

Teacher Engagement in Homework: The Case of Private and Government Secondary Schools in Addis Ababa

Melkamu Beyeneⁱ

Addis Ababa University

Amare Asgedomⁱⁱ

Addis Ababa University

Abstract

This study explored teachers' engagement in homework across private and public secondary schools in Addis Ababa. A qualitative method with an embedded approach, ensuring validity and reliability by incorporating member checking, conducting extended site visits, and utilizing peer validation, was employed. The study involved 30 participants, including 12 teachers, 12 students, and six school leaders. The collected data was analyzed thematically. The study reveals that many teachers are not well-trained in creating effective homework assignments, even though they assign homework that fits the curriculum. They often do not consider the diverse needs of students, tend to give less time for homework, and are unable to prepare engaging and creative homework. During the homework assignment process, they impose penalties for incomplete work, as well as overseeing and completion of homework face challenges with large class sizes, cheating, and improper technology use. Private schools generally provide better feedback on homework than public schools. Many teachers express unhappiness with homework due to heavy workloads, stress from grading, and negative views on digital technology, along with parental criticism in low-performing schools.

The analysis reveals distinct variations in homework practices between public and private secondary schools. These factors significantly impact the effectiveness of homework. Therefore, it is essential for policymakers and stakeholders to reevaluate the methods of crafting, implementing, assessing, and perceiving homework in order to improve children's learning outcomes and overall performance.

Keywords: homework, teacher engagement, private and public secondary schools

DOI: 10.29329/ijpe.2025.1163.2

ⁱ **Melkamu Beyene**, Addis Ababa University, College of Education and Behavioral Studies, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, ORCID: 0009-0006-4839-723X

Correspondence: melkamubeyeneketil@gmail.com

ⁱⁱ **Amare Asgedom**, Addis Ababa University, College of Education and Behavioral Studies, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, ORCID: 0000-0002-5849-7852

INTRODUCTION

Origin and Development of Homework

The evolution of homework, initially examined by the German politician Horace Mann in the 19th century, received global acknowledgment following its implementation by the Italian educator Roberto Nevillis (Bembenuddy, 2010). According to Keith (1986), homework refers to any work students accomplish outside class, such as during study sessions or library visits. Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C., and Patall, E. A. (2006) describe teachers responsible for distributing homework that students are expected to complete outside of regular instructional hours.

A study conducted by Ilgar (2012) indicates that homework is essential to the educational process; nevertheless, it has historically sparked significant debate among educators, parents, and students. Authors Sullivan and Sequiria (1996) contend that, despite criticisms of too much homework, it positively affects educational outcomes. As well, in the U.S., schools have introduced a policy against homework, focusing on quality instead of quantity, as highlighted by Nuzlam (1998).

Authors like Trautwein and Schnyder (2009) emphasize that homework is important in classrooms for three main reasons: it helps students develop self-achievement, motivation, and self-regulation; it connects school with home, allowing parental involvement; and it encourages time management skills and good study habits (Bempechat, 2010).

Previous studies suggest that homework continues to be a debated topic in the realm of education, traditionally utilized to strengthen the concepts covered during classroom instruction. Its success relies on how teachers view, assign, and manage it, as well as the homework's design, complexity, and amount (Keith, 1986). The role of teachers in homework is important in selecting suitable homework by considering the curriculum and students' abilities, significantly influencing learning and teaching (Hanafin, 2014).

Research indicated that the shift from traditional education to contemporary, secular systems in Ethiopia presented considerable difficulties for earlier leaders. During his reign from 1889 to 1913, Emperor Menelik II endeavored to create the first educational institution within his palace. Acknowledging the constraints of this initiative, he opted to recruit teachers from Egypt (Seyoum, 1996). On the other hand, the emergence of private secondary schools in Ethiopia is a relatively recent development when contrasted with public secondary schools. Berhanu (2003) noted that by 2010, private schools in Addis Ababa represented approximately 53% of the total, a significant increase from nearly nonexistent levels in 1994. This transformation can be attributed to more desire of parents for a higher standard of education than what is provided by public secondary schools. Although both types of institutions share similar objectives and curricula, they differ in several key areas, such as funding sources and administrative approaches (Hofman, 1993).

Presently, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (2018) is worried about secondary school teachers' low quality and motivation, which results in poor student attendance and engagement. It mentions that teachers fail to motivate students, and high staff turnover worsens the situation. The report also points out that teaching methods are often non-engaging and lack practical relevance. Literature Review

Literature Review

Theoretical Perspectives

According to previous studies by Davis et al. (2003), teacher engagement is important for forming strong relationships with students. These connections enhance student involvement and improve educational outcomes. Teachers who build caring relationships with their students often feel better and have less stress and burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Moreover, in schools, teacher

engagement involves physical, mental, and emotional elements linked to their social interactions with students and peers (Rich et al., 2010).

