

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret
Faculty of letters and Languages
Department of languages
Section of English



**Investigating Learners' Attitudes towards Homework:
Case of Second, Third and Masters' Students of English at Ibn
Khaldoun University, Tiaret**

A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Partial
Fulfillment of the requirements For Master's Degree in Didactics

Submitted by:

Mr. Amrane Youcef
Ms. Belhout Asma

Supervised by:

Dr. Benabed Ammar

Board of Examiners:

Chairman:	Dr. Toubida Mustapha	MAA	University of Tiaret
Supervisor:	Dr. Benabed Ammar	MCA	University of Tiaret
Examiner:	Dr. Mehdaoui Ahmed	MCB	University of Tiaret

Academic Year 2018-19

Dedication

This work is dedicated to our

Parents, friends and family members.

To our teachers at all levels

*To the memory of our beloved ones who
passed away.*

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, all praise to Allah almighty for granting us the power and motivation to accomplish this work.

Our gratitude is due to our supervisor Mr. Benabed Ammar for his guidance, heartfelt support and provision with the necessary documents.

Special thanks to the examiners Dr. Mehdaoui Ahmed and Dr. Toubida Mustapha for their time devoted to examine this work and for their constructive feedback.

We are so grateful to Mr. Mustapha Toubida for having proposed such an interesting research topic

The guidance of Mr Toubida and Ms Lahmar was of an immense significance respect and thanks are due to both of them for their availability

Apart from our own efforts, the success of this research paper depends largely on the encouragement and guidelines of many others. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the people who have been instrumental in the successful completion of this dissertation.

ABSTRACT

Homework has been for long a standing tradition in learners' daily school routine. While the great benefit to homework assignments on learners' academic achievement stays undeniable, many learners still confront this with a state of unwillingness to do homework. This study attempts to investigate learners' unwillingness to do educational homework. It is mainly concerned with students of English from different study levels at Ibn Khaldoun University. Its main endeavor is to reveal learners' attitudes towards educational assignments, as well as to cast light generally on the most possible factors that can make learners shape an attitude towards homework and especially highlight the suspected ones for decreasing their will and motivation to do homework. In addition, through this study one tries to spot light on the main deficiencies that hamper the practice of homework assigning from being implemented effectively. To attain the objectives of this investigation, the study took a sample of 46 students from different study level at Ibn Khaldoun University. Questionnaires were handed to twenty students and another twenty students were surveyed in this study. Besides, a focus group interview was held with six students at the university. Findings reveal that learners hold a negative attitude towards educational assignments. In addition, homework high levels of frequency and difficulty have been shown to be the most possible factors for decreasing their motivation to do homework.

Key words: Homework, homework frequency, homework difficulty, homework accomplishment

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	vii
List of Graphics, Figures and Tables.....	vii
General Introduction.....	1

Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction	
1.1. Homework Definition.....	7
1.2. Homework Types.....	8
1.2.1. Practice Homework.....	8
1.2.2. Preparation Homework.....	8
1.2.3. Extension Homework.....	9
1.3. Homework History.....	9
1.3.1. The Case for Homework.....	10
1.3.2. The Case against Homework.....	11
1.4. Homework Benefits.....	12
1.5. Homework and Learners' Attitudes	13
1.6. Homework and Stress.....	14
1.7. Homework Variety.....	15
1.8. Homework Frequency and Achievement.....	16
1.9. Homework and Feedback.....	17
1.10. Homework Difficulty.....	18
1.11. Homework and Motivation.....	18
1.12. Homework Importance for Learners.....	21

1.13.	Homework and Distraction.....	21
	Conclusion	

Chapter Two: Context of Study and Methodology Design

Introduction		
2.1	Context of the Study.....	24
2.1.1	General considerations on the educational reforms in Algeria.....	24
2.1.2	General principles of the secondary and tertiary educational reforms.....	26
2.1.3	Reflection on the context of the reforms of the Algerian educational system.....	27
2.1.4	The Competency Based Approach.....	28
2.1.4.1	The characteristics of the Competency Based approach.....	29
2.1.4.1.1	Action-Oriented Approach.....	30
2.1.4.1.2	Problem-Solving Approach.....	30
2.1.4.1.3	Socio-Constructivist Approach.....	30
2.1.4.1.4	Cognitive Approach.....	31
2.1.4.2	Linguistic and supportive competencies within the CBA.....	31
2.1.4.2.1	Language Competencies within the CBA.....	31
2.1.4.2.2	Supporting Competencies.....	32
2.1.5	The shifting paradigms from content-based programmes to competency- based curricula.....	32
2.1.6	The Status of English in Algeria.....	33
2.1.7	English in the Curriculum.....	34
2.1.8	Homework within the Context of other Educational Systems.....	35
2.1.9	Homework within the Algerian Educational System	36
2.3	Research Design and Methodology	37
2.3.1	Re-statement of the Problem.....	37
2.3.2	Research Questions.....	37

2.3.3 Research Hypotheses.....	38
2.3.4 Research Objective.....	38
2.3.5 Research Design/Methods/Procedures.....	39
2.3.5.1 The Targeted Population	40
2.3.5.2 Sample of the Population.....	41
2.3.5.3 Sampling Techniques.....	41
2.3.5.4 Research Tools.....	42
2.3.5.5 The Questionnaire.....	43
2.3.5.6 The Survey.....	43
2.3.5.7 The Focus Group Interview.....	44
2.3.5.7.1 The Purpose and Rational.....	44
2.3.5.7.2 Administration of the Focus Group.....	45
2.3.5.7.2 Pre-meeting.....	45
2.3.5.7.2 While -meeting.....	46
2.3.5.7.3 Post-meeting.....	47
Conclusion	

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

Introduction

3.1 Analysis of learners' questionnaire.....	49
3.2 Analysis of learners' survey.....	61
3.3 Analysis of learners' focus group interview.....	70
3.4 Discussion and interpretation of the research findings	74
3.5 Conclusion.....	76
3.6 General Conclusion.....	77
3.7 Limitation of the Study	78
3.8 Recommendations.....	79

Appendices

references

ملخص

Résumé

List of Abbreviations, Signs and Acronyms

% Percentage
2nd Second
3rd Third
BAC Baccalaureate
CBA Competency-Based Approach
ELT English Language Teaching
Etc et cetera
i.e. That is to say
LMD Licence-Master-Doctorate

List of figures

Graphic 3.1.1	51
Graphic 3.1.2	52
Graphic 3.1.3	53
Graphic 3.1.4	53
Graphic 3.1.5	54
Graphic 3.1.6	55
Graphic 3.1.7	55
Graphic 3.1.8	56
Graphic 3.1.9	57
Graphic 3.1.10	58
Graphic 3.1.11	58
Graphic 3.1.12.....	59
Graphic 3.1.13.....	60
Graphic 3.2.1	62
Graphic 3.2.2.....	63
Graphic 3.2.3.....	64
Graphic 3.2.4.....	65

Graphic 3.2.5.....	66
Graphic 3.2.6.....	67
Graphic 3.2.7.....	68
Graphic 3.2.8.....	68
Graphic 3.2.9.....	69

List of Tables:

Table 3.1	50
Table 3.2.....	61
Table 3.2.....	70

General Introduction:

In the field of teaching and learning, the term *homework* is frequently uttered. Homework is being assigned everyday and everywhere. It has been for long a standing and an unquestionable tradition that learners have had to respect. Yet many among educational researchers, teachers, students, parents and policy makers started questioning this practice throughout the second half of the last century.

In attempt to discover whether assigning homework is an informed practice or a blind tradition, multitudes of studies have been conducted over the last century and a great debate raged on along with it over the value of homework. Results showed that homework assignment have a great and a vital effect on student's success. For instance, Cooper suggests through his analysis that, homework is in fact beneficial to students. Not only can it have positive effects on overall grades, but it can also have other benefits such as developing responsible character traits, maturing cognitive capacities, fostering independent learning habits, and growing of good study habits.

While the great benefit to homework assignments stays undeniable, still it is not enough or maybe not made explicit to many students. Based on previous research in the field of English language teaching and learning, we have come to notice that many learners from different study levels do not tend to accomplish the homework and the tasks they are assigned willingly. As a result, if not done with learners' consent and will, homework assignments will serve very little use to students if not at all.

For learners to behave in such unwillingness towards homework, there must be some hidden rational or an incentive behind. With that gap being the problem in our research, the purpose of this study is to investigate learners' attitudes towards homework assignments as well as to highlight the main factors that are responsible for increasing or decreasing their motivation and will to do the homework they are assigned.

Research Questions:

The need to conduct the current study arises from a desire to better help teachers as well as students understand how learners are being negatively affected by their attitudes towards educational homework in a way that makes them unwilling to do homework. So,

The main objective of this study lies in the deep understanding it gives about the issue of learners' unwillingness to do homework; precisely, their attitudes towards it and the factors affecting these attitudes. In other words, the objective is to make learners (case of students at the University of Tiaret) aware of their attitudes towards homework assignments and sensitize teachers to the need of designing homework in a way that fits into learner profile taking into consideration homework frequency and difficulty. To achieve the objective of this study, some questions must be answered. More specifically, the following research questions need to be addressed?

1. What are learners' attitudes towards educational assignments?
2. What are the main factors that can decrease or increase learners' motivation to do homework?

Hypotheses:

By definition, a hypothesis is an educated prediction, supposition or explanation that is provisionally accepted in order to interpret a certain event or a phenomenon under investigation. It is used in an experiment to define the relationship between two variables. The purpose of a hypothesis is to find the answer to a question. It may be proven correct or wrong, and must be capable of refutation.

The guiding questions of this study have been formulated to display the reflection of learners' attitudes in the way they behave towards educational assignments. Based on the research questions above, the reasoning and the review of some previous studies, the researchers counts three main hypotheses.

Hypothesis one: Many learners realize the importance of homework assignments for their learning and academic and achievement.

In this hypothesis, we presume that regardless learners' unwillingness to do homework, they realize how important homework is for their learning.

Hypothesis two: Many learners regard homework assignments as a compulsory practice that has to be accomplished in order to get grades.

Though grades are an inescapable way of evaluating learners' achievement, it shouldn't seize their attention and become their main objective behind learning because good grades don't necessarily equal good learning.

Hypothesis three: Many learners feel unwilling to do homework assignments because of their high frequency and difficulty.

Despite a suspected number of factors affecting learners' willingness to do homework, we presume in this hypothesis that homework high levels of frequency and difficulty could be the most responsible one behind learners' unwillingness to do homework.

Research Methodology and Design

This research work uses both descriptive-interpretive methods, along with a number of research tools i.e. questionnaire, survey and focus group interview which seem to be appropriate and convenient for embark such an investigation. The research is divided into two parts where there is a descriptive review on the theoretical framework with the first two chapters, while an explicative approach is devoted to the practical data on the third chapter.

Research tools:

For this study, we opted for triangulation of data collection by using three instruments, namely, Questionnaire, survey and the Interview. All of these tools were designed and addressed to English students in the Letters and languages Department at the University of Ibn Khaldoun Tiaret. The questionnaire was handed to 25 students from the different study levels at the University of Tiaret. Second, the survey was handed to another but different 25 students at the same university. Finally, the study involved the use of an interview which was conducted with 5 students who displayed interest and volunteered to be participants in the study. Triangulation has been used in order to avoid any discrepancy or inconsistency in the results.

Delimitation of the Study:

The study is delimited to the issue of learners' unwillingness to do homework, precisely students of English at the Letters and languages Department at the University of

Ibn Khaldoun Tiaret. Thus, the study is narrowed to include students from different study levels at the Department of English only and not other departments.

Limitations of the Research:

The limitations of this design are wide and varied. Our instruments are open to interpretation and may not have conveyed the connotations we believed they did. Nevertheless, the data does seem to support our claim and the hypotheses set for this study. It should also be noted that students often tell us what we want to hear if it brings approval, so this may have played a role in the results. This data and the instruments do not definitively reflect the attitude that learners hold towards homework due to the fact that an attitude as a variable is immeasurable. It only reflects the common and widespread attitude between the participants in the sample of the study. Besides, the variables that have been proven to be responsible behind learners' unwillingness to do homework apply only to our study and to the randomly chosen sample. Other studies might prove something different. Furthermore, only 46 students is not sufficiently large sampling to supply information about the issue. It should be recognized also that one semester is too short a time to get entirely convincing results.

The Structure of the dissertation:

This dissertation has been structured in a way that endeavors to cast light on the issue under investigation as well as to demonstrate the adopted methodology. As a result to this, the research work comes in two parts, a theoretical and a practical one. The first part provides a conceptual framework as regards the reviewing of the relevant literature, while the second one is a fieldwork analysis and interpretation of the various generated data out of the different research tools used in the study.

Chapter One: It deals with the review of origin and history of homework and the debate that raged over it throughout time. In the same time it discusses its benefits and a number of factors suspected to affect learners' willingness to do homework.

Chapter Two: It is concerned with the contextualization of the research. The first part describes the Algerian education system, its tertiary cycle the different reforms it went

through as well as the status of English in Algeria and the CBA approach it adopts. Most importantly it contextualizes homework within the Algerian educational system and within other top scoring educational systems around the world. The second part of the chapter tackles in details the research methodologies.

Chapter Three: It is concerned with the methodology employed for this study. It represents an analysis for the different collected data from participants in order to reveal their attitudes towards homework as well the most responsible factors that affect their willingness to do homework. At the end of this dissertation, some findings are provided along with their interpretation and the general conclusion

Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

1.1. Homework Definition

1.2. Homework Types

1.2.1. Practice Homework

1.2.2. Preparation Homework

1.2.3. Extension Homework

1.3. Homework History

1.3.1. The Case for Homework

1.3.2. The Case against Homework

1.4. Homework Benefits

1.5. Homework and Learners' Attitudes

1.6. Homework and Stress

1.7. Homework Variety

1.8. Homework Frequency and Achievement

1.9. Homework and Feedback

1.10. Homework Difficulty

1.11. Homework and Motivation

1.12. Homework Importance for Learners

1.13. Homework and Distraction

Conclusion

Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter one talks about the theoretical overview of homework. Mainly it deals with homework definition and its types, homework history and the debate that raged over it by its opponents and proponents. It also talks about homework benefits, learners' attitudes towards it, and some important factors that govern doing and completing homework. Such factors include homework frequency and difficulty, homework stress and motivation, homework variety and feedback.

The word *Homework* is perceived by many learners negatively. For many students, this word evokes a labyrinth of feelings ranging from conflict, trepidation, boredom, compulsion and punishment. A lot of teachers contribute to this narrative by setting homework as a finishing-off activity just before the class ends (Czerniawski and Kid 2013).

Homework is usually done at home and alone, but it may be done in other places such as the library, in study periods during or after school, or with other people such as parents or fellow students. Homework is assigned, often on a daily basis, to students of all ages all over the world. Planning and assigning homework are a major responsibility and challenge to teachers at all grade levels (Hong and Milgram, 2000).

1.1 Homework Definition

There have been many definitions in attempt to define what homework is. A very broadly used definition to describe homework is the one provided by Cooper three decades ago. He (1989, 20) defined homework as “work assigned by teachers/educators for students to complete during non-school hours”.

This definition was improved by Coutts (2004) and Pytel (2007) who suggested that

homework is ‘teacher assigned and teacher monitored learning experiences that take place outside the classroom.’ Pytel (2007) claims that the reason behind assigning homework is to reinforce material that has been presented in class.’

