

# Driving Away the Homework Blues

## *Analyzing Student Views*

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**Abstract:** One of the many Herculean challenges a teacher has to cope with on the educational landscape is convincing students to complete their daily homework. Students' attitude toward this category of 'out-of-class tasks' is largely dependent on their mindset, which in turn is predetermined by the array of experiences encountered by them in the course of homework completion. Educators of the present millennium need to realize that the fastest way to students' minds is through their hearts. Hence, it would be well its worth to enhance learners' perceptions of homework in a bid to transform their approach towards it. The present study sought to explore perceptions of Middle and High School students on four dimensions of homework, namely, Personal Experience, Personal Opinion, Personal Interest and Autonomous Motivation. It delved into the most likely reasons for non-completion of this element of coursework by students. It also explored their preferences for more creative options of tasks and assignments allocated as homework in the different subjects of the school curriculum, as against the traditional routine and mundane activities prescribed by teachers. The sample comprised of 576 students of a private aided English medium State Board School in Mumbai. Partial correlation analysis was conducted to assess which variables exhibited the strongest interrelationship in students' perception of homework. Findings revealed that Personal Opinion and Autonomous Motivation exhibited the highest association with students' attitude towards homework and its completion. More importantly the study revealed important trends in student preferences for different types of homework, as well as shed light upon the most common reasons for its non-completion.

**Index Terms-** Homework, Personal Opinion, Personal Experience, Personal Interest, Autonomous Motivation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Homework has been an age old practice inherent in the teaching-learning process. It has always been a debatable topic in the educational scenario with students and teachers being at logger heads about its importance and utility value. Nevertheless, despite its unpopularity, the numerous complaints raised by the student fraternity about this customary exercise and the myriad problems encountered by the teaching fraternity in ensuring its completion by students, it has still maintained its stay over the academic horizon. Homework is defined as written/oral individual or group tasks assigned to students by the teacher to be done out of school time with the purpose of getting equipped for new learning material or alternatively, reinforcing, expanding, practicing or completing newly learned material. Cooper (1989) defined homework as work assigned by educators for students to carry out during non-school hours. Earlier studies have emphasized the innumerable academic advantages and benefits of completing homework. Reasons usually cited by educators for allocating homework include: to help students practice skills or prepare for exams; to help them develop good work habits, life skills, critical thinking; and to encourage students to learn (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2007). Homework has also proved to make a significant contribution to increasing student achievement (Carr 2013; Dean et al. 2012; Cooper, 2007). According to Trautwein et al (2009), the basis of homework is divided into three broad aims: the first and most central aim reported by teachers is to enhance students' academic achievements by drill and practice. The second speaks of improving motivation and self-control among students, thus imparting to them capabilities such as personal responsibility. The third aim relates to the establishment of a strong relationship between the school and the home, as homework informs parents of the contents taught at school, promotes communication on school-related subjects, and generates standards and expectations. Many studies have discussed the benefits and limitations of assigning homework. Other proponents of the valuable worth of homework recommend that homework offers instantaneous advantages to students, such as enhancing their grades, their academic performance, and their approach to their studies. The long-term benefits include time management and constructive problem solving which will assist students not only at school but in their later life as well. Many believe that homework widens one's prospects, as well as prepares students for life and for dealing with the complexities of a competitive world (Davidovitch et al., 2016). Homework has also been considered as a solution that enables the educational system to cope with an overloaded curriculum, relieving the burden and letting teachers teach more material in class while confident that the students are practicing the contents learned at home (Alanne and Macgregor, 2007). While these reasons for assigning homework are well-intended, they reflect the view point of educators. Difficulties in achieving these goals may be caused by differences in student perception of the purpose of homework assignments. Some of the issues which have confounded the problem further include the mental fatigue arising from the overload of homework assigned on a given school day, a sense of frustration and anxiety arising from incompetence to complete the tasks assigned, lack of leisure time due to hectic after-school schedules and a faulty perception of homework as a penalty. Several other factors also play a major role in determining students' perception of homework namely, the resources and the social support system available to provide the necessary guidance and assistance that they need. An important aspect that needs to be considered when educators assign homework, is that they need to consider student ability level and the repercussions of after-class activities on student performance (Cooper, 2001). Darling-Hammond and Ifill-Lynch (2006) proposed that a considerable number of students don't really know how to do the homework so as to derive any satisfaction from it. A smaller number expressed that they did not have time to complete it. Another reason as to why students do not complete homework is to protect their self-esteem. This is a belief in which students feel they are better off exhibiting an attitude of not caring, rather than trying and then failing, which would prove them to be incompetent. More often than not