Well-trained teachers, on the other hand, are vital in homework task practices. As well, proper training enables teachers to give fun projects, while untrained teachers may provide unclear instructions (Landing, 2009).

Some studies noted that homework works better depending on factors like the subject, its amount, difficulty, and priorities (Holte, 2016). The author also states that teachers should tailor homework to different learning styles, set clear goals, and communicate these with students to promote independent learning and improve academic success. As well, Fitzmaurice et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of homework being relevant and meaningful for students' learning and motivation.

Fitzmaurice et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of carrying out assigned homework with monitoring and support. According to Salee and Rigler (2008), digital technology also boosts education with online tools and interactive platforms. It supports personalized feedback for student homework and success. As well, NOUN (2008) stresses accountability in education, especially in homework.

Earlier research shows that teachers play a key role in encouraging students to take charge of their learning at home. They can help students appreciate homework and offer helpful feedback (Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012). The authors also suggest using personal pronouns, metaphors, and questions to engage students in homework. Evaluating assignments and giving feedback is also crucial (Trautwein et al., 2006). Research by Fitzmaurice et al. (2019) indicates that teachers apply different techniques for correcting homework, such as individual corrections, self-correction, and visual checks.

According to studies by Trautwein et al. (2009), among other factors, teachers' beliefs about homework are crucial for children's learning, indicating academic performance, teaching self-regulation, time management, and improving academic performance through practice. On the other hand, as it takes time to prepare and assess, homework can be a major challenge for teachers (Trautwein et al., 2006).

A study by Fleisher and Ohel (1974) show that parents frequently criticize teachers in professional matters, which makes them feel helpless and undermines their authority. Homework is thought to enhance students' academic performance through practice, with studies examining its benefits and drawbacks, including immediate improvements in grades, school performance, and study habits (Trautwein, etNiggli, Schnyder, &Ludtke, 2009). Moreover, teachers have been discovered to be slightly hesitant about utilizing the web to prepare homework, although they no longer actively object (Kolikant, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

In Ethiopia, many students are uninterested in learning, and teachers are not fully engaged in the homework process (MoE, 2018). Besides, teachers lack better training for effective homework assignments and clear guidance (Landing, 2009). This results in students having low attendance, enthusiasm, and interest in their studies. Teachers also worry that homework may harm students' mental and physical health (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000; Jonas sen & Blondel, 2005; Allen et al., 2007). However, a child's success with homework largely relies on the teacher's involvement (Hanafin, 2014). As well, teachers' views on homework affect students' willingness to do it (Trautwein et al., 2009).

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated teacher engagement in homework tasks in public and private secondary schools in Addis Ababa. Motivated by parents' desire for quality education and their

concern for student outcomes (Saboka, 2003), the researcher seeks to fill the knowledge gap by studying the differences and similarities in teachers' engagement with homework in these schools.

In this qualitative methods study, our research questions (RQs) are as follows:

RQ1. How are teachers involved in creating homework tasks in public and private secondary schools in Addis Ababa city?

RQ2. How are teachers participated in executing homework activities in private and government secondary schools in the city of Addis Ababa?

RQ3. To what extent do teachers assess homework in private and public secondary schools in the city of Addis Ababa?

RQ4. How do teachers perceive homework in private and public secondary schools in the city of Addis Ababa?

METHODS

Research Design and Approaches

This study employed qualitative methodologies with an embedded approach to gain a more profound understanding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It examined teachers' involvement in homework-related tasks, encompassing the design, implementation, and evaluation processes, as well as their perceptions. Consequently, an interpretative philosophical framework was utilized to gather comprehensive data regarding teachers' engagement (Pring, 2015).

Samples and Sampling Techniques

The research used purposive sampling to select study areas based on differences in children's academic performance, location, and the researcher's knowledge. Purposive sampling involves intentionally choosing specific individuals or locations for their valuable insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This differs from quantitative research, which examines larger sample sizes (Ogula, 2005). A qualitative research methodology conducts a comprehensive examination with a specific sample size, as demonstrated in the table below.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

	Gender		Total	Qualification	Gender		Total	Qualification
	M	F			M	F		
School Leaders	2	1	3	Masters	2	1	3	Masters
Teachers	4	2	6	Degree	4	2	6	Degree
Student leaders	3	3	6	11-12 grades	3	3	6	11-12 grades
Total	9	6	15		9	6	15	

In the above **Table 1**, 30 participants—12 teachers, 12 student representatives, and six school leaders—from both public and private schools participated in the study. The selection of informants was relies on expertise, experience, exposure, and closure to the issue. The study focused on selecting secondary schools based on children's national exam results over three consecutive years. This involved 47 schools from three sub-cities: Gullale, Kolfe-Keranio, and Addis Ketema. Hence, six schools were chosen— three each from private and government sectors—categorized as high, medium, and low achievers. The selected high-achieving schools were Etege-Menen and Bekulos-Nur; medium-achieving schools included Addis Ketema and Amigonia; and low-achieving schools were Ayer-Xena and Betel- Mekane-Yesus respectively.