There is no doubt that teachers’ intention behind assigning homework are at their very best, yet the literature pertaining to this topic shows that these intentions are made implicit and not clear enough to both students and parents. This led educational researchers, teachers, students and parents to split between an opponent anent to homew

1.2 Homework types

There are different kinds of homework. Some homework is designed to assure that students review, practice, and drill material that has been learned at school. Other homework assignments are intended to provide students with the opportunity to amplify, elaborate, and enrich previously learned information. Homework is also sometimes used to prepare, in advance, material to be learned in the following classes (Hong and Milgram, 2000).

Rosário, Núñez, Vallejo, Cunha, Nunes, Mourão, & Pinto (as cited in Tami, 2017) identify three types of instructional homework purposes: practice, preparation, and extension. These practices can be used by teachers when assigning homework tasks to promote student engagement and meaningful learning.

1.2.1 Practice Homework

Practice homework focuses on tasks taught in class to increase speed, demonstrate mastery, review work, study for tests, and retains specific skills over time. Teachers assign practice and preparation homework most often because it can be more convenient and less time consuming. Practice homework is more often used in mathematics and spelling to increase spelling proficiency and fluency in math facts.

1.2.2 Preparation Homework

Preparation homework focuses on preparing students for the next lesson (Rosário et al., as cited in Minke, 2017). This type of homework is inherently linked to pre-learning by Vatterott (2009). The homework is designed to encourage students' thinking about a previous homework topic discussed in class and prepare for future topics. In a study of 638 sixth-grade students, practice and preparation homework tasks showed impact on students' mathematic achievement (Rosário et al., as cited in Minke, 2017). Students were able to review the material covered in the future lesson from the textbook and write the main ideas covered in a notebook to help prepare the students for learning. Students would use the textbook to help focus on the next lesson and prepare for what would be covered in the future class lesson.

1.2.3 Extension Homework

Extension homework focuses on promoting the shift of previous learning to new tasks. Extension homework requires higher level or abstract thinking to occur. Teachers use this form of homework to encourage students to collaborate with peers and be more creative during students' learning. Real-life, hands-on applicable skills are used to complete extension homework tasks. This provides a richer learning experience for students. Rosário et al. noted that homework with a specific purpose of extension (promoting problem-solving skills) is valuable for improving students' achievement. (Rosário et al., as cited in Minke, 2017)

1.3 Homework History

Multitudes of studies (approximately 130) have been conducted over the last century and a great debate raged on along with it over the value of homework (Smith, 2016) Homework has become a controversial topic ever since it became part of schooling. 2 Opinions concerning the efficacy of homework, its purpose, and whether it should even be assigned have been debated subjects among educators, students, and families (Cooper,

Robinson, & Patall, 2006). Some educators regarded educational assignments as necessary and vital to successful academic achievement, while others maintained that it cannot be associated to achieving academic success and even went as far as to question its purpose.

Homework has always been a controversial and a perennial educational topic that continues to be debated in education (Cooper, Robinson & Patall; Corno; Trautwein, Köller, Schmitz & Baumert, as cited in Şentürk and Cığerci, 2017). At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a movement against homework, especially in the USA. Educators of that time held negative attitudes towards homework as to being far from enhancing students' learning and it was a burden for students.

However, this trend was reversed by the launch of Soviet's Sputnik satellite by Russians in the 1950s. Americans became alarmed to the fact that their education system needed reform and rigor and; therefore, saw in giving more homework as a partial solution to the problem and a suitable practice to enable learners' acquire knowledge rapidly and to raise internationally competitive students.. However, this trend was reversed once more by 1980 as learning theorist emerged to question the value of homework and it was claimed that homework assignments brought excessive pressure on students and that it was detrimental to students' mental health. Up to this date, there is still an ongoing debate and impassioned arguments for and against homework continues to proliferate (Şentürk and Cığerci, 2017; Marzano and pickering, 2007).

1.3.1 The Case for Homework

Supporters of homework overstated its benefits and asserted the fact that homework could transmit learning to outside school borders. Painter (2003) emphasizes the importance of homework as an extension of the classroom which helps learners to internalize information that has been presented in class. It plugs the gap between lessons in a way that makes learners involved in working on the subject even if they have one or two classes a week. Homework as a matter of fact can be regarded by most educators as a cornerstone for students' learning and thus they assign it conscientiously.

Fawzy, (2012) concludes some of the benefits of homework: it improves learners' attitudes towards learning, their writing and literacy outcomes and enhances parents' appreciation of education. Apart from the academic benefits, homework has other benefits which are nonacademic: greater self-discipline and perseverance, better time organization, greater self-direction, responsibility, more inquisitiveness and developing study skills like independent problem solving and therefore, homework plays a vital role in shaping and consolidating learners' beliefs and study habits as regard academic work.

(Czerniawski and Kidd, 2013) summarize below the arguments provided by some of the famous figures in educational research (e.g. Cooper 1989; Hallam 2005; Kohn 2006)

Arguments for

1. Homework increases knowledge and understanding of the subject, factual retention, critical reasoning and curriculum enrichment.
2. It nurtures the independent learner (e.g. fostering self-direction, self-discipline, time management, inquisitiveness, creativity and research skills).
3. It is beneficial for schools/colleges by easing time constraints on the curriculum, exploiting resources not available in the institution thus fulfilling the expectations of parents, learners, politicians and the public.
4. Homework can involve parents/guardians/schools/colleges in a potentially dynamic and supportive set of relationships that result in greater participation and academic achievement.

1.3.2 The Case against Homework

Although the case for homework is compelling, the case against homework is popular. There has been a considerable literature tackling this later. *The End of Homework: How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children, and Limits Learning* by

Kralovec and Buell (2000), is a book that landed a heavy attack on homework. It claimed that homework is over estimated on the cost of the familial well-being and that it bites into the family's time and interferes with the learners' personal life. The book primarily casts light on the economically disadvantaged students who live in an environment that makes it difficult to accomplish the tasks they are assigned. This book called people for a union against homework. *How Homework Is Hurting Our Children and What We Can Do about It* is another book whose writers; Bennett and Kalish (2006) called for an action against homework. They criticized homework in terms of quantity and quality. The book uncovers evidence that the amount of homework can harm students' health and family time when it is too much. The authors suggested that individuals and parent groups should insist that teachers reduce the frequency of homework, design more valuable assignments, and avoid over breaks and holidays (Marzano and pickering, 2007)

It has been found that homework can cause physical and emotional fatigue and reduces learners' spent time on leisure and family activities. Some of the negative effects of homework found by Cooper include "loss of interest in the subject, physical and emotional exhaustion, denial of access to leisure time and community and family activities, pressure to complete tasks and perform well, and confusion of instructional techniques" (1994).

1.4 Homework Benefits

Czerniawski and Kidd (2013) describe homework as a Pandora's Box for educational researchers, getting cut clear proofs as to the extent to which to homework can support or impede learning has proven a hard nut to crack. In educational achievement for instance it is very difficult to separate homework as a factor from other variables including the quality of teaching, resources, parental support and so on.

Despite the discrepancy prevailing on this topic, research provides strong evidence that, when used appropriately, homework benefits student achievement. Homework thus can be considered as an indispensable and a vital part of the learning process. It is expected by students, teachers, parents and school directors. Many among educational researchers,

teachers and parents and especially the cons in the debate over homework importance glorify homework for reason that is obvious; that homework has benefits on learners. Some of the main benefits can be summarized in the following: Students retain what they were taught at class, they reinforce what they have learnt, they develop good study habits, and their cognitive understanding about the language increases. All of these benefits ultimately help them develop to become independent and responsible learners (Painter, 2003).

Sharma and Sharma (2016) suggest that students' motivation to complete homework is mostly subjected to the usefulness, relevance, and academic merit that learners believe will attain from the homework. Furthermore, Learners' willingness or reluctance to do homework' is dependent on their personal expectations as regard the importance of homework. Learners' experiences regarding the expected learning outcome they perceive in the aftermath of completing homework is considered a crucial factor linked to the views that learners hold towards homework in general and completing homework in particular

Students' experiences based on the perceived learning merits they stand to gain from completed homework assignments is another critical factor that is linked to the views of homework held by students and also to their willingness to complete homework.

1.5 Homework and Learners' Attitudes

It is no exaggeration to say that many students do not complete all of the homework they are assigned if not at all. In this study, one main endeavor is to reveal learners' attitudes towards homework assignments. Learners' unwillingness and reluctance to do homework is due to some attitudes they hold towards it and seemingly negative ones.

Students sometimes complain that the homework they are given is boring or pointless, referring to homework tasks that consist of studying for tests, doing workbook exercises, finishing incomplete class work, memorizing lists of vocabulary and writing compositions. Where this is actually the case, the negative effects of homework can be

Chapter one: Literature Review

observed, typified by loss of interest and a view of homework as a form of punishment. For this reason, it is important to define what an *attitude* as a term is. Due to the complexity of this term and its unmeasurability, there have been many attempts to define this term. The following are some dictionary and psychologists definitions for the term *attitude*:

“A complex mental state involving beliefs and feelings and values and dispositions to act in certain ways “(Word Net 2.0, 2003).

“A mental position with regard to a fact or state” (Merriam-Webster’s Medical Dictionary, 2002).

“Behavior based on conscious or unconscious mental views developed through cumulative experience” (Venes, 2001, p. 189).

A definition by Dawson (as stated in Banaji and Heiphetz, 2010) states that in social psychology “it [attitude] refers to a disposition towards or against a specified phenomenon, person or thing” (151). This definition provides two aspects of an attitude that are supported in the literature. First, an attitude is bipolar; it can be positive or negative, favorable or unfavorable. Second, an attitude is a response to a person, object, or situation. The critical attributes of an “attitude” are that it has a cognitive, affective, and behavioral component; it is bipolar; and it is a response to a stimulus. These attributes extend to all aspects of intellect and behavior. Since we are trying in this study to reveal learners’ attitudes towards homework assignment and the reasons behind their unwillingness to do it, we felt that it was important to look at some of the factors affecting learners’ attitudes towards

1.6 Homework and Stress

The puzzling question of how much time should be spent on homework is nerve racking to many teachers and students. Regardless to what extent homework can contribute to learners' academic achievement too much or too little of anything can be harmful. What is widely perceived is that when students are getting too much homework than they can handle and this can impact them negatively and significantly. Before assigning students, a teacher should remember the reason behind this practice.(How much Homework, 2016)

Why learners get homework is a frequently asked question in the field of education and to which Tom Cunnane, principle of Kill National School answered. "The idea behind assigning homework is to consolidate what has been done in the classroom, to promote independent learning. It also helps to keep parents in touch with the children's work at university". (How much Homework, 2016)

Homework is generally given out to ensure that students take time to review and remember the day's lessons. It can help improve on a student's general performance and enhance traits like self-discipline and independent problem solving. Parents are able to see what their children are doing in school, while also helping teachers determine how well the lesson material is being learned. Homework is quite beneficial when used the right way and can improve student performance.

However, this well intentioned practice can turn sour if it's not handled the right way. Studies show that if a student is inundated with too much homework, not only do they get lower scores, but they are more likely to get stressed.

One of the speculated reasons for this stress is that the complexity of what a student is expected to learn is increasing, while the breaks for working out excess energy are reduced. Students are getting significantly more homework than recommended by the education leaders, some even nearly three times more. To make matters worse, teachers may give homework that is both time consuming and will keep students busy while being totally non-productive.

Remedial work like telling students to copy notes word for word from their text books will do nothing to improve their grades or help them progress. It just adds unnecessary stress. (The Truth about Homework Stress, 2019)

A balance should be stricken on how long time should learners spend on homework. The quality of the time spent also matters. If learners are focused and actively engaged on the homework they are working on, this would in return yield good quality results. Learners would benefit from the homework. . (The Truth about Homework Stress, 2019)

1.7 Homework Variety

In the field of language teaching and learning, it is always important to remember that learning comes in many different forms. Every student has a unique way of learning and different learning needs (Learner Differences and Learning needs, 2010). Factors such as physical characteristics, intelligence, perception, gender, ability and learning styles constitute the individual differences upon which learning differ from one learner to another. Since the learners' own learning speeds and interests vary, these characteristics should be taken into consideration by the teacher. Keeping this in mind will help the teacher plan an effective and productive learning-teaching process that assigns students a variety of homework that match their individual differences, needs and profiles (Kubat, 2018).

Sticking to one type of homework than others can exclude and marginalize some students out of the teaching-learning process. In a study of 112 undergraduate chemistry students, the learners report interest in different types of homework. For example 62% of students are satisfied with online assignments (this format provided immediate feedback and allowed multiple attempts), whereas, 41% are satisfied with traditional paper assignments (this format had no computer printing issues and it is a style most familiar) (Jennifer, 2018).

Good teachers assess student learning style with the use of learning inventories. Differentiate homework to account for student interest and learning preference and assign them a variety of different homework experiences. Some are very brief and may only need a few write-in answers, while others may require a large time commitment, creativity, and project steps. These more involved projects enrich the students' understanding of the subject matter and engage them in topics more fully than we can pursue during class time (Jennifer, 2018). Using a variety of types of homework enables educators to use different assessment methods. Perhaps a student has difficulty taking tests. Homework projects could show that this student really does grasp the content (Purpose of Homework, 2012)

1.8 Homework Frequency and Achievement

Marzano and Pickering (2007) examined research about homework from the past few decades and summarized by quoting from one of the studies

“With only rare exceptions, the relationship between the amount of homework learners do and their achievement outcomes was found to be consistent and statically significant” P45

Butler in his book *Homework* claims that “In schools where homework is frequently assigned and adequately graded, students tend to achieve better and perform at a higher level” and that regularly assigned homework to can improve their overall attitude towards school and learning in general. Butler believes that homework can be used by teachers to monitor a student's progress and identify any learning problems (Alanne and Macgregor, 2009)

Some educators believe that too much homework may influence negatively a learner's attitude towards school. By receiving too much homework, learners' positive attitudes towards homework can be and thus lose the motivation to do it (Cooper 2007:11).

According to Sharp, correlations found between achievement and time spent on homework shouldn't necessarily be considered as a proof that more time on homework automatically leads to better achievement. Time spent on homework explains only a small amount of the variance in learners' achievement scores (Marzano and Pickering, 2007). Furthermore a recent study revealed that it was not the amount of homework assigned that is associated with student achievement but rather the amount of homework completed, especially at the upper grades. It was also reported in this study that about one third of the students do not finish their homework. The results in this study serve as a warning sign that an important correlation on the homework–achievement relationship has been ignored and thus deserve systematic investigations classes (Hong and Milgram, 2000).

1.9 Homework and Feedback

Albright, Bass, Johnson and Linton (2011) stress that one important factor affecting homework accomplishment is probably the feedback provided by teachers. Teacher feedback effects positively homework completion. Teachers' feedback to learners on their homework is necessary for learners to identify and work on their weaknesses and for the teacher to reflect on his practices as a teacher. Without feedback, a student is unsure if they understood the lesson or not. This can cause learners to underestimate the value of the homework and become unwilling to spend time or make efforts to do homework. In a study conducted by Wilson and Rhodes (2010), findings showed that nearly half of the surveyed students, i.e. 44% reported that their homework is hardly ever returned immediately with a feedback provided. It would always take some days before it is returned. 27% of these students asserted that their homework is returned within a day or two. Without proper or timely feedback students do not know what they need to work on or what kind of additional help they need.

In a study conducted with American students from low socio-economic backgrounds (Bempechat, Li, Neier, Gillis and Holloway, 2011), the surveyed students showed they were highly unwilling and demotivated to do homework and they linked this

unwillingness and reluctance to the fact that homework assignments are rarely graded by teachers and that they are hardly ever linked to previous classroom lessons.