homework assigning is based on a teacher's personal beliefs rather than on research-based best practices (Bryan, 2004). Simpicio (2005) has identified three problem areas with regards to non-completion of homework by students. The first problem is to do with consistency. Some teachers give little or no homework, while others give too much. It is important that teachers cooperate with one another about the amount and type of homework they are assigning. A second problem is that many homework assignments do not accomplish the educational objective they were designed to achieve. Instead of reinforcing classroom learning, they end up reinforcing bad habits if the student was unable to grasp the concepts covered in class. This gives rise to a new set of problems resulting in parents completing the homework on behalf of the child. Thus the entire intended objective of assigning homework is totally defeated. Hectic after-school schedules pose a huge problem to students leaving them with no viable option but to complete their assignments at breakneck speed with no emphasis on quality. They come to believe that submitting sub-standard work is better than not submitting the assignment at all as teachers rarely check the quality of work turned in by them. Vatterott (2009) notes that teachers have discovered that the rate of homework completed is indirectly proportional to the quantity of homework assigned. Smaller amounts prove to be beneficial for learning, whereas too much homework is likely to have a negative impact and remain undone.

If educators have to ensure that the envisioned goals of allocating homework to students are achieved, it would call for a paradigm shift in the way students perceive homework and its significance. There are numerous research-proven approaches that, if used appropriately and efficiently, will ensure that students complete homework when assigned. These strategies will also warrant that homework meets clear learning objectives, and hopefully will ease the homework burden placed on parents and families. Shockley (1964) has proposed a list of suggested strategies for teachers to use when constructing and assigning homework. Firstly, teachers should assign work that can be completed within reasonable time limits. Also, homework should be an extension of the work that was completed in class on a given school day. It is important for teachers to pay heed to individual differences in students' interests and learning styles. The need of the hour is to do away with the current one-size-fits-all strategy which is the existing homework regime. Customized assignments should be available if needed. Finally, Shockley suggests that teachers tip the balance towards homework quality rather than quantity. This will encourage students to take their time and do the assignment diligently rather than hastily without learning what is intended. Darling-Hammond (2006) suggested several measures to encourage students to complete their homework. Firstly, she recommended that the work that is assigned needs to be viewed as deserving of effort by the students concerned. She proposed that homework tasks should be authentic and engaging such that students have a valid reason to do them. Students will be more enthusiastic to complete homework if they see it as meaningful to their own life. It is also important that they believe the homework has some utility value. For example, if students know the assignment will be used in class the next day, they will be more motivated to make sure it gets done.

Homework should be used to help teachers formatively assess how students are progressing. Doing "busywork" (such as finding answers in a book) is of no value to demonstrate what a student knows or has learned. Homework should provide teachers with a true picture of what a student knows or understands (Carr, 2013). It should never be used as a punishment or a technique that is likely to drive home a message that homework is an undesirable task (Dean et al., 2012).

Autonomous motivation of students is a significant and inherent element whose importance in coloring their perceptions about homework cannot be denied. Student motivation to complete homework assignments is in turn influenced by an array of opinions, outlooks, and feelings. These include students' experiences that lead to success or failure, their personal expectations and criteria for performance, and confidence in their ability to do well. These beliefs, attitudes, and emotions develop in the multiple settings of students' homes, schools, and culture. This indicates that parents too have a role to play in helping children develop the right perception of homework.

The need of the hour is for parents, educators and students to arrive at a consensus about the invaluable worth of homework. A review of previous literature reveals that studies highlighting student perceptions of homework are conspicuous by their absence. The present study attempted to look into students' perspective of homework as they are the main stakeholders in the educational process and their voices cannot go unheard. The research endeavored to explore the reasons most often cited by students for not completing their assignments and homework, as this would throw more light on their personal limitations in meeting with submission deadlines. There also exists a dearth of studies which have considered enhancing the quality and creativity of homework assignments to make them more appealing, interesting and enjoyable for students so as to replace the existing obsolete modes. The investigator sought to bridge all the mentioned voids in existing research through this study.

## II. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the study was to assess students' perception of homework in Middle /High School so as to modify their approach towards it. The objectives were as follows:

- To assess Middle/High students' perceptions about the 4 different dimensions of homework.
- To identify the most predominant reasons for Middle/High school students not completing their homework.
- To examine the appeal of the creative component in enhancing homework quality.
- To compare the difference in the interrelationship, if any, in the 4 dimensions of homework.

