents with some high school, a high school diploma, some college, an associate's degree or even a four-year bachelor's degree. Communities are made up of parents of varying ability levels and experiences. This research suggests that there is a disadvantage to children whose caregivers have less than a master's degree.

Research Question 3:

To what extend does homework impact

a. Family Time

b. Participation in extra-curricular activities

In their open-ended interviews with parents of third grade students in 1998, Xu and Corno found that homework can cause tension and interferes with quality family time as well as limits children's abilities to participate in other activities. Parents who have ideas of homework similar to those in Xu and Corno's study tend to believe that parents, not schools control their child's time outside of the school day (Vatterott, 2018). The majority of educators and parents that participated in the quantitative survey of this research, felt that the amount of homework given was an "appropriate amount." However, there is a bit of a disconnect when you look at two other survey questions. For example, 47% also agreed or strongly agreed that homework impacts their child(ren)'s

ability to participate in other activities. The majority of parent participants in this study, 57%, agreed or strongly agreed that homework does impact quality time spent as a family.

This current research did not ask participants to quantify an "appropriate amount" However, in the research conducted by Pressman et al. (2015), researchers found that kindergarteners had an average of 25 minutes per day. The researchers noted the stress that this put on both children and parents and theorized that the overload of homework at this age could negatively impact children's abilities in other ways. Specifically, the decreased playtime could decrease fine motor skills and opportunities for socialization (Pressman et al., 2015). One parent writes, "they need time to do other things like sports, dance, read and play." Given this data, it does not seem that parents really agree that it's an "appropriate amount" of homework. It could be that parents are accustomed to the ritual of homework and therefore feel that the amount their child receives is appropriate.

Research Question 4:

How does homework impact the family dynamics?

There is research to support the idea that homework can cause stress within families (Farkas, 1999; Katz et al., 2012; Pressman et al., 2015). Interactions based on homework are a major source of conflict and stress for families (Katz et al., 2012). These negative interactions have lasting impressions on the relationship between children and their parents. Parents generally describe their time spent on homework as straining, stress producing, burdensome and unwanted (Katz et al., 2012). As cited in Katz et al. (2012), homework forces parents into unwanted roles as tutors and enforcers. These roles increase tension within the family (Vatterott, 2018).

In the current research, many participants noted significant stress brought on because of homework. There were two main categories of stress: stress from time constraints and stress felt by the parent, child or family. One participant writes, "Family lifestyles have changed over the years and most households require two incomes to survive, leaving little time…homework adds undue stress to the entire family, especially with Common Core math that most parents were not taught growing up." Another participant with similar views notes the difficulties of "juggling working full time, raising two kids, dinner, homework, and after school activities in a 4-hour time period…something is compromised: dinner, family time, homework, social activities or physical fitness." One participant notes that they sometimes do homework in the car between activities. As previously reported, 47% percent of survey parent participants felt that homework impacts their child's participation in extra-curricular activities and 57% said that it negatively impacts time spent together as a family. Sixty-six percent of parents in this research felt that their child(ren) gets an appropriate amount of homework, however, a lack of time each day was referenced as a major cause of stress by 17 participants in the survey.

Sixty-eight parent participants across the study referenced stressful environments or situations brought on by homework. One parent writes, "I spend more time fighting with my son and it adds to his stress and anxiety, which is unnecessary for a child his age." The most commonly identified source of stress was in relation to the Common Core mathematics homework, it was referenced 17 times. Once parent writes,

> Due to the new Common Core standards, math homework has become very stressful and difficult in our house. As a parent, we were not taught the way our

children are being taught, which makes it harder to sit and teach certain strategies for the homework. I feel like my spouse and I spend so much time trying to read the directions and figure out what is being asked to do, which takes extra time to complete the assignment, which ultimately leads to tired and frustrated children at homework time.

Looking at this research, the stress families feel comes from a few different sources. Parents feel stressed because they do not always understand "how" to complete the math, they are stressed because there is not enough time to provide their child with a well-rounded afternoon and evening before bed, or they struggle to adequately explain the homework to their child. This creates a divide in households and communities because of the differences in the resources of time and knowledge.

Limitations of the Study

The findings from this study summarize the perceptions of homework held by elementary educators and parents and included experiences around homework in one suburban community in New York. The results of this study were limited due to several factors. Convenience sampling was used and only provided information from one school district. Convenience sampling relies on willing participation, and therefore the number of participants in the quantitative survey fell below the minimum sample size of 316 families. Additionally, 87% of the respondents were Caucasian and therefore generalizing the findings to other populations is difficult. Additionally, 67% of survey parent participants had obtained at least a four-year college degree and 40% held at least a master's degree. For the interviewed participants, 5 participants held at least a bachelor's degree. These parent education levels may not be representative of other

communities. Furthermore, this study was conducted in a suburban community with a 95% graduation rate compared to the state average of 83%. Therefore, it may be difficult to generalize to other areas.