Data Collection Instruments

A semi-structured interview was employed as one method of data collection. A semi-structured interview is a data-gathering technique in which the interviewer is not required to ask exact formal questions (George, 2022).

Semi-structured Interviews

The study included semi-structured interviews with 12, teachers, 12 students' representatives, and six school leaders of upper-grade (grades 11–12) secondary school from government and private secondary schools. A study by Ogula (2005) showed that open-ended and unstructured interviews help in discovering new ideas. To encourage participants to share freely, the researcher adjusted the time and location of the interviews. A checklist was developed to assess homework engagement among teachers in both private and public secondary schools located in Addis Ababa. The study aimed to gather qualitative data from students, teachers, and school leaders through semi-structured interviews, and theme analysis was used for data evaluation.

Methods of Data Analysis

Thematic data analysis was conducted post-data presentation, examining varied epistemologies and inquiries. Braun and Clarke (2006) define it as detecting, analyzing, categorizing, summarizing, and presenting themes through color-coding. The prevalent approach consists of a six-step procedure: becoming familiar with the data, coding, developing themes, reviewing those themes, defining and naming the themes, and finally, composing the report were employed (George, 2022). Moreover, an established method was employed to represent respondents in analyzing the collected data. Teachers were then presented from Tone (T1) to T twelve (T12), students, from S one (S1) to S twelve (S12), and school leaders, from L one (L1) to L six (L6). The text examines the categorization of secondary schools, encompassing both public and private institutions, into three distinct performance tiers: low, medium, and high-achieving. Each category is assigned specific labels, with government schools identified as HAGS, MAGS, and LAGS, while private schools are referred to as HAPS, MAPS, and LAPS. The analysis focuses on comparing teacher engagement in homework-related activities across these public and private educational establishments.

RESULTS

The function of teachers within the educational landscape is multifaceted and carries considerable significance. This section, however, specifically examines their involvement with homework in both private and public secondary schools, focusing on four key themes that emerged from the research results. Previous research conducted by Keith (1986) suggests that, despite historical criticisms regarding the educational value of homework, its effectiveness is contingent upon teachers' viewpoints, the nature and administration of the assignments, as well as their design and complexity. Furthermore, Hanafin (2014) emphasizes the critical role teachers play in selecting suitable homework that aligns with the curriculum and the capabilities of students, which has a profound impact on the learning and teaching process. Consequently, the qualitative analysis of the study's findings identified the following themes: teachers' perceptions, creation, implementation, and assessment of homework.

Teacher's craft of Homework

A well-structured homework system significantly depends on the training provided to teachers in higher education institutions. The awareness and training of teachers regarding the processes of setting, assigning, implementing, and evaluating homework are more critical. The proficiency and comprehension of teachers in designing homework directly influence the quality of the assignments given. Although research indicates the importance of training teachers in homework creation, findings reveal that the training offered, especially in higher education settings, is often insufficient, as noted by the respondents:

In HAPS and HAPS schools, there is no homework training, but professionals provide orientation on assessment. [L1, T2, and L4, T8]. Similarly, in MAPS and MAGS, separate training related to creating well-designed homework was not provided at higher institutions; though pedagogical courses were provided, on-the-job training is lacking. [L2, T4, and L5, T10]. In LAPS and LAPS, participants emphasized the importance of prior experience and training in assigning homework. Yet only a few higher institutions provided seminars on homework tasks. [L3,T5,5 and L6, T12]

As far as creating homework is concerned, the assigned homework needs to be derived from the existing curriculum. However, some educational institutions integrate additional curriculum elements or content pertinent to the subject, while others promote the use of Google resources for students when fulfilling homework tasks. Finally, participants described this methodology in the following manner:

HAPS schools place a higher value on real-world experience of the current content [S2, L1, and T1], while HAPS focuses on references and textbooks. [S 7, L 4, and T 8]. MAPS maintained alignment but added other ideas to homework [S3, L 2, and T 4]. Yet, MAGS schools don't assign homework unrelated to the material. [S 9, L 5, and T 10].In LAPS, homework delivery relates to the primary topic, [S 6, L 3, and T 5] and in LAPS, homework preparation includes extracurricular activities.[S 12, L 6, and T 11]

Most secondary schools are dedicated to designing purposeful and meaningful homework, aiming to make homework interesting, engaging, and relevant to the subject matter and the students' learning capacities. Yet, some institutions faced challenges in preparing such types of homework, as indicated by the respondents:

Both HAPS and HAPS schools provide engaging, creative, and motivating homework. [S2, L1, T1, and S8, L4, T7]. Nevertheless, MAPS and MAGS schools assign it by adding other values that do captivating and interesting homework. [S 4, L 2, T3 and S 9, L1, T 9]. Alternatively, in LAPS schools, it is difficult to prepare homework that meets every need of an individual. [S 5, L 3, T 6].In LAPS, in contrast, a standardized and excellent homework design is maintained. [S11, L6, and T12]

The frequency with which content or homework is assigned to children is a significant consideration. In this context, some institutions regularly assign homework, while others do so infrequently. Consequently, respondents from each institution provided the following feedback:

In both HAPS and HAPS schools, homework is assigned based on teachers' guidelines and schedules. [S 1, L1, T2 and S 8, L 4, T 7] While in MAPS, schools give out additional homework each week, [S 9, L 5, T 10] and in MAGS, schools English and math subjects are provided daily.[S 3, L 2, T 4]. LAPS schools usually provide homework once a week. [S 5, L 3, T 6], while LAPS adhere to monthly and weekly schedules.[S 12, L 6, T 11]

The literature advocates for the customization of homework to accommodate the diverse learning needs of children. However, it has been observed that while some secondary school teachers do factor in the learning difficulties and variations among their students when assigning homework, others neglect to consider the challenges their pupils encounter, as indicated by multiple respondents:

In preparing homework, HAPS school teachers do not consider the learning differences of children,[S 1, L1, T2], but HAPS school teachers adapt homework to accommodate children's different learning styles. [S 8, L 4, T 8]. Nevertheless, in both MAPS and MAGS, school teachers do not consider learning difficulties among children while designing homework. [S 4, L 2, T 3 and S 10, L 5, T 9]. As well, in LAPS and LAPS schools, teachers are not tailored based on student ability and struggle to give appropriate and pertinent homework. [S6, L3, T5 and S11, L6, T12]

Teacher's execution of Homework

The implementation of homework, alongside design elements, constitutes a significant factor in the successful execution of homework tasks. In this context, the volume of homework assigned to students is crucial; some schools impose an excessive amount that can be perceived as tedious and burdensome, while others assign a moderate quantity, with a few providing minimal assignments, as noted by informants:

Both high-achieving private and public secondary schools help to have a minimal amount of homework [S2, L1, T1, and S8, L4, T7]. In MAPS, schools with significant homework loads are not encouraged. [S4, L2, and T3]. In contrast, MAGS schools persuade pupils to do as little homework as possible. [S 9, L 5, T 10]. In LAPS, it is advised to assign eight to ten questions daily. [S 5, L 3, T 6]. Yet, LAGS schools practice doing the least amount of homework possible. [S 11, L 6, T 11]

In relation to the availability of time for effective homework practices, certain schools advocate for an extended duration for children, while others recommend a more moderate amount of time. Consequently, respondents indicated that:

In HAPS schools, more time is recommended for setting aside enough homework. [S 1, L1, and T2]. But in HAGS schools, children don't get sufficient playtimes. [S7, L 4, and T7]. Similarly, in medium-achieving private and public secondary schools, little time is provided for children to perform their homework tasks [S3, L 2, T 4 and S 9, L 5, T 10]. In schools, both private and public, that exhibit low academic performance, the challenges students face in the learning of respective grade levels are factored into the allocation of time designated for homework. [S 5, L 3, T 6 and S 11, L 6, T 12]

The matter of overseeing and supervising homework represents a significant aspect of its implementation. Effective management and regulation of homework are crucial due to the prevalent lack of motivation and engagement among many children. Various viewpoints regarding homework monitoring were noted, as indicated by the informants:

Both high-achieving private and public schools periodically check on the completion, employ procedures, and conduct arbitrary checks of homework [S2, L1, T1, and S7, L4, T8]. As well, medium-achieving private schools observe their students daily [S3, L 2, T 4]. Yet, medium-achieving government schools monitor poorly, and plagiarism is common. [S9, L5, T10]. Low-achieving private schools conduct observations to ensure that it is finished. [S 6, L 3, T 5]. In low-achieving government schools, however, they seldom supervise their notes because of the large class size.[S 11, L 6, and T 12]

Children who fail to comply with homework assignments should face penalties, as suggested by various previous studies. The findings revealed that children who are reluctant to participate in their tasks are subject to certain consequences, as reported by informants:

In this perspective in HAPS schools, children who disobey suffer some legal consequences. [S2, L 1, T1]. Similarly, in HAGS, it's normal to kneel in front of the class whenever they do not perform homework. [S8, L4, T7]. As well, in medium-achieving private schools, some punishments were employed. [S3, L 2, T 4]. Also in MAGS schools, reducing grades and reporting errors are commonly exercised.[S 9, L 5, T 10]. In addition, in both low-achieving private and public schools penalties including reporting, marking, and deducting of marks are employed. [S 6, L 3, T 5 and S 11, L 6, T 12]