## III. HYPOTHESIS

The following null hypothesis was formulated for the study:

- There is no significant difference in the interrelationship between the 4 dimensions of homework.

#### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design employed was descriptive and included a survey. Moreover, the present study is of the correlational and comparative type because it sought to analyse the relationship between the 4 dimensions of homework and compare any likely differences between them.

##### 4.1 Population and Sample

The sample comprised of 576 students of the secondary section (standards V to IX) of a private-aided English medium school in Mumbai, affiliated to the S.S.C Board of Education selected by the convenience sampling technique.

##### 4.2 Data and Sources of Data

The Students' Homework Perception Scale was explained to the students and then administered. They were given a time period of 30 minutes to fill the same. The results were then scored and tabulated. The scale comprised of 3 parts:

- ✓ A 4 point Likert scale comprising of 20 items related to 4 dimensions of homework, namely, Personal Experience, Personal Opinion, Personal Interest and Autonomous Motivation.
- ✓ 10 common reasons for students not completing homework were listed. Students were expected to tick mark which of them in their experience was most often cited as an excuse for not completing their homework.
- ✓ 5 pairs of statements specifically pertaining to the homework activities commonly given by teachers in different subjects. The responses to the items had to be given by the students on the basis of which item of each pair they found more appealing, interesting and enjoyable. A higher scale value was assigned to the more creative option and a lower score to the traditional option.

##### 4.3 Theoretical framework

Homework was the variable studied and it had 4 dimensions namely, Personal Experience, Personal Opinion, Personal Interest and Autonomous Motivation. The operational definitions of the key terms included in this study have been given below:

1. **Homework:** School work formally assigned to students for completion beyond school hours.
2. **Student Perception:** The way a student regards or interprets homework.
3. **Personal Experience:** The student's own observations and impressions arising from his/her practical encounter with homework.
4. **Personal Opinion:** The student's own view, thought, belief or judgment about homework.
5. **Personal Interest:** The student's feeling of wanting to pay attention or be involved in doing the homework.
6. **Autonomous Motivation:** The intrinsic goals or outcomes which encourage a student to complete his/her homework for the purpose of self-development.
7. **Creative Component:** The techniques, strategies and activities that a teacher uses to enhance the quality of homework and make it interesting, enjoyable and appealing to students.

##### 4.4 Statistical Analysis

The scores were tabulated and then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics

- **Descriptive analysis** included the summary of the mean percentage of the 4 dimensions of Homework namely; Personal Experience, Personal Opinion, Personal Interest and Autonomous Motivation. The magnitude of these variables in Middle/High School students and the Total Number of Students was also computed and tabulated. The reasons for not completing homework and student preferences for creative versions of homework vis-à-vis traditional options have also been summarized.
- **Inferential statistics** included computation of Partial Correlation Coefficients between the 4 different dimensions of homework, considering any 2 given dimensions at a time and controlling the effect of the other one or two for calculation of first order or second order partial correlation coefficients respectively. When P value was less than 0.05, the difference was considered statistically significant and highly significant when P-value was less than 0.01 and 0.0001.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 5.1 Results of Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Table 1 shows the magnitude of the variables of the study.

Table 1: Magnitude of the Variables of the Study

VARIABLE	GROUP	MEAN	PERCENT MEAN	MAGNITUDE
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE (PE)	Middle School	16.18	74.53	SUBSTANTIAL
	High School	15.76	71.73	SUBSTANTIAL
	Total no. of students	15.97	73.13	SUBSTANTIAL
PERSONAL OPINION (PO)	Middle School	16.07	73.8	SUBSTANTIAL
	High School	16.02	73.47	SUBSTANTIAL
	Total no. of students	16.05	73.67	SUBSTANTIAL
PERSONAL INTEREST (PI)	Middle School	14.3	62	SUBSTANTIAL
	High School	14.55	63.67	SUBSTANTIAL
	Total no. of students	14.43	62.87	SUBSTANTIAL
AUTONOMOUS MOTIVATION (AM)	Middle School	14.37	62.47	SUBSTANTIAL
	High School	14.48	63.2	SUBSTANTIAL
	Total no. of students	14.43	62.87	SUBSTANTIAL

From Table 1 it can be concluded that the Percentage Mean of all the 4 dimensions of homework was found to be substantial in both Middle School and High School students. However, a closer look at the data reveals that the values are slightly lower in the case of Personal Interest and Autonomous Motivation, thereby indicating that these 2 dimensions deserve more attention when seeking to transform student perceptions about homework.