Recommendations for Future Practice

The findings from this research highlight the need for further investigation into homework practices. Many of the parents indicated that homework causes tension in the home, decreases positive feelings about school and learning and many participants also indicated that they do not feel prepared to help increase their child's understanding through homework. Existing literature does not conclusively support the practice of homework at the elementary level, as a way to increase student academic achievement or learning.

If districts decide to continue with the practice of homework, they may need to investigate programs or supports that can be put in place to better support parents in their roles as homework supporters. Therefore, providing Parent Universities, programs like TIPS (Epstein & VanVoorhis, 2001) or workshops, can help to increase parents' understanding of the material, or increase their understanding of how best to help their children with homework. Districts should also devote professional development time and resources into ensuring that teachers and administrators within the district are aware of the latest homework research as well as creating a framework for what constitutes "meaningful" homework. Furthermore, professional development time should be centered on differentiating homework based on the needs of the students.

Much of the qualitative data in this research pointed to Common Core math style homework as causing the most stress and confusion. School districts should revisit

homework policies or guidelines to ensure that they reflect the needs of the community and that they are followed by the educators within the district. This may include larger discussions about the type of mathematics homework that is sent home to families. Additionally, a few participants referenced a lack of time for reading since "it doesn't have to be handed in," it was often dropped when time was limited. Therefore, school districts may change the math homework to include more traditional types of problems and expect children to read each night.

If districts opted to investigate eliminating traditional homework, the biggest obstacle would be the political one. Homework is a complicated topic. This research shows that many parents feel that homework is important. However, when asked more specifically about the benefits of homework based on the themes found in existing literature, many parents disagree with its benefits. Presenting the community with the body of research showing that homework does not really provide all the benefits they believe it does, would help to lesson some of the disputes.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study indicate that additional research on the topic of elementary homework could be beneficial. The following recommendations are identified for future research regarding homework's impact on families of elementary students;

1. Conduct a large scale, longitudinal research on homework effectiveness. This suggestion has also been made by Cooper et al. (2006).
2. Conduct an experimental study where one group of teachers are provided training in homework design and the other group is not. Then compare student outcomes. Some of the homework research, as well as participants in

this study, discuss "meaningful" homework. Teacher training should involve a more detailed definition as to what constitutes meaningful, and time and training should be provided to create meaningful assignments.

3. Add the students' perspectives. Provide students with a modified version of the quantitative survey to assess their perspectives on homework's effectiveness.
4. Conduct an experimental study where one group of parents are provided training in homework assistance, similar to the TIPS research conducted by Epstein and VanVoorhis (2001).
5. There are some districts that have eliminated traditional homework. Conduct a quantitative study to compare the standardized test scores, or student averages between districts with, and districts without traditional homework.
6. This study can be replicated in urban, rural or suburban districts or in areas where the graduation rate is not as high.
7. Conduct another survey of teacher perceptions of homework's effectiveness to look for differences between teachers with children and those without children.
8. Conduct a study looking at the social, emotional impact of homework on elementary school children.
9. This study suggests that children whose parents' have less education than a master's degree, are at a disadvantage when it comes to help with mathematics homework. This could contribute to widening the achievement gap and could be studied in the future.

Conclusion

This study analyzed the perceptions of homework held by educators and parents of elementary school children. It further described parent perceptions of their abilities to help with homework and experiences during elementary school homework. The quantitative analysis indicated that there was not a significant difference in the perceptions of elementary level educators and parents regarding homework's perceived effectiveness in most areas. In two areas, there was a significant difference. The results suggest that educators are more likely to see homework as increasing student achievement and promoting good work habits and responsibility. Almost 71% of participants, parents and educators combined, felt that homework does increase personal development skills.

When looking at mathematics homework, this research found that parents/caregivers with a master's degree level of education or higher felt significantly more prepared to help their child(ren) with homework, when compared to parents with some high school, high school diploma, some college, associate's degree or bachelor's degree. In the qualitative research, mathematics homework was referenced more than any other subject area, as an area in which parents have trouble helping their child. This was furthermore, the most referenced subject area with regard to causing stress in the home. There were no significant differences in homework's impact on family time or extra-curricular activities based on different groups of parents. However, majority of participants felt that homework negatively impacted family time and participation in extra-curricular activities. Additionally, 58.6% of parents felt that homework brought unnecessary tension into the home. There is a large body of research on homework in

general, finding both pros and cons for homework practices. The complexity of homework calls for much research to truly understand this time-honored practice.

Epilogue

The convergent mixed method design employed in this research allowed the researcher to delve into parent and educator perceptions of homework. One of the most interesting findings was that most of the interviewees felt that homework was important. However, when the questions were further broken down into benefits of homework, the majority of participants did not agree that homework resulted in benefits. The most overwhelming majority was an agreement that homework promotes good work habits and responsibility, 70.6% agreed or strongly agreed. As Kohn (2006) found, these are hard to attribute to the completion of homework. Is homework really the only way to promote these skills? Is it the job of schools to assign homework so that it might promote personal development skills like this, especially when 59% of parents reported that homework causes tension in their homes? What is best for children?