1.10 Homework Difficulty

Homework difficulty could be another factor playing behind learners' reluctance to do homework willingly. Learners are likely to feel frustrated if the homework is too difficult for them or feel bored if it is too easy. In a study done with Israeli students (Katz, Kaplan and Gueta, 2009), more than 50% of the students that were interviewed indicated that they couldn't finish the homework they were assigned because they were busy working on 'other activities' which they described as 'more important' to their academic achievement than the assigned homework. A small minority, vis, 10% of the students in the study reported that the homework was beneficial to them with a vast majority of 82% suggesting that the assigned homework was either simply 'difficult' or 'extremely difficult.

1.11 Homework and Motivation

One factor affecting doing and completing homework is motivation. Deci, Connell, and Ryan (1989) conducted a study which revealed that intrinsic motivation increases when a learner feels independent and when they receive information about their competence in exploring their environment. When learners feel they are learning by themselves and teachers providing them with appropriate feedback on their homework and what they need to improve upon, they will be intrinsically motivated and thus more willing to do and complete the assignments. The study also indicated that when student's environment of learning is controlled by teachers and that learners are not allowed to choose about the what and how of what they are to be doing, this will make them be less motivated to complete the homework or even do it in the first place.

Eddy (2012) asserts that without any motivation or positive attitude, there can hardly be a successful process of learning. The question why people learn foreign languages can be put forward.

Most people nowadays feel the need to speak a new language for personal and professional aims. These aims are the following:

- More employment opportunities;
- Better salary prospects;
- Higher chances for business success;
- Further understanding of someone else's culture.

According to her, all learners exhibit an inborn curiosity to explore the world, so they are likely to find the learning experience per se intrinsically pleasant. In reality, however, this "curiosity" is vitiated by such inexorable factors as compulsory school attendance, curriculum content, and grades – most importantly, the premium placed on them”.

Learner's motivation and needs have always had a central place in theories of foreign language acquisition motivation and attitudes are important factors, which help to determine the level of proficiency achieved by different learners.”

Among linguists, several types of motivation are distinguished:

- 1- Global motivation, which consists of a general orientation to the goal of learning a foreign language;
- 2- Situational motivation, which varies according to the situation in which learning takes place;
- 3- Task motivation, which is the motivation for performing particular learning tasks.

Hummel, (2014) projects a frequent distinction with respect to motivation between intrinsic and extrinsic types. **Intrinsic motivation** is defined as: “Intrinsically motivated behaviors aimed at bringing about internally rewarding consequences . . . feelings of competence and self-determination.” For instance, an intrinsically motivated language learner may desire to become an excellent speaker of the target language, due to a personal

desire to excel. **Extrinsic motivation** is defined as: “Anticipation of reward from outside and beyond the self” (material and nonmaterial rewards). An example of an extrinsically motivated language learner might be someone who considers better language skills will lead to getting higher paying or more prestigious employment

Ryan & Deci (2000) discovered that choice effects intrinsic motivation in a positive way and that individuals will have an increased intrinsic motivation to complete a task if the task. Giving learners a possibility to choose from different options available such as choosing a project to work on would be one way in which they would have some control and therefore lead to more intrinsic motivation to complete the project. It was found that the motivation a student has towards a task is higher if the individual perceives the task as emotionally rewarding and valuable. Thus, if a student perceives a specific homework assignment to be beneficial, enjoys doing the assignment, and feels a sense of accomplishment from doing the assignment, he/she will have increased motivation to complete it. Students who have such intrinsic motivation to manage and complete their homework have higher levels of self-efficacy and higher academic course grades (Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2006)

1.12 Homework Importance for Learners

Answering the question how important is the homework for a learner reflects the attitude the learner holds towards the homework. Most learners when asked about the importance of homework, they assert that it indispensable. They say it can improve their thinking skills and memory, help them develop positive study skills and habits, encourage them to use time wisely, teach them to work independently and to take responsibility for their work, help them learn to use resources, such as libraries, reference materials, and computer Web sites to find information, get them ready for the next day’s class to extend learning by applying skills to new situations (e-school, 2010).

Furthermore, homework is an important way for students to develop the self-regulation skills needed for tasks that are not easily completed without a significant level of mental effort and focus. It is not enough for students to have a positive attitude towards their schooling in general or even homework in particular; the self-regulation used when completing the homework, has a greater effect on academic achievement than does the student's attitude towards school. (Bush, 2018)

“Students with high levels of self-efficacy also have high levels of self-regulation and are able to arrange their environment to be able to push away distractions such as watching television, texting friends, spending time on social media, or surfing the Internet in ways un-related to the assignment at hand; they are able to prioritize their tasks and make difficult decisions concerning use of time in order to achieve academically” (Bush, 2018: 26).

Sharma and Sharma (2016) suggest that students' motivation to complete homework is mostly subjected to the usefulness, relevance, and academic merit that learners believe will attain from the homework. Furthermore, Learners' willingness or reluctance to do homework' is dependent on their personal expectations as regard the importance of homework. Learners' experiences regarding the expected learning outcome they perceive in the aftermath of completing homework is considered a crucial factor linked to the views that learners hold towards homework in general and completing homework in particular Students' experiences based on the perceived learning merits they stand to gain from completed homework assignments is another critical factor that is linked to the views of homework held by students and also to their willingness to complete homework

1.13 Handling Distraction

Handling distraction refers to students' efforts to discriminate task-relevant information from that of unrelated activities and to keep their attention focused on the demands of the specific task at hand (Xu & Corno, 1998). It involves not paying attention

to unrelated activities around them (e.g., conversations among family members or text messages from friends) and not to engage other unrelated activities that would distract them from homework (e.g., Web surfing or online chatting).

One recent study (Xu, 2010) finds that homework distraction was related to gender, grade level, the context of doing homework at home, and student attitudes toward homework. Specifically, girls (compared with boys) and 11th graders (compared with 8th graders) are more likely to be distracted while doing homework. In addition, students' desires to engage in other after-school activities (e.g., television, sports, and other extracurricular activities) are positively related to homework distraction. On the other hand, those students with higher scores in adult-oriented and learning-oriented reasons are more likely to take initiatives to overcome homework distraction.

Conclusion

Homework is a common and widespread educational activity. Although a great debate raged about it throughout the last century, it continues to be an important practice of learners' educational lives. Despite its acknowledged importance as an educational practice for learners, still this is not made explicit to many of them or that they have certain attitude that make them project an unwillingness towards doing homework. Homework frequency, difficulty, feedback, variety and motivation are all possible factors that can impact learners' attitude towards homework and make them unwilling to do homework.

Chapter Two: Context of Study and Methodology Design

Introduction

2.1 Context of the Study

2.1.1 General Considerations on the Educational Reforms in Algeria

2.1.2 General Principles of the Secondary and Tertiary Educational Reforms

2.1.3 Reflection on the Context of the Reforms of the Algerian Educational System

2.1.4 The Competency Based Approach

2.1.4.1 The Characteristics of the Competency Based approach

2.1.4.2 Linguistic and Supportive Competencies within the CBA

2.1.5 The Shifting Paradigms from Content-based Programmes to Competency- based Curricula

2.1.6 The Status of English in Algeria

2.1.7 English in the Curriculum

2.1.8 Homework within the Context of other Educational Systems

2.1.9 Homework within the Algerian Educational System

2.2 Research Design and Methodology

2.2.1 Re-statement of the Problem

2.2.2 Research Questions

2.2.3 Research Hypotheses

2.2.4 Research Objective

2.2.5 Research Design/Methods/Procedures

2.2.5.1 The Targeted Population

2.2.5.2 Sample of the Population

2.2.5.3 Sampling Techniques

2.2.5.4 Research Tools

2.3.5.5 The Questionnaire

2.3.5.6 The Survey

2.3.5.7 The Focus Group Interview

Conclusion

Introduction

Learners' attitudes towards educational homework affect significantly the extent to which they can be willing to do them. This study aims at investigating learners' attitudes towards educational homework with a view of investigating any possible solutions for raising learners' motivation to do homework willingly. As stated previously, being able to do homework willingly is regarded as a good study habit that implies a number of factors to be taken into consideration. These factors can mostly contribute to the shaping of an attitude towards educational assignments mainly as to be worth doing or not. Thus, it affects learners' motivation and will to do them. The chapter includes the context of the study, the design of the research, the methodology and the data gathering and analysis procedures.

2.1. Context of the Study

The first part of the chapter sets the scene for the research by describing the context of the study. To clarify why homework is an integral and an indispensable part in the teaching-learning process within the Algerian context, it is important to consider a general description of the Algerian Educational System. The different parts below deals with general description of the different reforms within the Algerian educational system, the different study levels of instruction in Algeria, the status of English language in Algeria, how it was introduced into the curriculum, the adopted CBA approach in Algeria and status of homework within the Algerian educational system and other educational systems around the world.

2.1.1. General Considerations on the Educational Reforms in Algeria

In the aftermath of independence, the Algerian educational system was found in a critical situation after the majority of administrators and teaching staff who were French left the country. Alarmed at the difficult situation the Algerian school was going through, the education was given a priority in Algeria and it went through major reforms.

In the 1970s, the Fundamental School was launched as a way to ensure that all six years old Algerian children start school. The Fundamental school entailed a compulsory

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

schooling for period of nine years to children at the age of six. The aim behind this fundamental school was to develop the material and spiritual elements of socialism within the learner by teaching them economics and social sciences based on Arab-Islamic sources and values.

However, this first attempt of reform was criticized due to the fact that the implemented system marginalized learners' needs at this current era which requires perfect mastery of the basic skills of language. The amount of knowledge learners receive was a way too much. Even the quality of knowledge and the nature of school subjects taught require a certain level of reasoning and maturity that go beyond the child's ability. After the fundamental school, pupils who pass the final exam (BEF, Brevet d'Enseignement Fondamental) are oriented to secondary schools leading them to University, the final stage of Algerian education accessible only to "Baccalaureate" holders.

After the independence, the French language dominated the different walks of life in Algeria and especially the educational domain. Since the seventies many reforms brought by the Algerian government came as an attempt of "Arabisation" to restore the Standard Arabic as the official language of instruction at schools. So, Standard Arabic replaced French gradually and was restored successfully.

In addition, the dominance of Standard Arabic as the major language of instruction in Algerian schools and universities and the insufficient time and resources allocated to French and English (respectively first and second foreign languages) placed the following generations at serious learning problems in foreign languages. This was prevailing at University level, where the majority demonstrated deficiencies in both speaking and writing.

According to Miliani (2000), the language problems that the learners encounter are namely due to the neglect of the Algerian socio-linguistic reality in language planning. He states that:

Language (foreign and national planning), as well as teaching have always responded to considerations or policies imbued with partisanship far from the sociolinguistic reality of the country. (In Hamzaoui-Elachachi, 2006:14)

2.1.2. General Principles of the Secondary and Tertiary Educational Reforms

The teaching of English in Algeria starts in the middle school, after an educational background that comprises five years of Arabic and three years of French language in primary school. Then, it is carried out till the end of secondary school. At universities English is taught either as a major degree in English departments or as an additional and compulsory subject in other departments such as: Political or Economic Sciences, Technology, Biology and so forth.

Secondary Education lasts three years and constitutes a formal preparation for the Baccalaureate examination (BAC), held at the end of 3AS, which is at once a statistical index of the educational achievements in secondary schools and a key to higher education. As far as EFL is concerned:

“It is part of the curriculum regardless of the learners’ stream (literary, scientific or technological) and represents an additional facet to the general learning and instruction of pupils” (Ourghi, 2002:24).

English is introduced in their learning respectively during the third year of primary school and first year of their middle school. According to Senoussi (2012), it is at the level of 3AS that the teacher introduces learners to a systematic study of discourse patterns and language functions that give learners the opportunity:

“...to process content relating to their lives and backgrounds and to develop both fluency and accuracy”. (Teacher’s Guide, 2007:59).

These pupils are also exposed to different types and styles of discourse and are supposed to have an acceptable command of the main functions to have the capacity to express themselves. By the end of Secondary Education, learners are thus, expected to acquire a functional knowledge of English that may enable them to gain an ability to express themselves orally and in writing in a fluent, accurate and meaningful English, inside and outside the classroom setting.

2.1.3. Reflection on the Context of the Reforms of the Algerian Educational System

Algeria, as the rest of the other countries in this global world has gone through the endeavor of improving the quality of English in its education system to ensure better communication and development. This made the educational system go through major reforms by adopting different approaches to language teaching.

A lot of importance has been given to the teaching of EFL, and thus English now is a compulsory subject-matter in the curriculum in all schools Algerian schools. This is stated in the National Charter (1976) “English is a means to facilitate a constant communication with the world, to have access to modern sciences, modern technologies and to encourage creativity in its universal dimension.”

Like all countries around the world, and to respond to the requirements of the labor market, Algeria has adopted the LMD/BMD system. Since 2003-2004 academic year, the LMD system was implemented in the tertiary education. This reform was designed to introduce new competencies at each level, a standardized teaching unit system throughout each curriculum, and make transfer possible among national and international universities. In a nutshell, the reform objectives are to place universities at the heart of the country’s economic development by ensuring the production and dissemination of knowledge, mastery of technology, promotion of research and development and training of the human resources. (Idri 2010)

Each academic year is divided into two semesters, between 14 and 16 weeks/semester. Each semester consists of a set of fundamental (core classes specific to the general field of study), discovery (electives outside the student’s area of specialization), methodology (classes for particular subjects of study) and transversal teaching units. The latter are either tutorials or lectures. Each semester includes at least between 350 or 360 hours of study, i.e., 2100 hours (96 to 84 weeks) to cover a BA degree curriculum. Each teaching unit is assigned credits and coefficients. These credits can be capitalised and transferred. The BA degree is equal to 180 credits.

The second level of the tertiary education includes four semesters for Master degree training. It requires 120 credits to be fully completed. It also prepares students to

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

doctoral studies. It offers further, high-level intensive study in an academic specialty and initiates students to research tools and methods.

The third level of the tertiary education is a three-year programme leading to Doctorate. The admission to Doctorate studies requires a Master and an admission examination (contest). After three years of high-level research and successful defense of a dissertation, the candidates are awarded the diploma of Doctorate.

2.1.4. The Competency-Based Approach

The failure of the different approaches so far tried to reach the objectives targeted by education policy to produce learners who are able to communicate appropriately in the target language has accelerated the implementation of the CBA.

Definition of the CBA

Many attempts to the definition of the CBA were made:

For Richards and Rodgers:

“CBA focuses on the outcomes of learning. CBA addresses what learners are expected to do rather than on what they are expected to learn about. It refers to a movement that advocates defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable description of knowledge, skills, and behaviours students should possess at the end of a course of study.” (2001)

For Schunk, D.-H.:

“CBA is outcome based instruction and is adaptive to the changing needs of the students, teachers and community. Competencies describe the student’s ability to apply basic and other skills based on a set of outcomes that are derived from an analysis of tasks typically required of students in life role situations.” (2004)

For Savage, L.:

“CBA is a functional approach to education that emphasizes life skills and evaluates mastery of these skills according to actual learner performance. It was defined by the US office of Education as “performance-based process”

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

leading to demonstrate the mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society.” (US Office of Education 1978)

Based on the aforementioned definitions, which highlight the importance of learners' outcomes, the CBA can be defined as an approach that focuses on measurable and useable knowledge, skills, and abilities. It consists of teachers basing their instructions on concepts expecting to foster deeper and boarder understanding. According to the Quebec Education Programme (11), the CBA consists of organizing the programme of a syllabus in terms of the development of competencies using specific practices that comply with its founding principles.