Table 2 shows a summary of 10 of the most predominant reasons cited by students for not completing their homework.

Table 2: Students' Most Predominant Reasons for Not Completing Homework

REASON	NO. OF STUDENTS WHO STATE THIS REASON MOST OFTEN
I was working on other assignments.	344
I am involved in a lot of after school activities.	298
I forget to do it.	224
I do the work but forget to submit it.	222
I did not have the time to complete it.	217
I was ill.	201
I did not know what I was supposed to do.	193
I did not understand it.	173
I was absent when the homework was given.	135
I just don't like doing homework.	134

As revealed by the data in Table 2, the most commonly cited reason for students not completing/submitting their homework was that they were working on other assignments and involved in a lot of after school activities. This finding is supported by prior research evidence too. Many researchers have opined from their findings that students spend too much time doing school work beyond school hours and hence do not have enough time to enjoy leisure activities or family time (Kohn, 2006). Students, and increasingly parents, have often expressed frustration over the amount of time spent on homework (Rauch, 2004). Many students have non-conducive home environments for studying, or their parents are unable to help them with their homework (Vatterott, 2009). Consequently, they struggle to get their work turned in on time. This calls for educators to pay heed to the hectic and often overloaded schedules of students which do not permit them to keep up with the submission deadlines fixed by teachers. Recommendations to overcome these hurdles have been put forth at the end of the discussion of the findings of this study.

Table 3 shows a comparative summary of the number of students who preferred the creative version of homework vis-à-vis the traditional option in the different school subjects of the curriculum.



Table 3: Student Preferences for the Creative Version of Homework as Compared to the Traditional Option

SUBJECT	OPTION	NO.OF STUDENTS
English	Creative	274
	Traditional	302
History	Creative	392
	Traditional	184
Mathematics	Creative	324
	Traditional	252
Science	Creative	372
	Traditional	204
Geography	Creative	376
	Traditional	200

As is evident from Table 3, the number of students who preferred the creative option of homework activities far outnumbered those who opted for the traditional variant in all the subjects except English where contrary findings were noted. This emphasizes the changing trends and preferences of learners through the years. With the changing times, there has been a major transformation of learners from passive recipients of knowledge who prefer replication of content they have learnt, to active participants who play a vibrant role in their own learning process. Education in the present century is learner centric and prioritizes the need for developing and enhancing critical and creative thinking competencies in the student fraternity. Present day learners appreciate activity based learning which provides them with numerous opportunities for application of the knowledge they acquire. This justifies their personal preference for homework activities such as educational visits/viewing educational films followed by reporting their observations and opinions, constructing models and working models to apply theoretical knowledge, numerical games and quizzes to test divergent thinking to name a few. Prior research too suggests that the likelihood of student completion of homework can be judged by the type of assignment that is sent home (Epstein and Van Voorhis, 2001). According to this study, students' engagement declines with lower-level thinking questions that involve searching, finding and reproducing answers in a textbook. According to Vatterott (2009), challenging assignments that allow students to think critically and generate their own creative answers or ideas are more likely to be completed. Further, homework completion increases when students are emotionally engaged, allowed to give their opinion, solve a problem, compete with others, use their imagination, or be creative. The author finds that assigning homework that is engaging is important; however, valuable learning will not take place with engagement alone. There must be an alignment of homework to learning objectives.

In the present study students' preference for traditional homework activities in English as a subject denotes their lack of confidence and competence to deal with creative activities like crosswords, vocabulary improvement exercises and tasks to enhance linguistic proficiencies. This can be attributed to the fact that English is not the mother tongue/ spoken language of most students, India being a multi lingual Nation. The existing reality is that many students cannot get the much needed support and guidance from their parents and tutors to complete challenging homework activities assigned by teachers in English as they grapple with the language as well. This explains why students are averse to such out-of-the-box activities in English in comparison to the age-old and die-hard practice of replicating answers to questions which they can comfortably and conveniently copy from their prescribed text books without the expenditure of any conscious effort.

## 5.2 Results of Inferential Statistics of Study Variables

Table 4 shows the significance of 'r' for the original correlations between the 4 dimensions of homework.