Such a large percentage of participants felt the impact of homework on their child's ability to participate in extra-curricular activities and its impact on family time. There are other ways to learn and develop as responsible, caring people, outside of the academic world. So, are we limiting our children by expecting them to spend so much of their time on academics and limiting their leisure time?

Thinking about how this research could impact policy makers and school decision makers, the education level of the person completing the homework was statistically significant. Therefore, decision makers need to be aware that the decision to give or not to give homework could impact the achievement gap across socioeconomic, race, or

immigrant statuses. Parents' abilities to assist their children depends on the resources they have available; time, money and knowledge. School districts cannot possibly account for these differences. Should there then be homework to exasperate them?

Appendix A

IRB Approval

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066
Feb 18, 2020 1:26 PM EST
PI: Keri Sabella
CO-PI: Anthony Annunziato
Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership
Re: Expedited Review - Initial - **IRB-FY2020-280** *The Impact of Homework on Families of Elementary Students and Parents' Perceptions of Their Abilities to help with Homework*
Dear Keri Sabella:
The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *The Impact of Homework on Families of Elementary Students and Parents' Perceptions of Their Abilities to help with Homework*. The approval is effective from February 18, 2020 through February 16, 2021
Decision: Approved
PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.
Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology

Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.
IRB Coordinator

Appendix B

PTA Flyer

Dear Levittown Parent/Guardian/Caregiver,

I am an East Broadway parent and a doctoral student at St. John's University. In order to complete my studies, I need to complete a dissertation study. My study focuses on the homework experiences of elementary school students and families.

I have developed a SHORT, multiple-choice survey as part of my research. The purpose of this survey is to determine the perceptions of homework that are held by parents and educators. This brief survey is for **parents/guardians of K-5 students** as well as educators of K-5 students in Levittown Public Schools. The link below will take you to the survey, which is in Google Forms. The survey takes approximately 7-10 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about your beliefs of homework, how effective you believe it to be, and how homework impacts your family's daily life. Since this study deals with opinions of homework and is anonymous, there are no risks to you.

Please feel free to share the link with other Levittown School District families that have students in the elementary schools. THANK YOU again.

Directions:

Type the link into your browser (Safari, Google, etc.) OR scan the QR code with your smart phone camera.

Link: **https://tinyurl.com/PTAHomeworkSurvey**

OR Your Smart Phone camera should automatically scan this code.

The link will also be posted on your elementary school's Facebook page.

If you have any questions or are unsure of how to answer a question, please email keri.sabella17@stjohns.edu. If you have any questions about this research or how it will be used, please contact the researcher's St. John's faculty sponsor, Dr. Anthony Annunziato at annunzia@stjohns.edu or contact Dr. Marie Nitopi with St. John's Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 718-990-1440 or irbstjohns@stjohns.edu.

Thank you,
Keri Murphy-Sabella

Appendix C

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

Consent Form For Survey Participants

Dear Parents/Guardians,

You are invited to take part in a research study titled, The Impact of Homework on Families of Elementary Students and Parent's Perceptions of their Abilities to Help with Homework. This survey is one part of my research. The purpose of this survey is to determine the perceptions of homework that are held by parents and educators. This brief survey is for parents/guardians of K-5 students as well as educators of K-5 students in public schools. For this study, you must:

- have at least one child who is in a general education or inclusion (co-teach) class, in grades K-5 for the 2019-2020 school year and receives homework

  OR

- Teach K-5 general education or inclusion (co-teach) classes

This study is being done as part of the requirements for Doctor of Education at St. John's University. Your participation will allow this researcher to document and publish how parents and educators of elementary school students regard homework and their experiences while completing homework.

The survey is in Google Forms. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about your beliefs of homework, how effective you believe it to be, its purpose, and how homework impacts your daily life. Since this study deals with opinions of homework and it is anonymous, there are no risks to you. The only person that will have access to the information you provide will be this researcher. There will be no compensation for participating in this project, it is completely voluntary.

If you have any additional questions about this project, or need clarification when answering the interview questions, please email Keri.Sabella17@stjohns.edu or call 516-851-8550. If you have any questions about this research or how it will be used, please contact the researcher's St. John's faculty sponsor, Dr. Anthony Annunziato at annunzia@stjohns.edu or contact Dr. Marie Nitopi with St. John's Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 718-990-1440 or irbstjohns@stjohns.edu.