The CBA has become a privileged approach as it claims learners' mobilisation of their values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors in a personal independent way to cope with problem-situations successfully. These problem-situations are not particularly academic, but also practical and life-oriented. The integration of the CBA in the field of education and learning involves the emphasis on both the input and also the outcomes. The derived outcomes, however, are not relevant and pertinent only to the academic knowledge, akin to what it used to be done with traditional testing where rote memorisation of knows, generally pre-fabricated, was required/sought. The targeted competencies embody a complex articulation of knowledge, attitudes and skills that learners can make use of whenever they are needed, not merely for the sake of examinations success.

2.1.4. 1 The Characteristics of the CBA

Few years have now elapsed since the new approach has been implemented by the institution in order to meet the needs that we have just defined of economic, professional, social...nature. The new approach, CBA, is characterized, as Mclagan underlines it, by focusing on “*Behavioral outputs or individuals “characteristics and qualities”* (1997:40-47). In other words, according to Daley and Garvin:

“The CBA is often associated with the knows, the skills and individual qualities, by distinguishing the actors of high levels from those of average levels and seeks to develop their potentials.” (1991:188-209).

2.1.4.1.1 Action-Oriented Approach

It is an action-oriented approach. It binds the language learning to the acquisition of the know-how embedded in activities and skills. The latter will enable the learners to become an effective and competent user of the language in real situations apart from the class. The descriptors of linguistic competence; for example, to make the learner able to follow the essential points of a discussion, exchange a point of view, understand the essence of many television programmes on subjects which interest them personally, comprehend and follow a regulation when it is written in a simple way, decipher ads, etc, including in the English program the typical behaviors hoped by the learner.

2.1.4.1.2 Problem-Solving Approach

It is a problem-solving approach, of the tasks problems on a purely informative basis, on a purely interpersonal basis, to discuss three or four idioms, on a purely creative basis, to supplement an invitation letter, to write an article of ten lines, to imagine that you are a member of...., to write a sketch, etc, it places the learner in situations which test and evaluate their capacities with being able to overcome the obstacles and the problems. The languages are learned effectively when they are used in problem solving situations.

2.1.4.1.3 Socio-Constructivist Approach

It is a socio-constructivist approach which focuses the learning of the target language through the social interaction by using English in contexts such as expressing opinion, taking part in a debate, exposing and enriching the vocabulary on varied topics dealing with cultural contents, etc. In other words, learning is not conceived like a transmission of a predetermined knowledge and a know-how-to-do and to be reproduced *in vitro*, only on the pages of a book or between the walls of a classroom, but like a creative construction of the knows built by the means of a process of social interaction with the other learners. From this point of view, the idea of construction of competencies and, consequently, the construction of knows, is capital; hence, it leads us to attach the processes of learning to their contexts: social, economic, cultural, etc.

2.1.4.1.4 Cognitive Approach

It is a cognitive approach; it is really indebted to Bloom's taxonomy who affirms that:

"All the educational objectives can be classified like cognitive, in relation to information, and emotional, in relation to the attitudes, values and emotions, or psychomotor, in relation to the physical movement." (1956:78)

He adds that:

"The cognitive objectives form a hierarchy according to which learner must carry out the objectives of a lower nature before he can complete those of higher order." (1956: 78-79). (See table 2 below).

Evaluation	6	Learner sets a value on the new information.
Synthesis	5	Learner builds new knowledge from the diverse elements.
Analysis	4	Learner analyses information by separating information into parts for better understanding.
Application	3	Learner applies knowledge to new situation.
Comprehension	2	Learner understands information.
Knowledge	1	Learner recalls knowledge.

The cognitive hierarchy table. 1

2.1.4.2 Language Competencies:

Interactive Competency of the CBA

The CBA aims at developing learners' ability to use the language orally to interact with others in order to create social relations, express needs, understand and address needs of others and to get things accomplished. Engaging in a discussion is an example of using interactive competency.

Interpretive Competency of the CBA

It also targets learners' ability enhancement to understand both written and spoken language through reading and listening, and to interpret it appropriately. Reading is the ability to understand and interpret written texts; listening is the ability to understand and interpret oral language. Reading and listening are thus addressed separately.

Productive Competency of the CBA

It seeks the development of the productive competency that confirms learner's ability to produce coherent, appropriate and relevant messages in writing and speaking. It is also the ability to effectively express ideas and organize thoughts appropriately.

2.1.4.2.2 Supporting Competencies

In order to develop the above competencies, learners also need to develop the supporting competencies, namely linguistic and language strategies.

2.1.4.2.2.1 Linguistic Competency

Linguistic competency includes the learning and mastery of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary needed in a given context. There is a set of descriptors of linguistic competency for each grade level.

2.1.4.2.2.2 Language Strategies

Language strategies are ways that help learners to acquire, remember, organize and use information on an ongoing basis. The language strategies are incorporated into the competencies, rather than listed separately.

2.1.5. The Shifting Paradigms from Content-based Programmes to Competency-based Curricula

The Algerian Ministry of Education has recently began a series of educational reforms by introducing the Competency-Based Approach (CBA for short), which paved its way to the secondary education, as a result of the educational reforms of the year (2005-2006). Thus, a transition from teacher to learner-centred instruction for all subjects including English was highly recommended. Such shift was targeted towards developing in learners to some extent a communicative ability in English to meet the needs of globalization. This change implies that the teacher should centre the teaching process on his learners.

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

In addition, the CBA induces teachers to make the learner the true centre of the teaching and learning. In such approach, pupils learn by doing and construct their own knowledge base. Thus, they are supposed to be responsible for their own learning. On the other hand, the teacher is required to become:

“a mediator between the pupil and knowledge...His task is to guide, help, simulate, accompany and encourage the pupil throughout this training”
(*Programme of English as a Second Foreign Language, 2003:6*).

2.1.6. Status of English in Algeria

The word multilingualism is often used to people who use two or more languages whether at school or at home. This however, doesn't imply that the speaker is competent and literate in both languages. As a result, the Algerian linguistic landscape can be described as multilingual due to the presence of four active languages in the Algerian context namely literary Arabic, Algerian Arabic, Tamazight and French.

Although it is commonly used as an international language in diplomacy, tourism, and international trade, English is not involved in societal functions in Algeria. The foreign language setting implies that a learner is rarely chanced to practice the language outside the classroom. For example, Richards favors this idea:

“In a foreign language setting there is always an effort to acquire an overseas standard form of English and not some local form of English”
(*Richards, 1972:87*).

Almost all subjects in Algeria are taught in Classical Arabic at the university, accepting the faculties of medicine, biology and engineering where French is the medium of instruction, while English is included in the school curriculum as a compulsory subject. To understand more the importance of English language according to the failure of French in some domains, Miliani (2000) says:

In a situation where the French language has lost much of its ground in the sociocultural and educational environments of the country; the introduction of English is being heralded as the magic solution to all possible ills-including economics, technological and educational ones. (Miliani, 2000:13)

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

However, by adopting English as an international and a global language for communication, more and more universities placed emphasis on teaching different kinds of English modules to students to help them become proficient and competitive in their future careers.

English as an international language is spoken by as many people as 1.5 billion in the world. It is the number one language used in almost all domains; technology, diplomacy, business, tourism, sport, economy, medicine, media.....etc. Thus, the use of English in this globalized world has become of a paramount importance and the considerable status it gained in the world urged many non-English speaking countries to integrate it their educational systems.

2.1.7. English in the Curriculum

English has been for long the dominant foreign language in the curricula of many educational systems in the world. With a view of such important role, much importance has been given to the teaching of EFL in the Algerian schools and universities, and thus English has become a compulsory subject –matter in the curriculum in all Algerian schools and universities.

With the new educational reforms that Algeria has mandated during the last few years, the English language was perceived on a larger scale on the view of the reform targets. Thus, syllabus designers view that:

The study of English must imperatively be conceived with the objective of helping our society to get harmoniously integrated in modernity. This means a fully complete participation in a rising linguistic community of people who use English in all types of transaction. This participation must be based on sharing and exchanging ideas as well as expectations in the fields of culture, science and civilization. This will make it possible to know oneself and the other. (Programme of English as a Second Foreign Language, 2003:2)

This clearly emphasizes that having a good command and grasp of English is highly recommended to make citizens participate actively in organizing the needs of their

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

community and to fit into different fields such as culture, science, and civilization and so on.

2.1.8 Homework within the Context of other Educational Systems

There is a learning crisis facing educational systems across the world. While education has become accessible to most people in the world, still being at school isn't the same as learning. This learning crisis still persists as Annette Dixon (2019) states because many educational systems and especially those of the developed and the under-developed countries have very little information as to who is learning and who is not. Regardless whether the educational system of a given country is highly or poorly achieving, there has been a common practice and long standing tradition of assigning homework that dates back as far in history as a century or even more. Homework has been for long and it is still believed to benefit learners and help them achieve better and develop good study habits. However, this supremacy that the homework has been questioned for the sake of uncovering evidence on what could be possibly the true responsible factor affecting learners' achievement positively.

As long as there is a worldwide competition between educational systems and a list to rank their scores, it seems no exaggeration to say that some educational systems are failing their students, precisely at least those who achieve below average. On global education metrics, the Finnish educational system regularly tops the charts outstandingly and their test scores dominate everyone else. Katie Lepi (2017) displays how successful is the Finish educational system compared to other high achieving systems. Their high school graduation is at 93% compared to 78% in Canada and 75% in US. What is attractive about the Finish educational system is that it is stable in terms of results and regularly overtops other systems. Despite the common similarities amongst these educational systems, the major difference is that the Finish educational system has the least frequency and intensity of homework compared to the rest of educational systems. No homework or very little homework is a drastic measure to many teachers and educational researchers. This is to the widespread belief that homework is an indispensable practice in the teaching learning operation. However, if we consider the acknowledged worldwide fact that the word *Homework* is perceived by many learners unpleasantly and the word evokes a

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

labyrinth of feelings ranging from conflict, trepidation, boredom, compulsion and punishment (Czerniawski-Kidd 2013).

It can explain why the Finish educational system is not focused on homework assigning. This from another hand was the reason that led us conduct this study in an attempt to investigate why many learners don't do the homework they are assigned willingly and to discover their attitudes towards it (Czerniawski-Kidd 2013).

It doesn't mean though that homework is not important or has no benefits on learners. Finish Prof Susan Hallam from the Institute of Education asserts that there is "hard evidence" that homework really does improve how well pupils achieve (Coughlan, 2016). Furthermore, Coughlan (2016) displays a study for the Department for Education which found that students who did two to three hours of homework per night were almost 10 times more likely to achieve five good GCSEs than those who did no homework.

There have been many studies which demonstrated that homework could be beneficial to learners, but to consider their findings as hard evidence for the equation that assigning homework necessarily leads to better achievement is far from reality as long as there are other variables playing behind the scenes such as motivation, frequency and quality of homework, and teacher's quality.

2.1.9 Homework within the Algerian Educational System

The Algerian educational system is heavily based on homework. This is to the belief that homework can benefit learners in terms of achievement, study habits and personality traits such as responsibility, autonomy and independence. Throughout their different study cycles, Algerian pupils are loaded with homework. Homework has been and still an inevitable learning practice that teachers have to assign and learners supposed to do. The Algerian Ministry of Education has recently began a series of educational reforms by introducing the Competency-Based Approach (Henceforth CBA) and the homework holds a position of a paramount importance within the CBA.

Thus, a transition from teacher to learner-centered instruction for all subjects including English was highly recommended. Such shift was targeted towards developing in

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

learners to some extent a communicative ability in English to meet the needs of globalization.

This change implies that the teacher should centre the teaching process on his learners. According to the Programme of English as a Second Foreign Language (2003:6), the CBA induces teachers to make the learner the true centre of the teaching and learning. In such approach, pupils learn by doing and construct their own knowledge base. Thus, they are supposed to be responsible for their own learning. On the other hand, the teacher is required to become: “a mediator between the pupil and knowledge...His task is to guide, help, simulate, accompany and encourage the pupil throughout this training”

2.3 Research Methodologies:

The methodology refers to the rationale that underlies a particular research work. The detailed explanations concerning the research design, research instruments, population, and so forth must be included. This study is based on the statement of the problem, research questions, research hypotheses, research objective, the study of the participants (or respondents), data collection procedures and data analysis procedures. The researcher was extremely systematic and detailed. All these are clearly explained in the paragraphs below.

2.3.1 Re-statement of the Problem:

Homework is an indispensable part in the teaching process within the Algerian educational context and learners are being assigned homework on a regular basis. Many learners assert that homework is in fact beneficial to them, yet this is not prevailing in the way they receive and do their homework. While teachers' intentions when assigning homework are at their best, many learners still don't receive homework pleasantly. This resulted in a widespread tendency among learners' to do the homework they are assigned unwillingly. Thus, learners' unwillingness to do homework is the problem of this study.

2.3.2 Research Questions

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

A research question is very important in any research work. A good research question helps to:

- guide the research process
- construct a logical argument
- write a literature review
- plan thesis chapters
- devise efficient search strategies.

For this challenging situation, the researcher posed two research questions:

1. What are learners' attitudes towards educational assignment?
2. What are the main factors that can decrease or increase learners' motivation to do homework?

2.3.3 Research Hypotheses

The guiding questions of this study have been formulated to display the reflection of learners' attitudes in the way they behave towards educational assignments. Based on the research questions above, the researchers hypothesize that:

1. Many learners regard homework assignments as a compulsory practice that has to be accomplished in order to get grades.
2. Many learners realize the importance of homework for their academic achievement and learning.
3. Many learners feel unwilling to do homework assignments because of their high levels of frequency and difficulty.

2.3.4 Research Objective

The need for this study arises from a desire to better help teachers as well as students understand how learners are being negatively affected by their attitudes towards educational homework in a way that makes them unwilling to do homework. So, the main objective of this study is to make learners (case of students at the University of Tiaret) aware of their attitudes towards homework assignments and sensitize teachers to the need of designing homework in a way that fits into learner profile taking into consideration homework frequency and difficulty.

2.3.5 Research Design

The design of research methods is dependent on research questions and their problems (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991: 22). This research deals with the what, why and how questions. The use of such questions entails the conduction of a qualitative inquiry research which aims at describing what is going on in the research. (Creswell, 1998: 17). Qualitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity. This research is largely qualitative in nature where learners' attitudes towards educational homework are the core and the primary focus of our research. Qualitative research allows for the analysis of the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular way or which make them like or dislike something. (Seymen, 2015: 2). So, by this research, we aim at investigating and exploring learners' attitudes towards educational homework and which could be the reason behind their unwillingness to do homework. We also aim at exploring possible ways by which learners' motivation to do homework can be raised. The main criterion of qualitative research is that it is appropriate for smaller samples. Its main advantage is that it gives a full description and analysis of a research subject, without limiting the scope of the research and the nature of participant's responses.

However, it can't be said that this research is purely qualitative as it involved the use of two quantitative tools; namely the survey and the questionnaire. Sticking to one method can be insufficient and risky to the validity and reliability of the results. When he was interviewed about the best method to use, Creswell stressed the use of mixed method approach so that the strengths of one method can be used to overcome the weaknesses of another method. By the use of the mixed methods approach, we endeavor to collect, analyze and interpret data using both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study in order to increase the generalizability of the results and provide a stronger evidence for conclusion.