Table 4: Original Correlations between the 4 Dimensions of Homework

Variables	r	r <sup>2</sup>	t	P
P.E x P.O	0.3749	0.141	9.697	<0.0001
P.E x P.I	0.2672	0.071	6.649	<0.0001
P.E x A.M	0.3683	0.136	9.499	<0.0001
P.O x P.I	0.2650	0.07	6.59	<0.0001
P.O x A.M	0.4510	0.203	12.117	<0.0001
P.I x A.M	0.3277	0.107	8.317	<0.0001

From the above data it is seen that the obtained 'r' values for different combinations of the 4 dimensions of homework in Middle and High school students are positive, low/moderate in magnitude and significant at the 0.0001 level. Of all the interrelationships analysed, the 'r' value between Personal Opinion and Autonomous Motivation was the highest i.e. 0.4510, implying that better the Personal Opinion held by students about homework, more intrinsically motivated will they be to complete it.

Table 5 shows the First Order Partial Correlations between the 4 dimensions of homework.

Table 5: First Order Partial Correlations between the 4 Dimensions of Homework

Variables	r	r <sup>2</sup>	t	P
WX.Y	0.327	0.107	8.29	<0.0001
WX.Z	0.252	0.064	6.239	<0.0001
WY.X	0.188	0.035	4.586	<0.0001
WY.Z	0.167	0.028	4.058	0.0001
WZ.X	0.241	0.058	5.949	<0.0001
WZ.Y	0.308	0.095	7.756	<0.0001
XY.W	0.185	0.034	4.51	<0.0001
XY.Z	0.139	0.019	3.363	0.0008
XZ.W	0.363	0.132	9.334	<0.0001
XZ.Y	0.4	0.16	10.456	<0.0001
YZ.W	0.256	0.066	6.345	<0.0001
YZ.X	0.242	0.059	5.976	<0.0001

Where,

W: Personal Experience

X: Personal Opinion

Y: Personal Interest

Z: Autonomous Motivation

The First Order Partial Correlation coefficients summarised in Table 5 also highlight that the highest 'r' values of 0.40 and 0.363 are observed for the interrelationship between Personal Opinion and Autonomous Motivation when Personal Interest and Personal Experience are alternatively controlled.

Table 6 shows the Second Order Partial Correlations between the 4 dimensions of homework.

Table 6: Second Order Partial Correlations between the 4 Dimensions of Homework

Variables	r	r <sup>2</sup>	t	P
WX.YZ	0.234	0.055	5.761	<0.0001
WY.XZ	0.138	0.019	3.335	0.0009
WZ.XY	0.205	0.042	5.014	<0.0001
XY.WZ	0.102	0.01	2.454	0.0144
XZ.WY	0.332	0.11	8.425	<0.0001
YZ.WX	0.206	0.042	5.039	<0.0001

Where,

W: Personal Experience

X: Personal Opinion

Y: Personal Interest

Z: Autonomous Motivation

The Second Order Partial Correlation coefficients summarised in Table 6 also reinforce the observation that the highest 'r' value of 0.332 is observed for the interrelationship between Personal Opinion and Autonomous Motivation when Personal Interest and Personal Experience are controlled.

**Interpretation:** Thus, from Tables 4, 5 and 6 it can be concluded that the 'r' value between Personal Opinion and Autonomous Motivation is the highest and is significant at the 0.0001 level. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the interrelationship between the four dimensions of homework, of which the relationship between Personal Opinion and Autonomous Motivation is the strongest.

**5.3 Discussion:** An analysis of the results obtained in Tables 4, 5 and 6 indicate that there is a positive and moderate relationship between Personal Opinion of students regarding homework and their Autonomous Motivation to complete the same. This finding suggests that if educators strive towards instilling the right mindset in students at a tender age about the very concept of homework and its significance, it could bring about a positive transformation in students' attitudes and approach towards completing out-of-class tasks assigned to them. Learners need to be convinced of the invaluable worth of homework not only as a determinant of their academic progress but more importantly, as a contributor towards making them more disciplined, organized and responsible in the journey of their own education. Cooper has stated that among the several nonacademic benefits of homework students become more goal-driven, exhibit greater self-control, master the art of time management, and are more self-reliant in facing unprecedented situations (Carr, 2013). Younger students must be helped to overcome the habit of completing homework to earn rewards and instead trained to develop an intrinsic interest to complete the same to achieve the true purpose of learning. Parents too could be instrumental in reforming students' opinions about homework by inculcating good study habits in their wards at an early age. They could teach them to prepare daily study schedules, prioritize tasks, balance school work and leisure so that children develop the right outlook towards after-school tasks instead of looking at them myopically. Parental involvement would also aid in relieving students' irrational fears about deadlines and homework completion. Research suggests that homework done with the assistance of a family member is linked with better academic progress (MetLife, 2007; Leons and Richards, 1989). Although the main aim of homework is to make students independent learners it also can fortify the connect between home and school through providing parents the avenue to work with their children to develop better study habits and skills (Gill and Schlossman, 2003). Some researchers believe that parental involvement in homework is a pivotal factor in the development of beliefs and attitudes that help children to perceive homework in a positive light (Bempechat, 2004). Research evidence has also suggested that students are most attentive to homework when they complete it with a parent, rather than with a friend or by themselves (Xu, 2009).