Sincerely,

Keri Murphy-Sabella

XXX Rosewood Lane

Wantagh, NY 11793

Directions:
School district employees: Please answer these questions as an "Educator" even if you are also a parent in another school district. There will be a few questions where, as an educator, you will be directed to answer "N/A" for "Not Applicable."
Parents within the school district: Please answer as a "Parent/Caregiver/Guardian"

Part A: Demographics

1. I am completing this survey as

   A parent/guardian/caregiver An educator

2. The person completing this survey is

   Male Female

3. What is your highest level of educational attainment?

   Some high school

   High school diploma/GED

   Some college

   Associate's Degree

   Bachelor's Degree

   Master's Degree +

   Doctorate +

4. With which ethnicity do you most closely identify?

   White

   African American

   Hispanic/Latino

   Asian

   Multiracial

   Pacific Islander

   Other

   Prefer not to answer

5. Parents/Guardians/Caregivers: My child is in the following grade

Educators: I PRIMARILY teach the following grade:

K 1 2 3 4 5

Multi-grade/self-contained class/12:1:1, 6:1:1

N/A (coach, administrator)

6. Parents/Guardians/Caregivers: How many children reside in the home?

1 2 3 4 5 or more N/A (educators)

7. How many adults reside in the home?

1 2 3 4 5 or more N/A (educators)

8. Who typically oversees homework with your child(ren)?

Myself My significant other (partner, spouse) grandparent

Another caregiver (babysitter, neighbor) After School program

Part B: Questions Related to Research Questions

9. It is important to assign homework to students to enhance learning.

Strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

10. Homework is an effective way to increase student achievement.

Strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

11. A primary purpose of homework is to maximize time spent on learning outside of school.

Strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

12. Homework helps to promote positive attitudes about learning.

Strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

13. Homework is an effective way to promote good work habits.

Strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

14. Parents/Caregivers/Guardians can adequately help the child understand ALL of the homework.

Strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

15. My child gets (I give) an appropriate amount of homework.

Strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

16. Parents/Guardians/Caregivers: Homework causes tension in our home.

Strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

NA (educators choose this option)

17. Parents/Guardians ONLY: Homework impacts time we can spend as a family (family outings, eating together, playing or spending time together).

Strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

NA (educators choose this option)

18. Parents/Caregivers ONLY: Homework impacts my child(ren)'s participation in extracurricular activities (sports, religion, hobbies, clubs, etc.).

Strongly disagree disagree neither agree nor disagree agree strongly agree

NA (educators choose this option)

19. Parents/Guardians ONLY: Do you feel that YOU can adequately help your child when they struggle with math homework?

Yes No A Little N/A (educators)

20. If you would like to include any other thoughts, pieces of information or explanations of the above answers, please do so here.

Appendix D

Consent Form For Interview Participants

Dear Parents/Guardians,

You are invited to take part in a research study titled, The Impact of Homework on Families of Elementary Students and Parent's Perceptions of their Abilities to Help with Homework. This study is focused on the homework experiences of families with students in general education classes or inclusion classes. For the purposes of this study, a "parent" is any caregiver who regularly completes homework with the student, outside of a school setting. For this study, you must have at least one child who:

- is in a general education or inclusion (co-teach) class
- in grades K-5 for the 2019-2020 school year
- who receives homework

This study is being done as part of the requirements for Doctor of Education at St. John's University. Your participation will allow this researcher to document and publish how parents of elementary school students regard homework and their experiences while completing homework. The researcher will be conducting interviews through Google Slides. If you wish to participate, but are unable to respond electronically, a paper copy of the questions can be mailed to you. The researcher will not collect your name and your email address will remain anonymous. The only person that will have access to the information you provide will be this researcher. There will be no compensation for participating in this project, it is completely voluntary.

If you have any additional questions about this project, or need clarification when answering the interview questions, please email Keri.Sabella17@stjohns.edu or call 516-851-8550. If you have any questions about this research or how it will be used, please contact the researcher's St. John's faculty sponsor, Dr. Anthony Annunziato at annunzia@stjohns.edu or contact Dr. Marie Nitopi with St. John's Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 718-990-1440 or irbstjohns@stjohns.edu.

Sincerely,

Keri Murphy-Sabella

XXX Rosewood Lane

Wantagh, NY 11793

Demographic Questions

1. The person completing this survey is

   Male Female

2. What is your highest level of educational attainment?

   Some high school

   High school diploma/GED

   Some college

   Associate's Degree

   Bachelor's Degree

   Master's Degree

   Doctorate or more

3. With which ethnicity do you most closely identify?

   White

   African American

   Hispanic/Latino

   Asian

   Multiracial

   Pacific Islander

   Other

   Prefer not to answer

4. My child(ren) is in the following grade:

   K 1 2 3 4 5

5. How many children live in the home?

1 2 3 4 5 or more N/A (educators)

6. How many adults live in the home?

   1 2 3 4 5 or more N/A (educators)

7. Are you the parent/guardian who primarily oversees homework?

   Yes No

8. On average, how would you describe your child as a learner? (Struggling, Average, Above Average) _____

Interview Questions:

9. Do you think homework is important? Please explain.
10. Do you think the amount of time spent on homework relates to your child's achievement in school? How do you justify that answer?
11. Do you think homework helps your child to feel more positive about school and learning?
12. Are there certain subjects where you feel more or less comfortable helping your child (i.e math or reading or science or spelling or social studies)? Please explain.
13. Think about a time your child(ren) struggled with understanding math homework. Did YOU feel comfortable providing help? Did your child understand after your explanation?
14. If your (K-5) child needs help with homework, are you confident that you can provide helpful support?
15. Does homework impact family time (i.e. leisure time, outings, activities together, meal time, etc.)? Explain.