In order to meet the objectives of the dissertation and obtain a full understanding as to what learners' attitudes are towards educational homework and how to raise their motivation to do homework willingly, we have made use of triangulation. Creswell (1998: 19) states that:

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

"The backbone of qualitative research is extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information."

This process allows for data to be collected from as many resources as possible. The use of multiple tools can secure data and grant the validity and reliability to the research findings. In this regard, this study was carried in three stages involving both qualitative and quantitative data that was collected in the form of:

A questionnaire directed to learners (**Phase 1: quantitative data**);

A survey administered to learners (**Phase 2: quantitative data**);

An interview conducted with focus group learners (**Phase 3: qualitative data**).

2.3.5.1 The Targeted Population

The target population for this study includes all the students of the English department at Ibn-Khaldun University of Tiaret except for first year students. Due to the importance of the study and the fact that first year students have insufficient experience with the topic of our investigation, they fall short of meeting our expectations and thus are excluded from the target population for representative issues. The population left comprises an accessible population of more than 400 students that is within our reach and from which the sample of this study was selected. The table below presents a record of all the matriculated students of the English section at the university. An 'X' mark indicates that the level is excluded from the target population while a '✓' indicates the ones that were included.

Level	Number
1 st year X	
2 nd year	
3 rd year	
Masters 1	
Masters 2	

2.3.5.2 Sample of the Population

The sample of the population of this study stood at 46 students selected from all the levels. At this stage, it is worth noting that not all the participants were required to respond to the three data collection tools used in this study. That is to say out of the 46 participants, 20 students responded to the questionnaire, 20 students to the survey and 6 students to the interview. This was done for a reason. When participants are kindly requested to respond to a number of comprehensible and simple worded questions about a topic in which they have a strong interest or at least they are concerned with, they can give honest answers that constitute high quality research findings. On one hand, this was done to decrease the chances that respondents can feel fatigue through the process of questioning or lose interest in it and on the other one, to increase the quality of the research findings in terms of validity and reliability.

2.3.5.3 Sampling Techniques

This study uses simple random sampling as a procedure for participants' selection. This technique was employed to grant a fair and equal representation for the variables in this study. It was used to select respondents for both the questionnaire and the survey. To minimize any biases in the process of simple random selection, we opted for random number generator software. The latter is preferred more as the sample numbers can be generated randomly without human interference. (Bhat, 2015)

For instance, this software chooses two numbers from 1 to 6 which is the total number of second year groups. Then, using this software again, we select randomly 5 participants; two from the first chosen group and three from the second or vice versa. The selection of each participant from any chosen group is dependent on the number that the software chooses and which corresponds to the number of the student on the group list. This is how all the respondents to the questionnaire and to the survey were selected from each level: second year, third year, masters1, masters2. The following table shows the number of participants that were selected from each level.

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

Level	Number
2 nd year	5
3 rd year	5
Master1	5
Master2	5

It is worth mentioning that the procedure of simple random selection as explained above was conducted twice; the first for selecting respondents of the questionnaire and the second for the survey. Also, even though randomly, the numbers that were generated twice by the software weren't considered until a different number is generated. Doing this was helpful in a way that all elements in the target population stood the same chance of being selected and be part in the study.

As for the focus group interview, a different selection technique was used. A method of purposive sampling was employed to develop a sample for the focus group. According to this method, which belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques, sample members are selected on the basis of their knowledge, relationships and expertise regarding a research subject (Freedman et al., 2007). For study purposes, we had to choose learners with a good command of English and who are able to express themselves confidently at a certain level of fluency and accuracy. The time allocated for the discussion of the focus group is limited and we had to give each of the seven respondents' sufficient time to express their opinions and make comments on the topic under investigation. For that we needed precise, concise and well worded answers which only fluent and confident learners can give.

2.3.5.4 Research Tools

Having embarked any research, a great deal of thought should be devoted to choosing the appropriate research tools. The selection of suitable instruments or tools is of vital importance for successful research.

Due to the nature of the topic of our study and the field of research itself, our choice concerning data collection fell on three different tools; the questionnaire, the survey, and the focus group interview. The choice of these tools was meant for triangulation to

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

grant the research findings more generalizability and validity. All of the three tools are used in this study to uncover reasons behind learners' unwillingness to do homework as well as to investigate possible solutions to raise their motivation to do homework willingly.

2.3.5.5 The Questionnaire

It is believed that attitudes are the steering wheel of human behavior. By means of the questionnaire, we intend to obtain data that can help investigate possible factors that can contribute to the shaping of learners' attitude towards educational homework and which could be the reason behind their unwillingness to do it. The first section of the questionnaire focuses on factors such as homework frequency, difficulty, length, accomplishment, importance, assistance, motivation, teacher's feedback and supervision.

The questionnaire used in this study comprises 24 close-ended questions. The participants were first asked to indicate their level of study and their gender. The first 12 questions in the questionnaire investigate possible problems with homework. This first combination of questions was meant to elicit data in the form of frequency. Thus, it required the participant to choose one answer from the following set of possible answers: never, sometimes, often and always. The second part of the questionnaire consists of 8 yes/no questions that were designed to explore learners' habits and routine while doing homework and check to what extent these habits are affecting negatively or positively their willingness to do homework. As for the last two ones, they are multiple choice questions which require respondents to underline one answer. This last section investigates the learners' incentives to do their homework as well as the reasons for not doing so.

2.3.5.6 The Survey

As far as data collection tools are concerned, conducting this research also involved the use of a survey. The rationale behind the use of this research tool is to gain unbiased information and insights from the participants' viewpoints regarding the topic under investigation. Such as is the case for the questionnaire, the respondents to this survey are required to answer two basic personal data questions concerning their age and their gender. Then, they are requested to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each of the eleven statements with an 'X' mark in the box of their answers. The first

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

seven questions in this survey are carefully selected in order to elicit data from learners concerning their attitudes concerning educational homework. Such data include homework frequency, accomplishment, difficulty, variety, value and teachers' feedback. The last four questions investigate learners' level of motivation to do homework and also the reasons that can induce them to do their homework in the first place. It is worth to note that some of the questions asked in the questionnaire were the same questions asked differently in the survey and the focus group interview. If these questions are answered the same, this can enhance the validity and the generalizability of the research findings.

2.3.5.7 The Focus Group Interview

A focus group interview is the third tool we employed in our research. By definition:

“focus group interview comprises of a small number of people, usually from six to nine, who are brought together by a moderator in order to explore their attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a given topic. It usually lasts for 90 to two hours at the most”. Denscombe (2007: 177).

2.3.5.7.1 The Purpose and Rationale

Focus group interview is a qualitative technique for data collection. A focus group is

“a group of individuals with certain characteristics who focus discussions on a given issue or topic” (Anderson, 1990: 242).

The aim behind using focus groups is to elicit high-quality data in a social context (Patton, 2002). Such data can help the researcher understand a specific problem from the viewpoints of the participants in the focus group (Khan & Manderson, 1992).

The acknowledged smooth and flawless conduction of a focus group interview by a qualified moderator guarantees the obtaining of high quality data that can give deep insights as to what learners' attitudes towards educational homework are, which represents the paramount question in our research. Conducting a focus group interview necessitates certain characteristics to be respected.

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

Denscombe (2007, p.178), states three distinctive characteristics for focus group interview:

- The focus to the session is on the group discussion which revolves around an item or experience about which all participants have similar knowledge.
- The interaction within the group is emphasized through the session as means of eliciting information.
- A primary role of the moderator is to facilitate the group interaction rather than leading the discussion.

All of the three characteristics mentioned above were sufficiently met and the discussion was conducted at a considerable level of professionalism.

2.3.5.7.2The Administration of the Focus Group

The sample of participants taken into the focus group interview which was employed in this study consisted of 7 interviewees.

“A maximum of six to nine participants is large enough to allow a variety of views be expressed among the group. However, a larger number than this can be unmanageable in terms discussions as it can be costly and time consuming to arrange” Denscombe (2007, p.177)

The conduction of the focus group went through three stages:

A) Pre-meeting

In this stage questions were thoroughly prepared to meet certain characteristics. Richard Kruegar and Mary Anne Casey¹ propose 8 reminders for “Good Questions” in focus groups. (Kruegar, Casey 2000: 40-43). They say good questions should be sound conversational, easy to understand, open-ended, one dimensional, short, clear, use words participants and include good directions. After the questions had been prepared, we recruited the participant in the focus group. The criterion for participant’s selection is that

“The individuals of the focus group should have certain characteristics and a common background so that they can focus discussions on a given issue or topic” Anderson (as cited in Dilshad and Latif, 2013).

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

The last step in this stage was reviewing the arrangements for anything missing (camera, audio recorder...etc.) and deciding on the meeting particulars.

B) While meeting

The whole meeting was audio recorded. First, we thanked the participants for coming and perceiving a brief overview of the purpose and goals of the focus group interview. Second, we set the tone by asking opening questions and made sure that all opinions about the topic are heard. Third, we continued asking questions in that manner from the easy to the difficult, from the general to the specific from the close-ended to the open-ended. Finally, when all questions have been asked, participants were welcomed to make any comments if they had any. Throughout the process,

‘Participants listened to each other’s responses and made additional comments behind their original responses while they heard what others had to say. Participants didn’t have to reach any kind of agreement or disagreement as this is in not the aim behind the focus group’ Patton (2000).

We were also acknowledged of our roles as a moderator and a note taker. The primary role was to facilitate the discussion. We didn’t allow our own views be shared with the participants as this might bias the participants’ answers. All in all, the discussion was conducted in a permissive and non-intimidating environment that allowed for participants to share their ideas and perceptions in an enjoyable and a comfortable way.

C) Post-meeting

We made a transcript of the meeting. We examined and analyzed the data we attained from the participants. We drew conclusions in view of our research questions and hypotheses. Finally, we used the results in our study and shared them with the participants of the focus group. This chapter will tackle thoroughly the data obtained and how it was interpreted and analyzed.

Chapter Two: context of study and methodology Content

Conclusion:

Knowing the way learners view homework and how important it is for them can be decisive in determining its repositioning in the Algerian educational system. This chapter was concerned with the context of study, through which, one tries to set a platform for the in-hand investigation, then it describes the methodology adapted to proceed in this investigation. Thus the sample population, the participants' profile as well as the data collection instruments that have been used were dealt with.

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

Introduction

3.1 Analysis of learners' questionnaire

3.2 Analysis of learners' survey

3.3 Analysis of learners' focus group interview

3.4 Discussion and interpretation of the research findings

3.5 Conclusion

General Conclusion

Limitation of the Study

Recommendations

Appendices

references

ملخص

Résumé

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

Introduction

Antonius (2003:2) briefly and clearly states that data as a word entails information that is collected systematically and organized and recorded to enable the reader to make sense out of the information.

In the following stage of the research process, the data attained from both the quantitative and qualitative methods are presented, described, analyzed and interpreted systematically. By this comprehensible documentation and analysis, the reader can interpret correctly the visual data which will be presented in the chapter.

The analysis starts first with the quantitative data attained by means of the questionnaire and the survey. Then, it is followed by the analysis of qualitative data that was recorded by means of focus group interview.

This study uses a mixed method of data collection, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. It is also important to remain mindful that data collected by these two methods are connected, in that the data that was collected by the questionnaire and the survey helped in preparing the questions of the focus group interview.

3.1 The Analysis of Learners' Questionnaire

The aim behind the analysis of the collected data is to convert raw data into something meaningful and legible. Differently couched, it is a switch from a body of illegible data to meaningful insights.

The questionnaire was conducted with 20 students that were chosen randomly from different study levels. Given that females constitute the vast majority of the accessible population, the sample of the study was accordingly dominated by females. The first two questions in the questionnaire required the respondents to indicate their level and gender. The following table presents the obtained results:

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

<i>Level</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>2nd year</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>3rd year</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Masters 1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Masters 2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>20</i>

Table 3.1 Respondents' level and gender

A total number of 20 questionnaires were distributed to students in two days, and it took two other days to be retrieved back. Respondents needed that period of time to think and reflect upon the questions and give high quality answers that could enhance the overall validity and reliability of the research findings. The questionnaire comprises two sections, each tackling a different area.

3.1.1 Section One: Respondents' Reflection on Homework Assignment

This section consists of 11 close-ended questions, all of which target answers in terms of frequency except from question 2. The respondents had to choose from a set of answers namely, never, sometimes, often and always. The first question is about *doing homework*: Do you do your homework? This question is essential to the flow of the rest of answers as it informs the learner about his tendency concerning doing homework. The answer to this question is decisive for the researcher to anticipate learners' attitude towards homework mainly as positive or negative. The second question is about *homework frequency*: How often do you receive homework? The quantity of homework that learners receive can be perceived differently by learners and thus affect the way they think and react about it. The third question is about *homework difficulty*: How do you usually find the homework? Learners are likely to feel frustrated if the homework is too difficult for them or feel bored if it is too easy. This can be a factor that determines their attitude towards homework. The fourth question is about *homework accomplishment*: How often do you complete your homework? Long or too long homework can make learners bored and thus underestimate the value of homework. The fifth question is about *homework value*: How

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

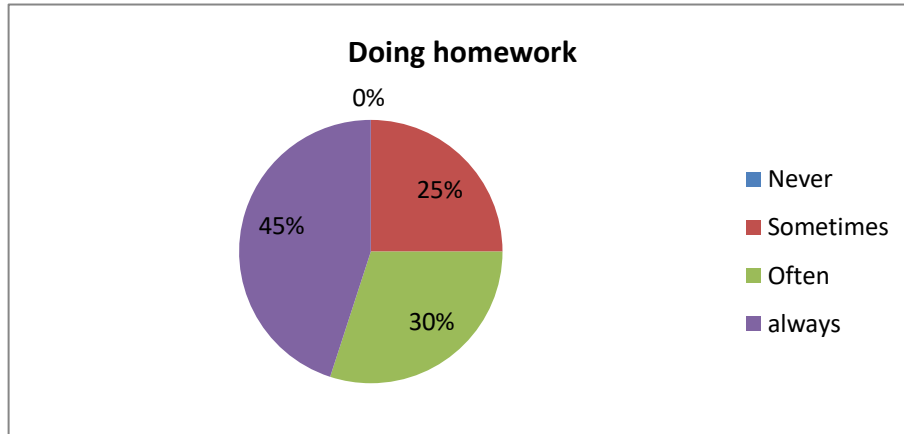
often do you find the homework worth doing? Some learners can be uncertain as to what the value of homework is, and thus chose to do it or not The sixth question is about *homework assistance*: Do you receive help to complete your homework? If so, this entails that the homework is challenging to be done on one's own or perhaps there is another factor that inhibits the learner from doing so. The seventh question is about *homework motivation*: do you feel motivated when doing your homework? Motivation is another factor that affects learner's will to do homework. If not motivated, doing homework for learners would be more a tradition rather than an informed practice. The eighth question is about *homework for better understanding*: Does homework help you better understand what you learn in class? Learners receive homework to reinforce what they learn at class. This question can reveal the extent to which learners find homework beneficial in terms of better understanding to what they learn at class. The ninth question is about *teacher's supervision*: How often do teachers check your homework? Learners' homework should be checked so that learners feel how important the homework is for the learner to do and for the teacher to check. The tenth question is about *teacher's feedback*: Do you receive comments or feedback on your homework? Teachers' feedback to learners on their homework is necessary for learners to identify and work on their weaknesses and for the teacher to reflect on his practices as a teacher

The following charts and graphs are intended to present the data collected from each item in the questionnaire:

3.1.1.1 Doing Homework:

Do you do your homework?