Lack of motivation is a prime debilitator in the story of students' adverse attitude towards homework. Some of the underlying reasons for this could include lack of parental involvement in schoolwork, the absence of a stimulating learning environment in the classroom and the prevailing trend of traditional and out-dated homework activities vis-à-vis creative assignments which are interesting, appealing and enjoyable for students. Teachers need to devise creative tasks as homework to ignite a spark of interest and enthusiasm in students, such that they are inspired to engage in these 'beyond-school' assignments. If the possibility of making homework assignments meaningful is explored, it would in turn step up students' autonomous motivation to complete it willingly and on time. Teachers need to bring into focus students' different learning styles when creating assignments. Educators must take into account that there are two main types of motivation, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic. Students who are motivated intrinsically do things for the purpose of self-development without looking for rewards or out of fear of punishment. They find the task gratifying and see value in it. Students, who are extrinsically motivated, on the contrary do things only to achieve certain results and rewards (Usher and Kober, 2012). It is thus imperative that teachers have a responsibility to make the assignments meaningful. As proposed by Hill and Nave (2009), quality of homework assignments must supersede quantity. According to King (2009), students need to have their minds challenged to be engaged constructively rather than merely meeting prescribed standards of the educational system.

One of the major factors influencing students' opinions about homework and labeling it as a 'kill-joy' is the stress associated with its completion. The thought of meeting deadlines only aggravates the problem further. It is time educators worked towards alleviating student stress in this direction, by limiting the number of homework assignments allotted on a single day. Darling-Hammond (2006) suggests that teachers could consider permitting students an opportunity to begin their homework in class so as to enable them to know whether or not students understand the assignment. The researcher also proposes that schools could allocate a time slot at the beginning or end of the school day to allow students the opportunity to work on their homework, so as to reduce their after-school workload. Above all, academicians need to realize that with the changing times, lifestyles are more demanding and hectic and students also have their own share of pressures and parental expectations to meet with. This coupled with the coaching and hobby classes they attend after school leave them little or no time for homework completion.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The concept of homework will never become outdated as an essential pedagogical practice. Neither can its vast scope of academic and nonacademic benefits be denied. If this element of coursework has to meet its true objectives and purpose, it would require educators at all levels to work undauntedly towards transforming students' attitudes, mindset and approach towards homework. This would only happen if tasks assigned for out-of-class completion are made more student-friendly, appealing, creative and worthwhile such that students are intrinsically motivated to complete them. Students' perspective of homework needs to be revamped from the grass root level by disconnecting it from the accompanying hype of deadlines, punishments and critical remarks from teachers which instill irrational fears in learners. Let us not forget that the very purpose of introducing homework in the context of school education has been defeated by churning it out to be a student's biggest rival instead of a stepping stone to their academic success.

In the light of the findings of the present research endeavor, the following recommendations can be put forth:

1. Parents must train their children to prepare a reasonable schedule to balance curricular and co-curricular activities after school hours to ensure that homework does not steal away their leisure time.
2. Parents must get more involved in helping students with the difficulties they encounter in the completion of their homework.

3. Teachers must arrive at a consensus to assign homework in the different subjects by rotation so as to avoid the overload of homework on a given school day.
4. Teachers must be encouraged to think out-of-the-box and come up with creative and appealing assignments to capture the interest and enthusiasm of students.
5. Students must be given more autonomy in the process of their own learning, transforming them from passive recipients of knowledge to active participants.
6. Students' suggestions could be considered about activities that they would find motivating to work on as homework, provided they meet the desired instructional objectives of the different subjects.
7. Schools should replace the term 'homework' with more creative titles which will itself help students to overcome the mental block they have towards this practice.
8. Schools could introduce the concept of supervised 'peer-work' to replace homework, so as to alleviate the undue stress of working beyond school hours. This would also make way for co-operative learning and peer mentoring.

## VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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