16. Does homework impact extracurricular activities (i.e. sports, religion, free time, playtime)?
17. About how much time does your child spend on homework each night? Do you think this is the "right amount" of homework?

    For multiple children, please identify with the grade level before providing your answer.
18. Think again about a time your child struggled with understanding math homework. Describe that experience. What was your child's response to your help?
19. What is the typical attitude and behavior of your (K-5) child(ren) in regard to homework?
20. Does elementary homework cause arguments, tension or stress at home? If so, please describe.
21. How involved are you with your child(ren)'s homework? (i.e. Do you decide where and when it's completed, do you check it over, do you correct mistakes, do you provide answers?)
22. Is there anything else that you would like to include about your experiences with your child and homework?

Appendix E

Demographics of Quantitative Survey Participants

Gender	Number of Parents	Number of Educators
Males	10	5
Females	246	59
Ethnicity	**Number of Parents**	**Number of Educators**
White	223	56
African American	0	1
Hispanic/Latino	14	3
Asian	7	0
Multiracial	0	0
Pacific Islander	0	0
Other	3	0
Prefer Not to Answer	9	4
Education Level	**Number of Parents**	**Number of Educators**
Some High School	2	0
High School Diploma/GED	16	1
Some College	32	0
Associate's Degree	35	0
Bachelor's Degree	65	2
Master's Degree	103	59
Doctorate +	3	2
Number of children living in the home		**Number of Parent Responses**
1		38
2		148
3		55
4		13
5 or more		2
Number of adults living in the home		**Number of Parent Responses**
1		12
2		211
3		26
4		6
5 or more		1
Person most responsible for homework oversight		**Number of Parent Responses**
Parent completing the survey		200
Significant other		25
Another caregiver		3
Grandparent		7
After School Program		21

Appendix F

Demographics of Qualitative Interview Participants

Gender	Number of Responses
Males	0
Females	8
Ethnicity	**Number of Responses**
White	7
African American	0
Hispanic/Latino	1
Asian	0
Multiracial	0
Pacific Islander	0
Other	0
Prefer not to answer	0
Education Level	**Number of Responses**
Some High School	0
High School Diploma/GED	1
Some College	2
Associate's Degree	0
Bachelor's Degree	1
Master's Degree +	4
Doctorate +	0
Number of children living in the home	**Number of Responses**
1	3
2	4
3	1
4	0
5 or more	0
Number of adults living in the home	**Number of Responses**
1	0
2	5
3	2
4	1
5 or more	0
Person most responsible for homework oversight	**Number of Responses**
Parent completing the survey	8
Spouse/Partner	0
Another caregiver	0
Grandparent	0
After School Program	0

Appendix G

Perceptions of Parent Abilities to help with Homework

Theme	**Parent Response**	**Educator Response**
Parents causing confusion	- "I can NOT help math because of the changes that have been made with the way it is taught." - "Common Core way of learning has made it difficult to help my children with the math." - "It's difficult to help my children [with math] when I don't have an understanding of how they are taught." - "I try to show her, but she tells me that's not the way she learned." - "The only thing I can do is give her the final answer. But I know it's not the way she's learning it, so I don't think I'm helping at all. I'm probably making it more confusing."	- "Parents have difficulty particularly helping with mathematics in the age of Common Core and as a result more students are struggling now." - "Many times the homework comes back to school with wrong answers…the child says, 'my dad told me I was wrong and made me change it,' meanwhile the student was correct."
Parents as tutors	- "I often look for lessons on YouTube pertaining to the [math] topic. I cannot solve the problem using the steps, techniques and strategies they were taught to use in class." - "I have to look back in their workbooks to see how they learned it…I have to teach myself how they learned and explain it in that way." - "I feel comfortable after reviewing prior examples." - "I watch videos and then help."	

Appendix H

Participants' views on time constraints

Theme	**Parent Responses**
Time constraints make homework completion difficult.	- "It is extremely difficult to juggle working full time, raising two kids, dinner, homework and after school activities in a 4-hour time period. I often feel something is compromised; dinner, family time, homework, social activities or physical fitness." - "Two working parents, getting home late and after school activities impact homework." - "Homework can sometimes cut into family time after dinner." - "Sometimes it's difficult because she gets home from cheer or religion fairly late. She still needs to have dinner, shower and do homework. So those days are hard."