Digital technologies enhance the execution of homework practices by providing children with access to information in a remarkably brief and smart way. Furthermore, the findings revealed that a majority of teachers are presently utilizing digital technologies to offer feedback. Overall, these tools

facilitate the distribution of questions and simplify communication with learners. Respondents also highlighted the tangible advantages of this technology as follows:

HAPS and HAPS school teachers have a positive view of the use of digital technology in homework. [S2, L1, T2, and S7, L4, T8]. But in medium-achieving private secondary schools, technology use effects are both positive and negative [S3, L 2, T4], while in MAGS schools, children are dependent on social media. [S 10, L 5, T 9]. According to LAPS, when used carelessly, digital technology has detrimental effects [S 6, L 3, T 5] while it aids in efficiently distributing homework documents in LAPS. [S 12, L 6, T 11]

Teacher's assessment of Homework

The evaluation of homework constitutes the third aspect of teachers' engagement in the homework process. Following the design and execution of homework assignments, research indicates that the review of homework is a significant concern. In this context, providing feedback on students' work is a key component of the homework review process. The findings reveal that while some schools offer comments on homework, others refrain from doing so for various reasons, as reported by respondents:

HAPS schools offer helpful critiques [S2, L1, and T2] while HAPS school children acknowledge their errors and are willing to accept the comments provided. [S 8, L 4, T 7]. Besides, MAPS, schools stress the importance of receiving constructive criticism, [S 3, L 2, T 4] and in MAGS, schools' unfinished homework is regularly commented on.[S 9, L 5, T 10]. Likewise, low-performing private and public schools engage in editing and providing constructive criticism. [S 6, L 3, T 5 and S 11, L 6, T12]

The correction of homework constitutes an essential aspect of the homework review process. In this context, various strategies were utilized for the correction of homework assignments. Participants indicated the specific strategies implemented in different school environments as follows:

In high-achieving private and government schools, the four correction strategies (visible inspection, self-correcting, individual correcting, and reporting) are executed well. [S 1, L1, T2 and S 7, L 4, T 8]. However, in MAPS and MAGS schools, the visual inspection process is mostly employed. [S3, L 2, T 4 and S 9, L 5, T 10]. Similarly, in low-achieving private and public secondary schools, visual inspection is employed to mark each student's work. [S5, L 3, T 6, and S12, L 6, T 11]

The analysis of homework assessment revealed that certain private educational institutions implement a grading system for homework, while some public schools exclude homework from their grading criteria. Overall, there is a tendency to evaluate homework; however, the implementation of this practice differs among respondents:

In most HAPS schools, homework is graded and valued. [S2, L1, T1] and also in HAPS schools, approximately 10% of continuous assessment is part of homework. [S 7, L 4, T 8]. Similarly, in MAPS schools, 15% of continuous assessment relies on homework grading. [S 4, L 2, T3]. But in MAGS schools, homework is rarely graded. [S 9, L 5, T 10]. Yet in low-achieving private secondary schools, grading is not uniform among subjects[S 6, L 3, T 5], and in low-achieving government schools, homework is not graded due to large class sizes.[S 11, L 6, T 12]

Teacher's perception of Homework

Educators' perspectives on homework significantly influence its design, implementation, and assessment. While certain teachers hold a favorable view of homework, others express skepticism. Furthermore, their beliefs can either enhance or impede the effectiveness of homework assignments.

These viewpoints also shape the practices surrounding homework. Participants provide valuable insights into teachers' attitudes toward homework:

In HAPS and HAPS schools, nearly half of teachers dislike homework, preferring it over classwork due to the workload and questions. [S 1, L1, T2 and S 7, L 4, T 8]. Furthermore, in both MAPS and MAGS schools, teachers hold varying perspectives on homework, with some expressing favorable opinions while others convey negative sentiments. [S3, L 2, T 4 and S 9, L 5, T 10]. LAPS school teachers are reluctantly assigned with negative views. [S 6, L 3, T 5]. And also teachers in LAPS often perceive homework unfavorably, since the burdensome nature of large class sizes, difficulties maintaining control, and the discomfort associated with grading assignments.[S 11, L 6, T 12]

Research suggests that insufficient time allocated for the correction of homework has become a notable challenge acknowledged by educators in the preparation and review of assignments. Consequently, a majority of teachers exhibit a negative disposition towards the time-intensive process of preparing and reviewing homework. Regarding their views on the preparation and review of homework, as well as the constraints of time, the respondents have conveyed the following:

In HAPS schools, the preparation and review of homework tasks every week are regarded as a more significant burden for teachers; however, a monthly approach is generally considered to be less demanding.[S2, L1, T1].While teachers at HAPS schools maintain an optimistic perspective of homework, even in light of potential challenges.[S 7, L 4, T 8]. Teachers in MAPS are acknowledged for the significant responsibilities associated with preparing homework and providing feedback. [S3, L 2, T 4]. Yet, teachers in MAGS schools perceive that preparing and reviewing homework is an essential responsibility of teachers.[S 9, L 5, T 10].In LAPS schools, the substantial workloads experienced by teachers have a significant impact on their perceptions and attitudes regarding homework.[S 5, L 3, T 6]. And this is viewed unfavorably due to the substantial class sizes in LAPS. [S 12, L 6, T 11]

A significant issue related to the perception of teachers arises from parental criticism. Many parents express discontent regarding the assignment of homework, although not all educators agree with these critiques. In light of this matter, the respondents provided the following recommendations.

HAPS and HAPS school teachers value criticism, note the lack of parent follow-up on homework, are open to learning from mistakes, and suggest parental involvement. [S2, L1, T2, and S 7, L 4, and T 8]. In MAPS and MAGS schools, teachers recognize the value of constructive feedback in improving teaching methods and supporting students and address parental criticism positively to improve teaching. [S 4, L 2, T 3, and S 9, L 5, T 10]. In both LAPS and LAPS, parents of students assess teachers according to the homework given; however, they claim that the instruction provided by teachers is insufficient.[S 11, L 3, T 12 and S 5, L 3, T 12]

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the engagement of teachers in homework in private and public secondary schools in the city of Addis Ababa and compares the results with previous studies. The study's findings connect with existing research, revealing four main themes: teacher's homework creation, execution, assessment, and perspectives.

Teacher's craft of Homework

Designing homework presents a significant challenge when it comes to assigning tasks to students. The training that teachers receive plays a crucial role in shaping the approach to homework design. Nevertheless, research conducted by Landing (2009) indicates that a considerable number of teachers do not possess sufficient training to provide clear instructions for homework assignments.

Many teachers across various school performance levels have not received enough college training in homework practices, and few attended relevant seminars. Holte (2016) urges teachers to make homework engaging and inspiring, but some high-performing schools struggle with this due to heavy workloads.

Fitzmaurice et al. (2014) state that for homework to be effective, it should align with the school's curriculum, which is generally followed in most schools. Government schools, on the other hand, tailor homework assignments to meet diverse learning preferences, while high-achieving private schools focus on students who demonstrate academic excellence. However, many private and public school teachers often do not consider students' skill levels when providing homework, which partly aligns with earlier research suggesting that homework should reflect students' varying abilities and learning challenges (Holte, 2016; Ndebele, 2018).

Teacher's execution of Homework

A thoughtfully crafted homework assignment can significantly enhance its effectiveness, provided that teachers are committed to implementing it with enthusiasm. The teacher plays a crucial role in setting the right amount of homework for students. Research indicates that a moderate amount of homework is better for children than having too little or too much (Keith, T. Z. 1986). It shows that secondary school students, regardless of their performance levels, are usually given a balanced amount of homework. Similarly, properly monitoring homework completion can improve student behavior and motivation in both private and public schools, but this is often lacking in large public school classes. Hence, studies have shown that such monitoring of homework can significantly enhance student behavior and motivation (Trautwein et al., 2006).

Students who do not fulfill their homework obligations may encounter various consequences: a decline in academic achievement, the necessity to kneel before their classmates, and the possibility of being referred to the school administration. This applies to private and public educational institutions, irrespective of the student's overall performance. Results are in agreement with a study by Katz et al. (2010), who recommended the establishment of consequences for those students who cannot fulfill their homework obligations. On the other hand, a study by Fitzmaurice et al. (2019) showed that teachers use various methods to correct homework, including individual feedback, self-correction, and visual checks. High-performing schools favor these methods and use digital technology for quicker feedback, while medium- and low-performing schools have inconsistent outcomes with digital technologies. According to NOUN (2008), school administrators must answer to the community regarding educational goals, and strong accountability enhances homework management in successful schools. In contrast, underperforming schools face challenges due to low accountability and weak teacher-student relationships.

Teacher's assessment of Homework

Different authors believed that the homework tasks needed to be evaluated. Teachers and parents believe that checking homework is important for student learning. While parents want teachers to correct assignments, those from average schools value feedback over grades. Homework should be short, but larger schools struggle to give effective comments. Research by Tautwein et al. (2006) supports the need for homework assessment and constructive feedback. Studies show that teachers provide parents with feedback on homework, which connects learning at home and school (Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012). Hence, high-performing and successful private schools emphasize homework feedback and grades. However, public schools regard homework as less in grades, and underperforming private schools face inconsistent grading due to class size issues.