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations



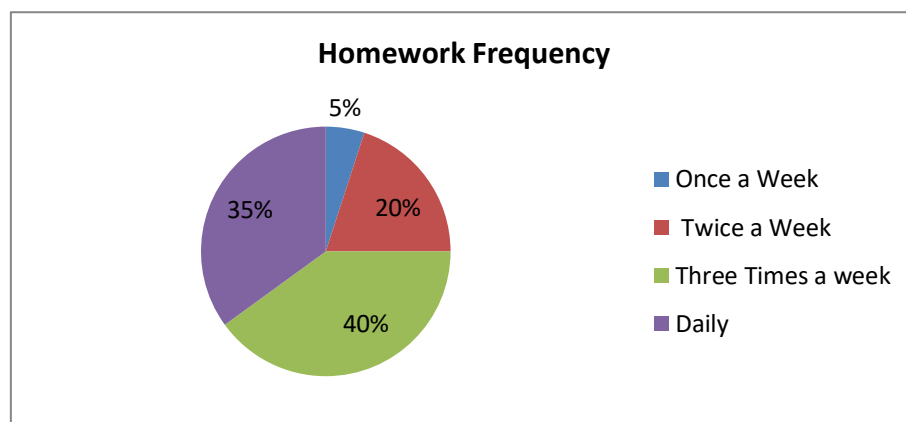
Graphic 3.1.1

The statistical data above show that no one of the respondents acknowledges that they never do their homework, while 25% of them sometimes do so. Nearly the similar number of the respondents, viz., 30%, often do homework while 45% of them or always does so.

As regards the above statistics, the frequency of doing homework is variable. Apart from those who regularly do their homework, the rest might have reasons behind the unsteadiness concerning homework doing.

3.1.1.2 Homework Frequency

How often do you receive homework?



Graphic 3.1.2

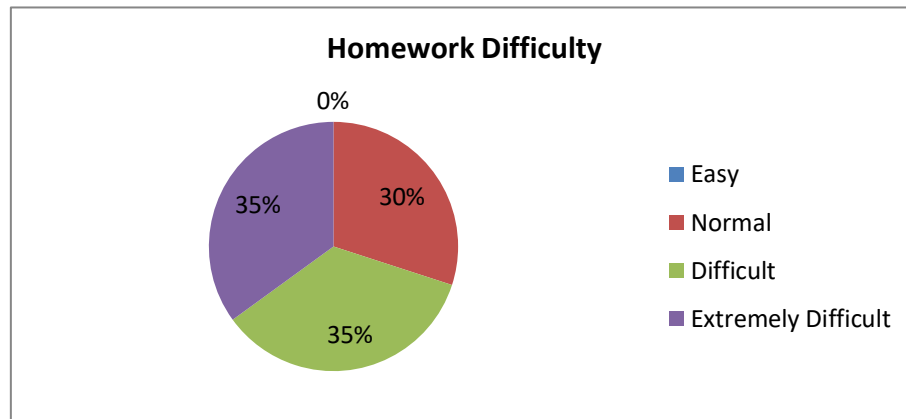
Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

The answers to the second item, as regards frequency, reveal that 40% of the targeted respondents attest that they are daily assigned homework. Less than the first group, i.e., 35% acknowledge that they are given homework three times a week, and 20% attest that they receive twice a week. Whereas only 5% of them report that they receive homework once a week.

In fact, too much and too little of something is bad. Targeting learners' efficient learning is important yet it should not be combined with stress, anxiety and pressure. Teachers should assign homework tasks at the right intervals.

3.1.1.3 Homework Difficulty

How do you find the homework?



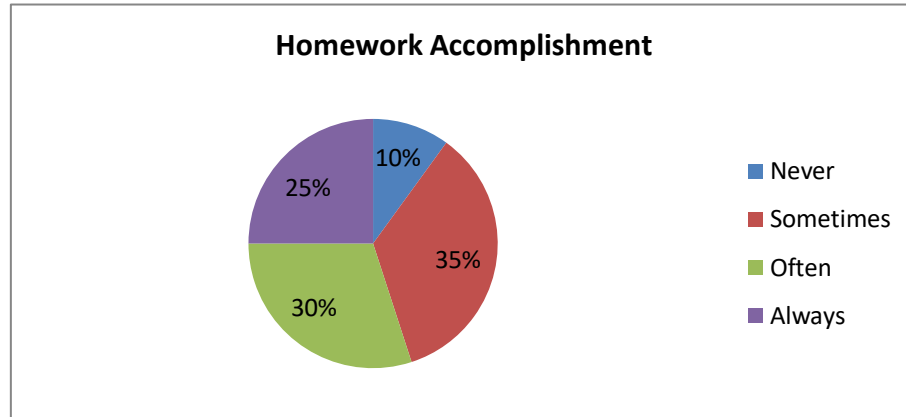
Graphic 3.1.3

The numerical data derived from item 03 shows that 30% of students find the homework normal. Yet, 35% of them find it difficult and another 35% stipulate that it is extremely difficult to complete. None of the surveyed students finds it easy

3.1.1.4 Homework Accomplishment

How often do you complete your homework?

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations



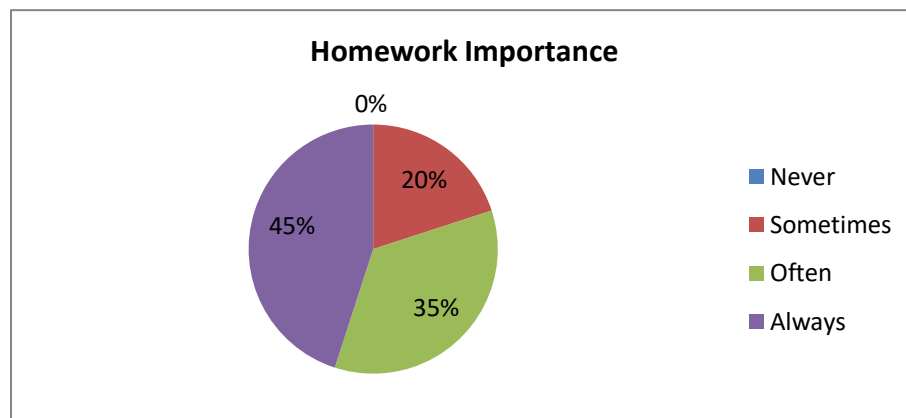
Graphic 3.1.4

Question 04 was asked to gauge students' effective completion of the assigned homework. The statistical data listed above show that 30% of students sometimes finish their homework, and the same percentage of them state that they often finish it. More than one third of them, i.e., 35% admit that they always finish it. Yet, a small minority recognizes the fact that they never complete their homework.

In this question (4), we intended to shed light on students' effective completion of the assigned homework.

3.1.1.5 Homework Importance

How often do you find the homework worth doing?



Graphic 3.1.5

The responses to item 05, aiming at instructing respondents on the worthiness/usefulness of doing the homework, demonstrate that no student never find

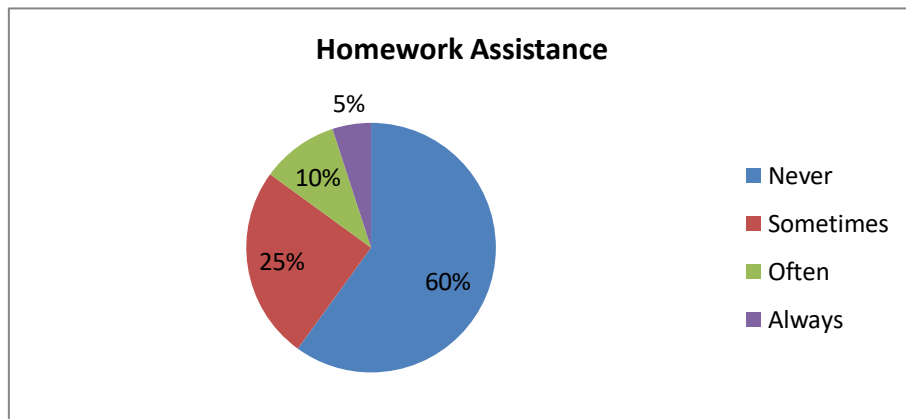
Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

the homework worth doing. 20% of them sometimes find it worth doing. 35% of students often find it worth doing, while 45% always find the homework worth doing.

Referring to the answers above, it can be noticed that most of the surveyed students (always 45%, often 35%) are conscious of the advantages and benefits of this type of home activities. Learners should perceive these activities as a meaningful extension of instruction time and a medium of communication between school and home. In fact, this gives parents practical tips so that they can show interest on their children's education. Homework increases knowledge and improves learners' skills, especially if completed either alone or in collaboration with parents, classmates, etc. Those moments of challenge enable them to reinvest the already gained knowledge. Moreover, homework represents an integral part of the learners' whole learning process. Besides academic acquisitions, it fosters critical life skills such as self-discipline, time management and sense of personal responsibility.

3.1.1.6 Homework Assistance

Do you receive help to complete your homework?



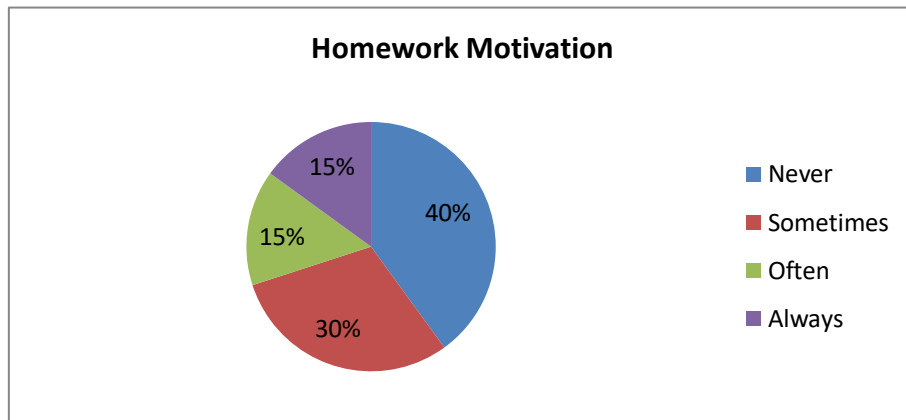
Graphic 3.1.6

Inquiring about assistance while doing homework, the reaped data show that 60% of students never receive help, while 35% sometimes receive help. 10% of them said they often receive help and only 5% never receive help.

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

3.1.1.7 Homework Motivation

Do you feel motivated when doing your homework?



Graphic 3.1.7

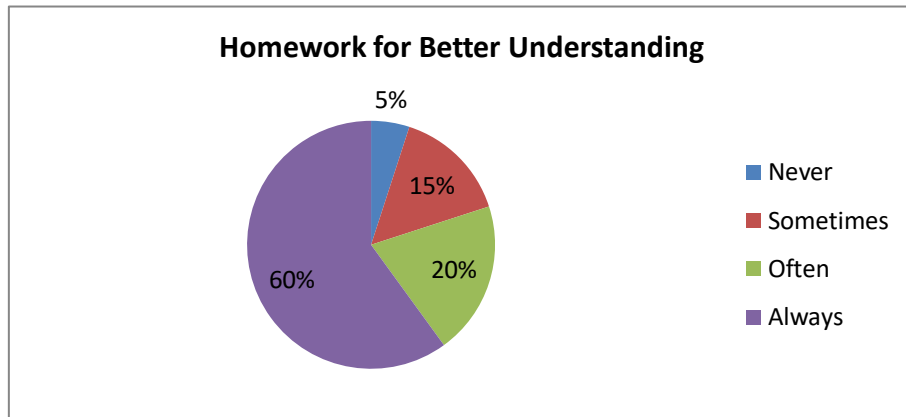
The data resulting from item 07, meant to gauge students' level of motivation as regards homework doing, show that a bit more than the third of students, viz., 40% say they never feel motivated when doing homework and 30% of them sometimes feel motivated. The remaining respondents are shared between often (15%) and always (15%) feel motivated.

Students' demotivation/dispersedness with respect to homework assignment is due to a set of reasons. Whenever home tasks are incongruous with what students have been presented with in the classroom, they feel no need to do the homework. Besides, the degree of difficulty of these tasks can cause students' refutation. Therefore, teachers should be aware of the fact that home tasks should not be long and rote rather a simple and short gauge of the students' mastery of the lesson skills.

3.1.1.8 Homework for Better Understanding

Does homework help you better understand what you learn in class?

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations



Graphic 3.1.8

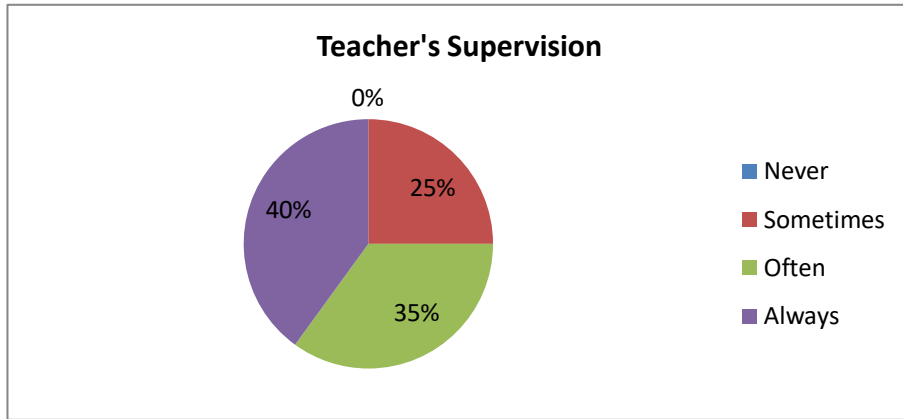
Item 08, in connection with the added value of homework, reveals that 60% of students say that homework always help them better understand what they learn at class, while 20% of them said often. Only a minority, i.e., 15% confirms that homework sometimes helps them better understand their beforehand learnt lessons. A very small number of them, i.e., 5% declares that the homework never impact them positively.

Homework assignment is meant to reinforce the prior acquisitions and prepare for the forthcoming sessions. Doing homework enables students to gain speed, increase mastery, review learned things and retain specific skills over time. All these converge towards students' engagement, confidence and self-esteem. In other words, the long-term benefits that homework doers can achieve are self-regulated and autonomous learning, and time management skills.

3.1.1.9 Teacher's Supervision

How often do teachers check your homework?

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations



Graphic 3.1.9

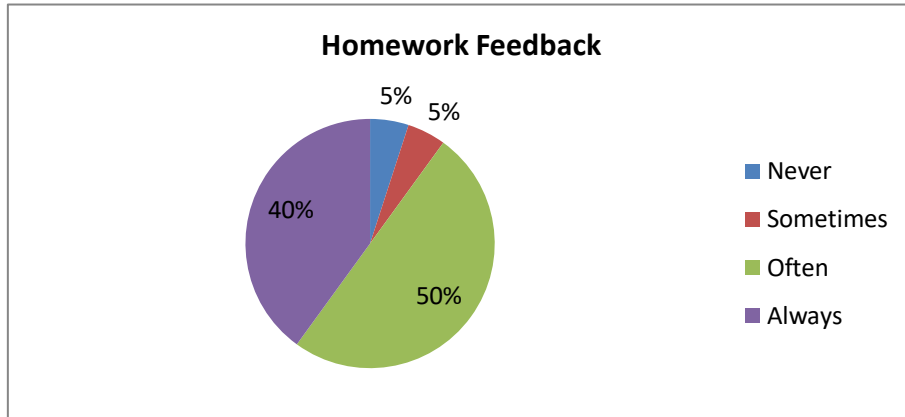
As regards teachers' feedback and monitoring, question item 09 was asked to check teachers' efficacy. The 25% of the respondents assert that their teachers check their homework and provide feedbacks. More than the third of them, 35%, report that their teachers often checked their homework. Yet, 40% of them say that teachers always check their homework, while no one said that their homework is never checked.