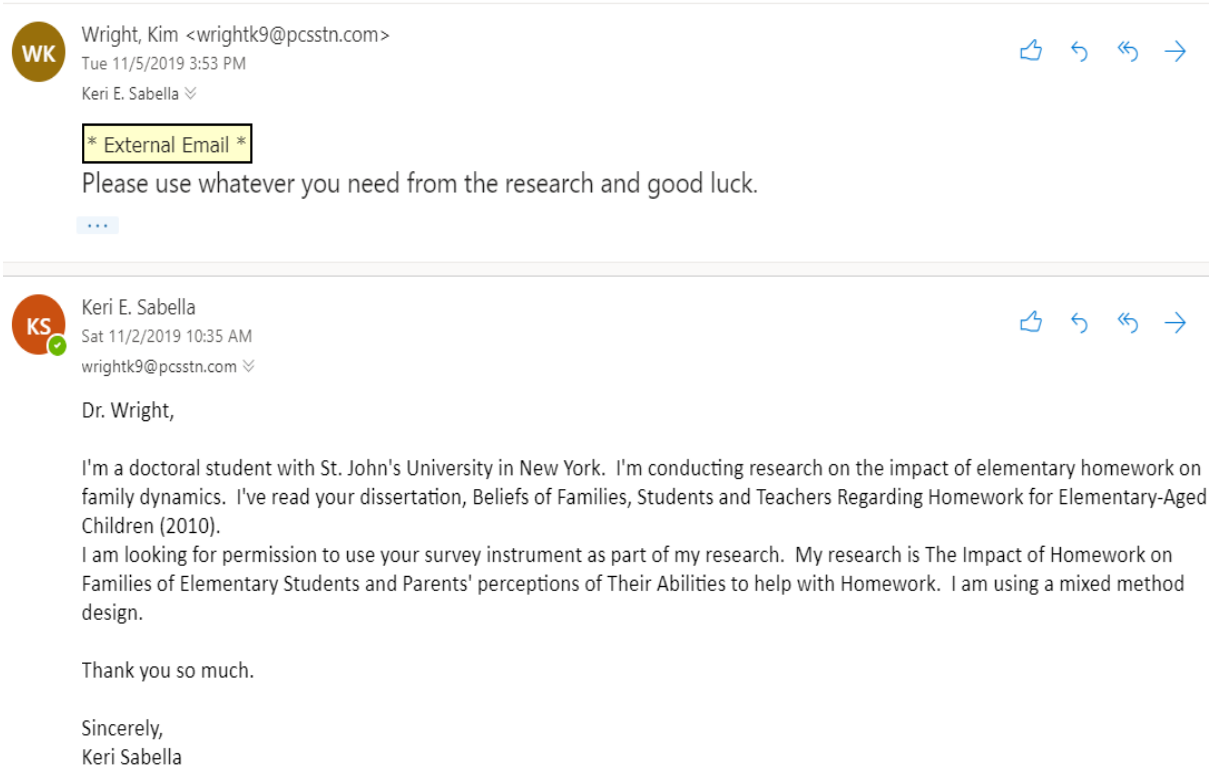
Appendix I

Participants and families feel stressed

Theme	**Parent Response Evidence**
Homework causes stress to children and families	- "I feel that my spouse and I spend so much time trying to read the directions and figure out what is being asked to do, which takes extra time to complete the assignment which ultimately leads to tired and frustrated children at homework time." - "Homework is daunting and takes far too much time. My child is done with learning at the end of the day and it is a fight to do homework every day." - "I spend more time fighting with my [son] and it adds to his stress and anxiety which is unnecessary for his age." - "We have times of tears of frustration. I try to show her how to do it, but she will tell me they learned if different in school and the teacher will mark her wrong if it is not done the right way."

Appendix J

Researcher Permissions



WK

Wright, Kim <wrightk9@pcsstn.com>
Tue 11/5/2019 3:53 PM
Keri E. Sabella

* External Email *

Please use whatever you need from the research and good luck.

...

KS

Keri E. Sabella
Sat 11/2/2019 10:35 AM
wrightk9@pcsstn.com

Dr. Wright,

I'm a doctoral student with St. John's University in New York. I'm conducting research on the impact of elementary homework on family dynamics. I've read your dissertation, Beliefs of Families, Students and Teachers Regarding Homework for Elementary-Aged Children (2010).
I am looking for permission to use your survey instrument as part of my research. My research is The Impact of Homework on Families of Elementary Students and Parents' perceptions of Their Abilities to help with Homework. I am using a mixed method design.

Thank you so much.

Sincerely,
Keri Sabella

IK

Idit Katz <katzid@bgu.ac.il>
Sun 11/3/2019 1:35 AM
Keri E. Sabella

* External Email *

Dear Keri Sabella,
Thank you for your interest in my research. I surly agree to use this instrument. If any help needed, please do not hesitate to contuct me.
Idit Katz

...