Teacher's perception of Homework

Teachers' views on homework affect the assignments they give. In high-performing schools, opinions vary, and some teachers report stress. Average schools have mixed views, while teachers in

low-performing schools often question homework's value, especially in struggling government schools. Research shows that teachers see homework as important for learning, developing self-regulation, managing time, and enhancing academic performance through practice (Trautwein et al., 2009). Homework preparation and review vary in perception among education systems. Private schools see it as a tough monthly challenge, while high-performing government school teachers view it positively. In contrast, low-performing schools face heavy workloads and large classes, affecting student attitudes, and research indicates that homework can be a significant challenge for teachers (Trautwein et al., 2006).

Fleisher and Ohel (1974) revealed that parents often criticize teachers, which can make teachers feel powerless and weaken their authority. However, some teachers appreciate feedback from parents about homework, as it helps improve teaching and student progress. In struggling schools, parents are dissatisfied with the quality of homework and teaching. The use of digital technology has mixed effects; while it can enhance learning, it may also lead to problems like addiction.

Teachers are a bit wary of using the internet for assigning homework, though they do not oppose it as before (Kolikant, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The research examined teacher engagement in homework across both private and public secondary schools, analyzing the levels of involvement among educators in these two types of institutions. The perceptions, design, implementation, and evaluation of homework vary significantly between public and private secondary schools. Many teachers show a lack of thoroughness in planning and grading homework, despite private schools often achieving better results. There are no clear guidelines for homework practices, and most teachers do not see homework's academic value positively. This variability in teachers' strategies for assigning homework highlights the need to align tasks with the curriculum and address students' diverse learning needs. Factors like homework's difficulty level, type, frequency, and quantity vary significantly across schools, impacting student engagement and academic success. Effective homework management by teachers is key to boosting student involvement, but private and public schools implement these practices differently. The use of digital technologies and accountability also affects how homework is given, with challenges and benefits that depend on the school's environment.

Furthermore, the methods of grading and providing feedback on homework vary significantly among schools, with certain institutions emphasizing constructive criticism while others neglect this approach, potentially hindering student learning. The perspectives of teachers regarding homework play a crucial role in determining its effectiveness, showcasing a blend of both favorable and unfavorable opinions. The research advocates for customized strategies and revised policies to boost teacher engagement with homework and cultivate a more conducive educational atmosphere, with the ultimate goal of improving student performance.

Implications and Practices

The research focused on how teachers create, implement, assess, and view homework in private and public secondary schools in Addis Ababa. It found both types of schools have strengths and weaknesses, with differences in teachers' engagement levels. Monitoring teachers' attitudes towards homework is important for understanding the challenges they face and can help improve students' learning experiences and academic performance. Teachers should approach homework positively, recognizing that the home environment plays a key role in education. Proper implementation of homework practices is essential for quality learning. The Ministry of Education is encouraged to update policies regarding crafting, executing, assessing, and perceiving homework while promoting better teaching methods and providing effective homework training for teachers at colleges as well as in careers. Additionally, raising awareness among parents is crucial for helping

their children with homework, and establishing effective communication channels among parents, teachers, and schools is essential.

Limitations

The research presents certain limitations that influence its conclusions. It primarily examines a selection of government and private secondary schools, which complicates the generalization of the findings to other educational institutions across the nation. Subsequent studies should investigate this subject in a broader range of environments. Additionally, time constraints faced by teachers and school administrators challenged the collection of interview data. Private schools exhibited reluctance to share information due to concerns about potential negative repercussions, in contrast to their government counterparts. The analysis of the extensive interview data proved to be both challenging and time-intensive. Nevertheless, the researcher completed the paper, gaining insights into patience and resilience throughout the process. Regular visits to the study locations facilitated the management of these obstacles.

Conflict of Interest: No potential conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

Funding: This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Credit Author Statement: Melkamu Beyene, the author, assumed complete responsibility for all aspects of this study, including the conceptual framework, methodology, data analysis, and the initial drafting of the manuscript, in addition to reviewing, editing, and finalizing the document. Amare Asgedom was responsible for managing the overall progress of the project and supervising its implementation.

Ethical Statements: The research was carried out following the approval granted by the Institutional Review Board of the College of Education and Behavioral Studies (CEBS) at Addis Ababa University. This approval was documented under protocol number CEBS_C & I/IRC/05-2024, dated February 22, 2024, and received endorsement from the committee members.

REFERENCES

- Battin-Pearson, S., Newcomb, M. D., Abbott, R. D., Hill, K. G., Catalano, R. F., & Hawkins, J. D. (2000). Predictors of early high school dropout: a test of five theories. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 92*, 568–582. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037>.
- Bembenutty, H. (2010). Homework completion: The role of self-efficacy, delay of gratification and self-regulatory processes. *International Journal of Educational Psychological Assessment, 6*: 1-20. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2010-24447-001>.
- Berhanu, S.(2003). *School Choice and Policy Response: A Comparative Context between PrivateandPublicSchoolsinUrbanEthiopia*.InternaionalConferenceforAfrican Development Archives. https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/africancentericad_archive/59/.
- Braun, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3* (2). pp. 77-101. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>.
- 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. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/00346543076001001>.