Students' homework should be subjected to teachers' regular checking, assessment and monitoring to be able to get an insightful evaluation of their progress. This can inform teachers' subsequent lesson planning and teaching. 'Feedback' in this context means constructively informing students of their performance in respect of a particular learning objective and guiding them as to how to improve or build on this. Regular feedbacks allow teachers to gather enough data on students' learning, especially to identify those struggling students, and those who are capable of enduring further challenges so that the needs of each and every student can be met. In fact, regular monitoring and assessing are one of the best means to ensure the formative evaluation.

3.1.1.10 Homework feedback

Do you receive comments or feedback on your homework?

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

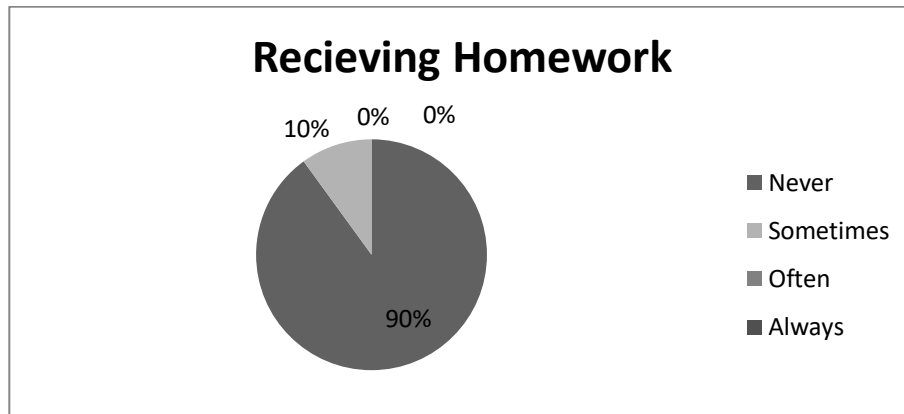


Graphic 3.1.10

Item 10 shows that 50% of students often receive feedback on their homework. 40% of students said they always receive feedback while 5% of them said never and another 5% said sometimes.

3.1.1.11 Receiving homework

Do you like to receive homework?



Graphic 3.1.11

The results obtained in this item (11) show that the heavy majority of the respondents, viz. 90% attest that they don't like to receive homework, while only 10% of them said that they sometimes like to receive homework.

For some students, homework assignments can have potential harm. They feel a pressing need for relax and rest after long hours of lessons at school. The pressure of being

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

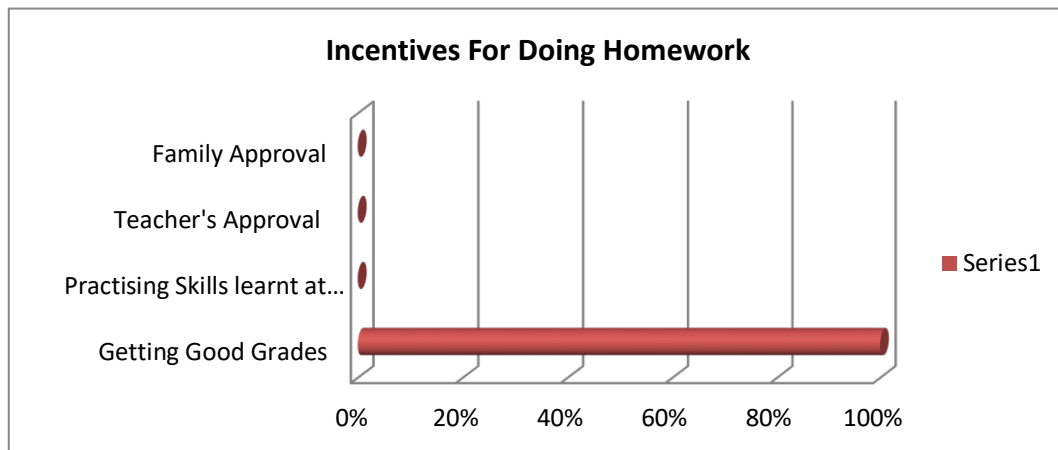
compelled to complete homework each night is quite daunting for most learners who need time to refresh both their minds and bodies. Opponents to excessive homework argue that this can cause learners' saturation blocking them from pursuing their academic studies. Thus, homework frequency should be governed by rationale and achievement gain to the learning process, i.e., assigned according to the idiosyncratic needs. Besides, with regard to the daunting profession, teachers should be able to assess those home tasks so as to motivate learners.

3.1.2 Section Two

This section contains two multiple choice questions; the first intended for highlighting the real incentive behind doing homework and the second the real reason behind not doing homework.

3.1.2.1 Respondents' incentives behind doing the homework

Question one: According to you, what makes learners do their homework?



Graphic 3.1.12

This graph above shows chokingly that a total of 100% of students do their homework for no other reason than getting good grades.

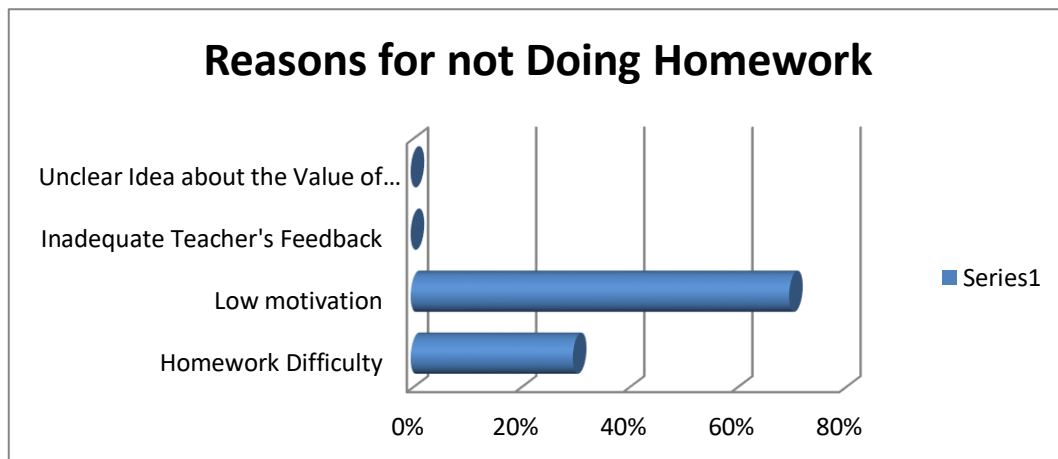
It is probably no exaggeration to say that nowadays learning shifted to be utterly grade-based learning at the detriment of that proficiency-based one. In fact, all education

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

systems that depend merely on grading are flawed, and the resulting grades are questionable, misleading and, in many cases, meaningless. It is acknowledged that grades serve a specific social purpose in the Algerian context. Generally speaking, grading is most frequently used as method of comparison: student vs. student, student vs. standard, effort vs. performance, past vs. present (Douglas & Smith, 2013; Grading, 2013).

3.1.2.2 Respondents' reasons behind not doing the homework

Question Two: According to you, what makes you refrain from doing homework?



Graphic 3.1.13

The data in the graph above show that more than the two thirds of the respondents (70%) report that they don't do their homework because of low motivation, while 30% of them say it is because of homework difficulty.

The homework practices can become synergetic in that the more a teacher is involved, invested and reflective in homework; he is more likely to provide meticulous feedback, individualized explanation as to how to improve learners' homework performance and motivation. Thus, learners would be more likely to draw benefits by actually doing the prescribed home tasks when teachers genuinely assess the worthiness of learners' home performance as a meaningful extension of classroom teaching activities.

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

Conclusion

The results entailing from the questionnaire reveal that home tasks, though being an integral part of the teaching/learning process, are perceived as being to somewhat very essential by most students as well as being deemed necessary by teachers. The society ethos and education system as a whole impacts students' performance, because their representations might easily be influenced by the overarching atmosphere of the milieu.

3.2 Analysis of Students' Survey

As was the case for the questionnaire, the survey was conducted with 20 students that were chosen randomly from different study levels. The first question was about gender and level. And females dominate the sample again. The following table presents the obtained results:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>2ndyear</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>3rdyear</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Masters 1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Masters 2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>20</i>

Table 3.2 Respondents' level and gender

20 surveys were distributed to students in one day, and it took two other days to be retrieved back. As stated above, Respondents were allowed this period of time to think and consider their answers to the questions in the survey. The survey comprises of two sections, each tackling a different area.

Primarily, respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to a number of statements. It is noticeable in this section that most of the statements are a reformulation to the questions of the first section in the questionnaire and which were intended to target student's attitudes towards homework. If the data elicited

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

from the survey is the same as the one elicited from the questionnaire, then this will grant more reliability to the findings. Except from the statements number 4, the rest of statements talk about already tackled items such as homework frequency, difficulty, accomplishment, feedback, importance, and motivation. These last items were tackled in details previously in this chapter (see the Questionnaire)

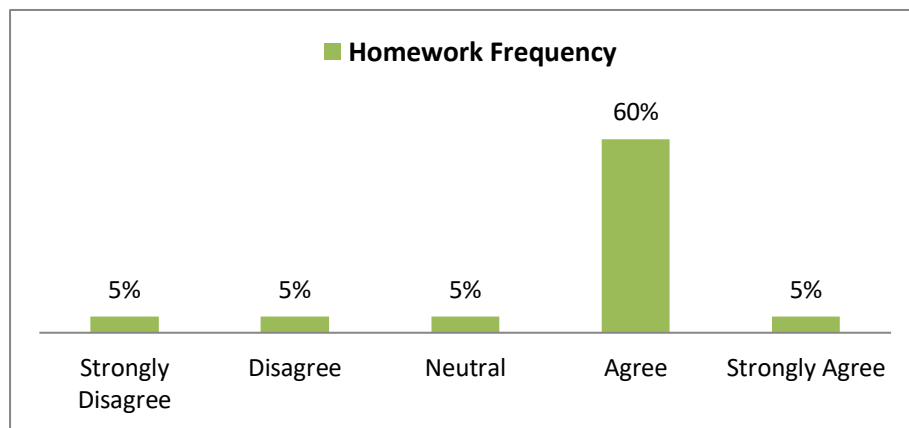
Statement number eight is about doing homework for parents' approval: *Students do their homework because they want to please their parents*. Students might not be sure as to why they are doing homework. While the obvious and acknowledged reason behind which the homework was found is to help learners reinforce what they learn at class, some learners still do the homework to please and live up to the expectations of their parents about them and not to pursue their own learning.

The following charts and graphs present the data collected from each item in the survey:

Section One: Respondents' Reflection on Homework Assignment

3.2.1 Homework Frequency

Statement: At Ibn Khaldoun University, students are given too much homework.



Graphic 3.2.1

The statistical data above as regard homework frequency shows that the majority, i.e., 60% agree that they receive too much homework. The same number of the

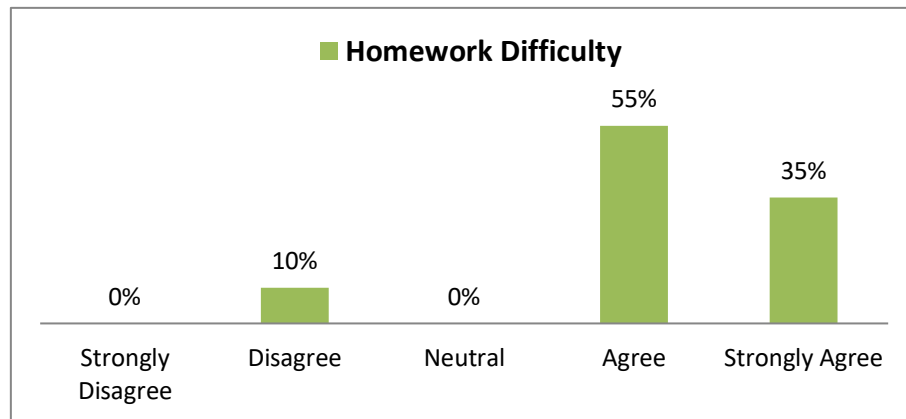
Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

respondents, viz., 5%, either strongly agree, disagrees, strongly agree or is neutral to the statement that they receive too much homework.

The numerical data above back up the collected data from the questionnaire concerning homework frequency which shows that a total percentage of 75% of respondents is shared between those who are assigned homework three times a week, i.e., 35% and those who are assigned on a daily basis, i.e., 40%. Based on this data, it can be said that learners are not being assigned homework at the right intervals, i.e., learners could be receiving too much homework than they can handle. As stated previously in the chapter, the high frequency of homework doesn't necessarily lead to efficient learning as this can cause anxiety, pressure and stress.

3.2.2 Homework Difficulty

Statement: The homework that students are assigned is difficult to accomplish



Graphic 3.2.2

The responses to this statement aiming at revealing learners' overall point of view concerning the degree of difficulty of the homework they receive demonstrate that more than half the respondents, viz., 55% agree that the homework they receive is difficult to accomplish. Less than that, 35% of the respondents strongly agree to that, while only 10% of the targeted population disagree that they are assigned difficult homework to be accomplished. None of the surveyed respondents strongly agreed or was neutral as regard the statement above.

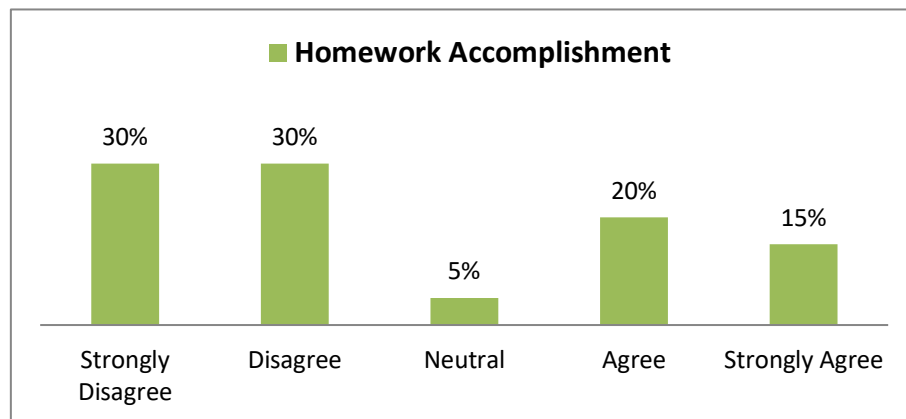
Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

Regardless whether they merely agree or strongly agree, 90% of the respondents regard the homework they receive at least as difficult. Data on homework frequency obtained by means of the questionnaire seems to be consistent with the data above, i.e., regardless whether difficult or extremely difficult, a total of 60% of the respondents find the homework they receive as difficult. This raises a question that is worth considering: Are students being assigned more difficult homework than they can handle?

3.2.3 Homework Accomplishment

Statement: The homework that students are assigned takes too long to complete

By this statement, we intended to cast light on students' effective completion of the assigned homework.