KS

Keri E. Sabella
Sat 11/2/2019 10:50 AM
katzid@bgu.ac.il

Dr. Katz,

I'm a doctoral student with St. John's University in New York. I'm conducting research on the impact of elementary homework on family dynamics. I've read your study, Homework Stress: Construct Validation of a Measure.
I am looking for permission to use your survey instrument as part of my research. My research is The Impact of Homework on Families of Elementary Students and Parents' perceptions of Their Abilities to help with Homework. I am using a mixed method design and would use some of your quantitative survey questions in my qualitative interviews. The interviews are intended to provide parents with the opportunity to further describe their experiences with homework.

Thank you so much.

Sincerely,
Keri Sabella

Re: Dissertation Survey Inbox ×

CHRISTY HOEKE CHRISTY.HOEKE@gcstn.org via mystjohns.onmicrosoft.com Fri, Jun 28, 11:26 AM

to Keri

* External Email *

Yes, you have. That indeed was my dissertation. You are more than welcome to use it! I look forward to seeing your results. Please keep me posted.

Dr. Christy Hoeke
Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 28, 2019, at 11:10 AM, Keri sabella <automailer@edlio.com> wrote:

> **From:** Keri sabella <keri.sabella17@stjohns.edu>
> **To:** CHRISTY HOEKE
> **Subject:** Dissertation Survey
>
> I'm hoping I've found the correct Dr. Hoeke. Was your dissertation, "Homework Practices: Teacher and Parent Perceptions of Efficacy and Purpose?"
> If so, I was wondering if I have your permission to use a few of your research questions in my own homework survey for my dissertation.
> Thank you,
> Keri Sabella

REFERENCES

Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Psychological Review, 28,* 117-148.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control.* New York, NY: W H Freeman/Times Books/ Henry Holt & Co.

Bempechat, J. (2004). The motivational benefits of homework: a social-cognitive perspective. *Theory into Practice, (43*)3, 189-196.

Butin, D. W. (2010). *The Education Dissertation: A Guide for Practitioner Scholars*. Corwin, A SAGE Publications Company.

Census.gov https://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/tabST-F1-2000.pdf

Cooper, H. (1989). Synthesis of research on homework. *Educational Leadership, 47*, 85-91.

Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C., & Patall, E. A. (2006). Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research, 1987-2003. *Review of Educational Research*, *76*(1), 1–62. Retrieved from https://search-ebscohost-com.jerome.stjohns.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ751143&site=ehost-live

Cooper, H. (2007). *The Battle over Homework Common Ground for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents* (3rd ed.). New York: Carrel Books.

Corno, L. & Xu, J. (2004). Homework as the job of childhood. *Theory Into Practice, 43*(3), 227-233.

Cowan, R., Traill, D., & McNaughton, S. (1998). Homework for primary children: Ideals and reality. *The Psychology of Education Review, 22*, 20-27.

Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Danielson, M. L. Strom, B., Kramer, K. (2011). Real homework tasks: a pilot study of types, values, and resource requirements. *Educational Research Quarterly, 35*(1), 17-32. Retrieved from https://search-ebscohost-com.jerome.stjohns.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=66721129&site=ehost-live

Data.Nysed.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://data.nysed.gov/lists.php?type=district

Dudley-Marling (2003). How school troubles come home: the impact of homework on families of struggling learners. *Current Issues in Education, 6*(4), 1-11.

Eccles, J. S. (1983). Expectancies, values and academic behaviors. Achievement and achievement motives: Psychological and sociological approaches (pp. 75–146). San Francisco: Freeman.

Epstein, J.L. & Van Voorhis, F.L. (2001). More than minutes: teachers' roles in designing homework. *Educational Psychology, 36*(3), 181-193.

Eren, O., & Henderson, D. J. (2011). Are we wasting our children's time by giving them more homework? *Economics of Education Review*, *30*(5), 950–961. Retrieved from https://search-ebscohost-com.jerome.stjohns.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ936135&site=ehost-live

Farkas, S. (1999). *Playing their parts: parents and teachers talk about parental involvement in public schools: a report from Public Agenda*. New York: NY: Public Agenda.

Finn, C. E., United States. Office of Educational Research and Improvement., United

States. Dept. of Education. (1986). *What works: research about teaching and learning.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Education. .edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1024833&site=ehost-live

Gill, B.P., & Schlossman, S.L. (2003) A nation at rest: The American way of homework. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 25*(3), 319-337.

Ginsburg, K.R. (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. *American Academy of Pediatrics, 119*(1), 182-191.

Gonida, E.N. & Cortina, K.S. (2014). Parental involvement in homework: Relations with parent and student achievement-related motivational beliefs and achievement. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, (84*), 376-396.