- Davis, H. A. (2003). Conceptualizing the role and influence of student– teacher relationships on children’s social and cognitive development. *Educational Psychologist*, 38, 207–234. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15326985EP3804_2.
- Dor, A. & Rucker-Naidu, T. B.(2012). Teachers' attitudes toward parents' involvement in school: Comparing teachers in the USA and Israel. *Issues in Educational Research*, 22(3), 246-262. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier22/dor.pdf>.
- Fitzmaurice, H., Flynn, M. & Hanafin, J.(2019). Positive dispositions and close alignment: Using Bourdieusian concepts to understand parents' and teachers' perceptions of homework. *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*. 48(4):1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2019.1674897>.
- Fleisher, G. & Ohel, S. (1974). Homework in the elementary school: Limitations and hazards. In A. Cohen (Ed.), *Studies in Education* (pp. 159-166). Haifa University. [Hebrew]. <https://www.scribd.com/document/520159021/>.
- George, T. (2022). *Semi-Structured Interview*. | Definition, Guide & Examples. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/semi-structured-interview/>.
- Hanafin. (2014). Multiple intelligences theory, action research, and teacher professional development: The Irish MI Project. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(4), 126-141. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2014v39n4.8>.
- Holte, K. L. (2016). *Homework in primary school: Could it be made more child-friendly?* Studia. <https://doi.org/10.5817/SP2016-4-1>.
- Ilgar S. and Ilgar L. (2012). An investigation of teachers’ view of homework partnership, *Procedia-SocialandBehavioralSciences*.46,3225–3229, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro>.
- Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The Pro social Classroom: Teacher Social and Emotional Competence in Relation to Student and Classroom Outcomes. *Review Of EducationalResearch*,79,491-525. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.3102/0034654308325693>.
- Katz, I., Kaplan, A. & Gueta, G. (2010). Students’ needs, teachers’ support, and motivation for doing homework: A cross-sectional study. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 78(2), 246-267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220970903292868>.
- Keith, T. Z. (1986). *Homework*. *Kappa Delta Phi Classroom Practice Series*. West Lafayette, IN: Kappa Delta Phi. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002221949402700901>.
- Kolikant, B. D. Y. (2010). Students’ attitudes towards use of the Internet after school hours for school assignments. In Y. Eshet-Alakalai, A. Caspi, S. Eden, N. Geri, & Y. Yair (Eds.), *The Learning Person in the Technological Era* (pp. 32-37). Raanana: Open University. [Hebrew]. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v5n6p46>.
- Landing-Corretjer G. (2009). *Listen to Me! An Exploration of the Students' Voices Regarding Homework*, Walden University. Scholar Works. <https://www.google.com/search?q>.
- Ministry of Education, MoE (2018). *Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap*. Education Strategy Center.
- National Open University of Nigeria, NOUN. (2008): EDA: 755. *Responsibility and Accountability in Education Management*: Lagos: National Open University of Nigeria. <https://www.google.com/search?q>.

- Nuzum, M. (1998). *Creating Homework Success-Improving Quality of Homework for Students' Instructor*, 108(3),86. <https://www.google.com/search?q=Nuzum%2C+>.
- Ogula, P. A. (2005). *Research Methods*. CUEA Publications. <https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=2833202>.
- Pring, R. (2015). *Philosophy of educational research*.3rd edn. Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2013.34076>.
- Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 53, 617-635. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.5465/AMJ.2010.51468988>.
- Sallee, B., & Rigler, N. (2008). Doing Our Homework on Homework: How Does Homework Help? *The English Journal*, 98 (2), 46–51. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40503382>.
- Seyoum Tefera (1996). Attempts of educational reform in Ethiopia: A top-down or a bottom-up reform? *The Ethiopian Journal of Education*, 16(1),1-37. [https://www.google.com/search?q=Seyoum+Tefera+\(1996\)](https://www.google.com/search?q=Seyoum+Tefera+(1996)).
- Sullivan, M. H., & Sequeira, P. V. (1996). The Impact of Purposeful Homework on Learning. *The Clearing House*, 69 (6), 346–348. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30189211>.
- Trautwein, U., Lüdtke, O., Schnyder, I. & Niggli, A. (2006). Predicting homework effort: Support for a domain-specific, multilevel homework model. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(2), 438-456. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.98.2.438>.
- Trautwein, U., Niggli, A., Schnyder, I., & Lüdtke, O. (2009). Between-teacher differences in homework assignments and the development of students' homework effort, homework emotions, and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101(1), 176–189. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.101.1.176>.