Hoeke, C. (2017). *Homework practices: Teacher and parent perceptions of efficacy and purpose* (Order No. 10757634). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1987625569). Retrieved from https://jerome.stjohns.edu/login??url= https://search-proquest-com.jerome.stjohns.edu/docview/1987625569? accountid=14068

Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Bassler, O.C. (1995). Parents' reported involvement in students' homework: Strategies and practices. Elementary School Journal, 95(5), 435. https://doi.org/10.1086/461854

JASP Team (2019). JASP (Version 0.11.1)[Computer software].

Katz, I., Buzukashvili, T., & Feingold, L. (2012). Homework stress: Construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Experimental Education*, *80*(4), 405–421. Retrieved from https://search-ebscohost-com.jerome.stjohns.edu/login.aspx?direct=

true&db=eric&AN=EJ975938&site=ehost-live

Kitsantas, A., Cheema, J., & Ware, H. W. (2011). Mathematics achievement: The role of homework and self-efficacy beliefs. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 22, 310-330.

Kohn, A. (2006). *The homework myth: Why our kids get too much of a bad thing.* Boston, MA: DaCapo.

Kralovac, E., & Buell, J. (2001). End homework now. *Educational Leadership*, *58*(7), 39–42. Retrieved from https://search-ebscohost-com.jerome.stjohns.edu/login.aspx? direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ626293&site=ehost-live

Kralovac, E. (2007). A brief history of homework. *Encounter*, Education for Meaning and Social Justice, 20(4), 4-5.

Lee., J.F., Jr. & Pruitt, K.W. (1979). Homework assignments: classroom games or teaching tools? *Clearing House*, *53*, 31-35.

Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. (2007) *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: The Homework Experience. A Survey of Students, Teachers and Parents*. New York: ERIC Clearinghouse.

Murray. L. Woolgar, M., Martins C., Christaki, A., Hipwell, A., & Cooper, P. (2006). Conversations around homework: links to parental mental health, family characteristics and child psychological functioning. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *24*(1), 125-149.

National Parent Teacher Association. (2016). Homework: Quality over quantity. Retrieved from https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/ptas-positions/Individual-PTA-Resolutions/Homework-Quality-Over-Quantity

Patall, E. A., Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C. (2008). Parent involvement in homework: A research synthesis. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(4), 1039-1101.

Pressman, R. M., Sugarman, D. B., Nemon, M. L., Desjarlais, J., Owens, J. A., & Schettini-Evans, A. (2015). Homework and family stress: With consideration of parents' self Confidence, educational level, and cultural background. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, *43*(4), 297–313. https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2015.1061407

Roper, J. C. (2008). *The effects of practice and working-practice homework on the math achievement of elementary school students showing varying levels of math performance* (Order No. 3483997). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (904395002). Retrieved from https://jerome.stjohns.edu/login??url=https://search-proquest-com.jerome.stjohns.edu/docview/904395002?accountid=14068

Seifert, T. (2004). Understanding student motivation. *Educational Research, 46*(2), 137-149.

United States Department of Education. (2003). *The basics- Heling your child with homework.* Retrieved from US Department of Education: https://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/homework/part4.html

Usher, E. L. (2009). Sources of middle school students' self-efficacy in mathematics: A qualitative investigation of student, teacher and parent perspectives. *American Educational Research Journal, 46*, 275-314.

Van Voorhis, F. (2004). Reflecting on the homework ritual: Assignments and designs. *Theory into Practice, 43*(3), 205-212.

Van Voorhis, F. (2011). Adding families to the homework equation: a longitudinal study of mathematics achievement. *Education and Urban Society*, *43*(3), 313-338.

Vatterott, C. (2010). Five hallmarks of good homework. *Educational Leadership, 68*(1), 10-15.

Vatterott, C. (2018). *Rethinking homework: Best practices that support diverse needs* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Watkins, P. J., & Stevens, D. W. (2013). The goldilocks dilemma: homework policy creating a culture where simply good is just not good enough. *Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, *86*(2), 80–85. Retrieved from https://search-ebscohost.com.jerome.stjohns.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1012641&site=ehost-live

Wright, K. M. (2010). *Beliefs of families, students, and teachers regarding homework for elementary-aged children* (Order No. 3418887). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (753899996). Retrieved from https://jerome.stjohns.edu/login??url=https://search-proquest-com.jerome.stjohns.edu/docview/753899996?accountid=14068

Xu, J. & Corno, L. (1998). Case studies of families doing third grade homework. *Teachers College Record, 100*(2), 402–406.

Vita

Name	*Keri Murphy-Sabella*
Baccalaureate Degree	*Bachelor of Arts, SUNY Cortland* *Cortland, NY* *Major: Elementary Education and Psychology*
Date Graduated	*December, 2002*
Other Degrees and Certificates	*Master of Arts, Adelphi University,* *Garden City, NY* *Major: Literacy Birth-Grade 6*
Date Graduated	*December, 2006*