Graphic 3.2.3

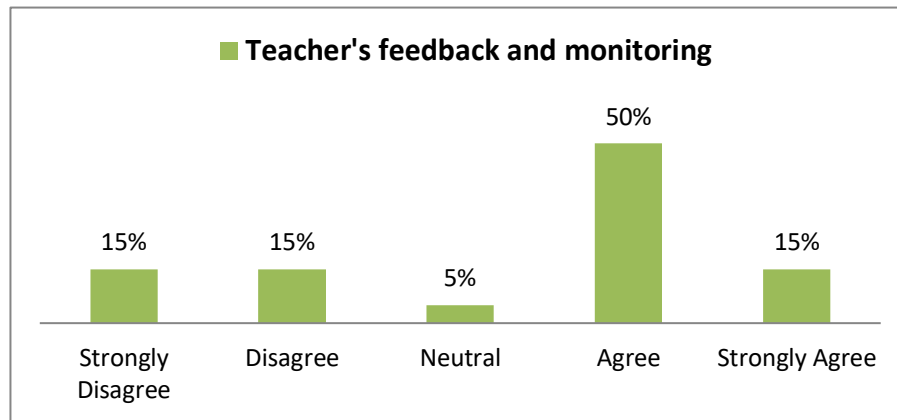
The statistical data listed above show that 30% of students strongly disagree to the statement that they are assigned homework that takes too much time to complete, and the same percentage of them agree to that. Nearly one quarter of them, i.e., 20% agree that the homework takes too long to complete and less than a quarter strongly agree to that. Yet, a small minority of 5% don't recognize the statement and remain neutral.

Referring to the answers above and the ones collected by the questionnaire as regards homework accomplishment, it can be said that the time allocated to learners to accomplish their homework isn't that short nor the homework assigned is that long or time consuming to complete.

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

3.2.5 Teacher's Feedback and Monitoring

Statement 05: Students receive regular feedback on their homework.



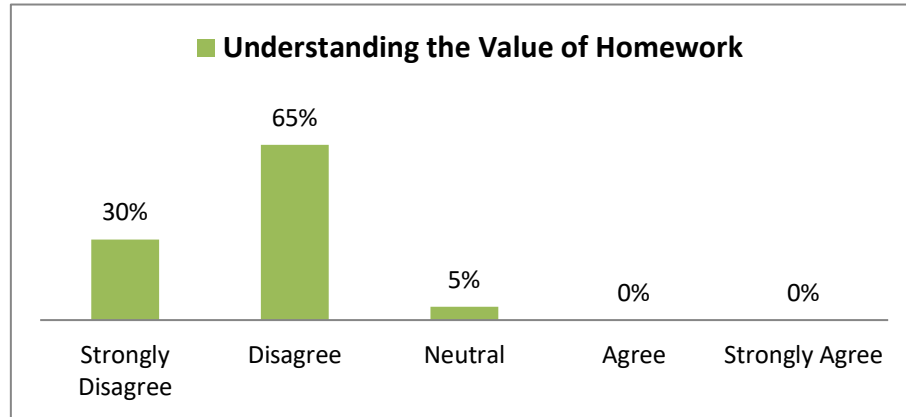
Graphic 3.2.4

The numerical data obtained shows that half of the respondents, viz., 50% of the respondents claim that they agree to the statement that they receive regular feedback on their homework. The similar number of respondents, viz., 15% either strongly disagree, disagree or strongly agree, respectively, that they receive regular feedback and monitoring, while the rest of respondents, i.e., 5% of them take a neutral position as regard to the statement above.

The gathered data above concerning teacher' feedback and monitoring is nearly the same data obtained by means of the questionnaire. In the survey, a total of 75% is combined between those who agree and strongly agree that they receive regular feedback. In the questionnaire on the other hand, the same total, i.e., 75% is shared between those who say that they always receive feedback and those who receive it three times a week at least. The numerical data about this item demonstrate that the frequency of feedback is sufficient to meet the homework that learners are assigned. This evokes a question that is worth pondering upon: Are students receiving adequate feedback on their homework?

- **3.2.6 Homework Importance**
- **Statement 06:** Students realize the value of homework

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations



Graphic 3.2.5

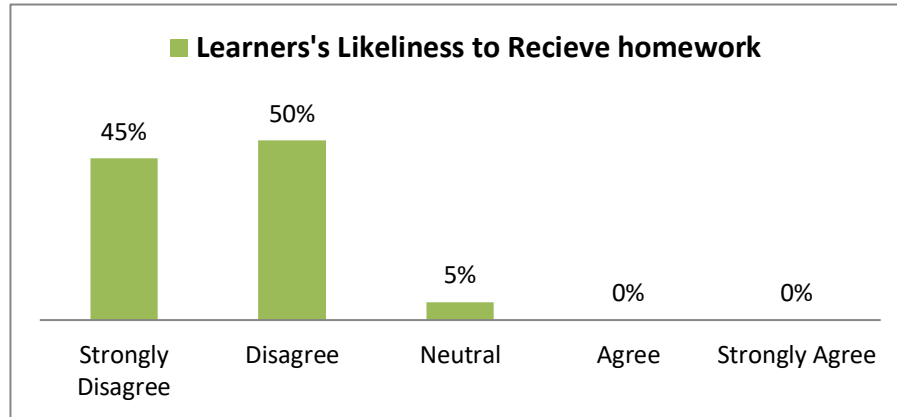
The answers to this statement show that the heavy majority, vis., 65% of students disagree that students realize the value of homework and nearly a third of the target population, vis., 30% strongly disagree that students realize the value of homework. A small minority, i.e., 5% of respondents take a neutral position concerning whether or not students realize the value of homework. Yet, no one of the students agreed or strongly agreed to the statement above.

It is no exaggeration to say that the statistical data above is alarming. Being an indispensable part of the teaching learning process, the heavy majority of students should be aware and conscious to the importance of homework on their learning. A total of 95% is shared between those who strongly disagree, vis., 30% and those who merely disagree, vis., 65%. This uncover the evidence that most of students don't realize the value of homework and this could justify their unwillingness to do the homework they are assigned.

3.2.7 Receiving Homework

Statement 7: Students like to receive homework.

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations



Graphic 3.2.6

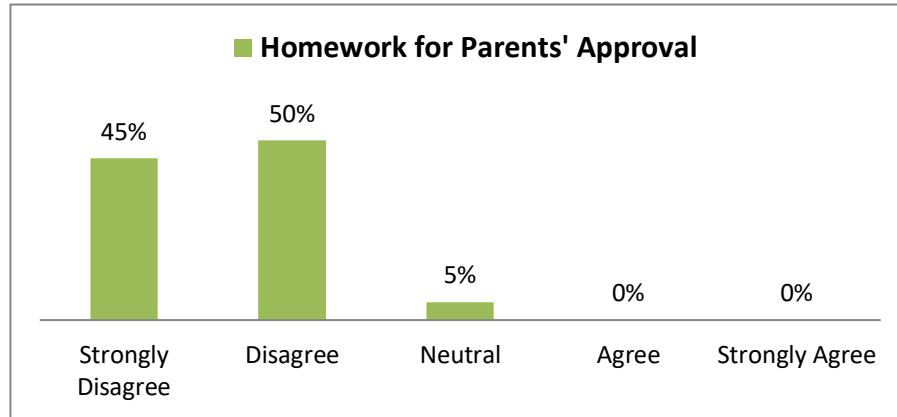
The statistical data above shows that half of the respondents , vis., 50% disagree to the statement that students like to receive homework and nearly another half of the target population, vis., 45% strongly disagree to the same statement. A small minority, vis., 5% take a neutral position as regard the statement while no one agrees or strongly agrees that students like to receive homework.

For some students, homework assignments can have potential harm. They feel a pressing need for relax and rest after long hours of lessons at school. The pressure of being compelled to complete homework each night is quite daunting for most learners who need time to refresh both their minds and bodies. Opponents to excessive homework argue that this can cause learners' saturation blocking them from pursuing their academic studies. Thus, homework frequency should be governed by rationale and achievement gain to the learning process, i.e., assigned according to the idiosyncratic needs. Besides, with regard to the daunting profession, teachers should be able to assess those home tasks so as to motivate learners. Repeated

3.2.8 Homework for Parents' Approval

Statement 08: Students do their homework because they want to please their parents.

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations



Graphic 3.2.7

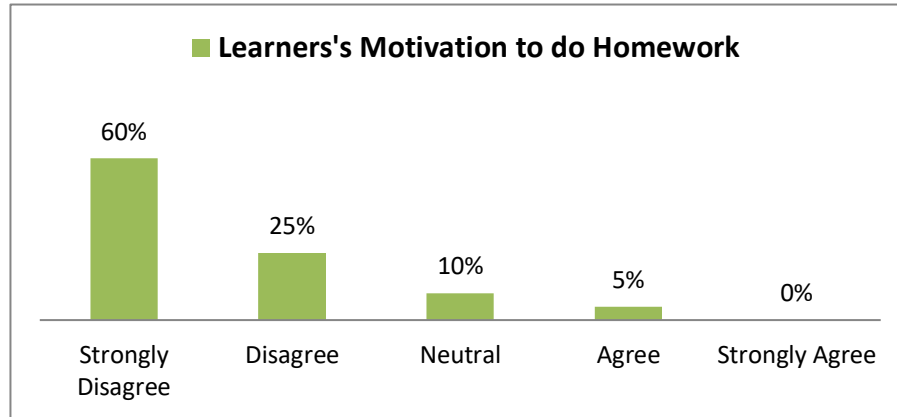
The statistical data for this statement show that half of the answers, vis., 50% are for those who disagree that learners do their homework because they want to please their parents and nearly the second half of the respondents, vis., 45% strongly disagree to the same statement, while a small portion of respondents, vis., 5% take a neutral position as regard doing homework for pleasing parents. No one however, agree or strongly agree to that learners do homework to please their parents.

As regard to the data of this item, respondents seem to be possessed of responsibility and independence towards their learning. The real incentive for a learner to do homework should be to please oneself by learning and taking his or her level to the next stage.

3.2.9 Homework and Motivation

Statement 09: Students feel motivated to do their homework.

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations



Graphic 3.2.8

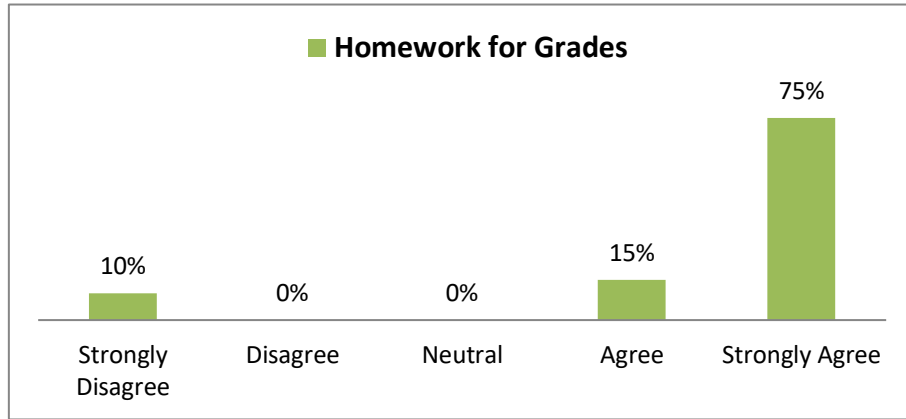
The responses to this item show that more than half of the respondents, vis., 60% strongly disagree to the statement that students feel motivated to do their homework and a quarter of them, i.e., 25% disagree that they feel motivated. Also, 10% of the students take a neutral position and only 5% of them agree that students feel motivated to do their homework. Yet, no one strongly agree that students feel motivated to do their homework.

The data collected from this item seem to be very congruent with that obtained from the questionnaire on the same item. It shows clearly that learners feel demotivated and unwilling to do their homework. Students' demotivation with respect to homework assignment is due to a set of reasons. Whenever home tasks are incongruous with what students have been presented with in the classroom, they feel no need to do the homework. Besides, the degree of difficulty of these tasks can cause students' refutation. Therefore, teachers should be aware of the fact that home tasks should not be long and rote rather a simple and short gauge of the students' mastery of the lesson skills. Repeated

3.2.10 Homework for Grades

Statement 10: Students do their homework because it is grade

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations



Graphic 3.2.9

The data resulting from this item show that the vast majority, vis., 75% strongly agree to the statement that learners do their homework for grades and 15% of them agree to that. 10% of the respondents strongly disagree that learners do their homework for grades while no one disagree or was neutral as regard this statement.

It is probably no exaggeration to say that nowadays learning shifted to be utterly grade-based learning at the detriment of that proficiency-based one. In fact, all education systems that depend merely on grading are flawed, and the resulting grades are questionable, misleading and, in many cases, meaningless. It is acknowledged that grades serve a specific social purpose in the Algerian context. Generally speaking, grading is most frequently used as method of comparison: student vs. student, student vs. standard, effort vs. performance, past vs. present (Douglas & Smith, 2013; Grading, 2013) [1]. Repeated

3.3 The Focus Group Interview

As stated previously, the interview was applied in this study to achieve triangulation and grant the research findings generalizability and validity. The interview was conducted with six students which is the minimum of participants recommended for the conduction of a focus group interview. The interviewees were not chosen randomly. In fact they were chosen purposively. For study purposes, we had to choose learners with a good command of English and who are able to express themselves confidently at a certain

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

level of fluency and accuracy. The time allocated for the discussion of the focus group is limited and we had to give each of the sixth respondents' sufficient time to express their opinions and make comments on the topic under investigation. For that we needed precise, concise and well worded answers which only fluent and confident learners can give. The selection was done online. We posted on Facebook that we needed some volunteers who might be interested or willing to take part in our study. The first question was about gender and level. And females dominate the sample again. The following table presents the obtained results:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>3rd year</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Masters 1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Masters 2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6</i>

Table 3.3 Respondents' level and gender

Twelve well chosen questions were asked to the interviewees to elicit data regarding their reflection on homework assignment as well as their incentives for doing homework. It is noticeable that most of the questions asked in the interview are a reformulation to the questions and statement used in the questionnaire and the survey and which were intended generally to reveal student's attitudes towards homework as well as to highlight possible factors affecting learners' willingness to do homework. If the data elicited from the interview is similar to some extent to the data elicited from the questionnaire and the survey, then this will grant more reliability to the findings.

Presentation of Data

The data obtained from the interview was presented in terms of overarching themes that dominated most of the interviewees' answers. First, after the interviewees' responses were all recorded and transcribed, the most appearing answers were highlighted and interpreted into codes. Then, these codes were narrowed down into a number of umbrella

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

themes that reflect student's attitudes towards homework and highlight factors affecting learners' willingness to do homework. The following are some of the main questions and answers that helped us to elicit the themes.

Theme one: Many learners recognize the importance of homework for their education

From the first two questions, it seems that all of the interviewees claim that they realize the importance of homework as a practice for improving their learning. These are some of their answers:

Question: As a student, how important is the homework to you?

Interviewee one: As a student, I think that homework is so important for me because it shows me my strengths and weaknesses at learning.

Interviewee Two: For me, it is essential because it shows me to what extent I have understood the lesson.

Interviewee Three: For me, homework helps me to understand what we dealt with in class. It is considered as a practice I have out of class to check and make sure I hold a grasp over what I was taught in class.

Question two: Do you like to receive homework, if no why?

Only one interviewee expressed his rejection to homework assigning.

Interviewee One: Honestly, I don't like to receive homework. I think this is because I am always busy cleaning, washing, cooking which is something inevitable being the only girl in the house. Also, homework interferes with my personal life and leaves no time to spend with the family. In my case, focusing on my classes could be enough to learn. I think I can make do without homework and skipping it can't affect me a lot. So, in general, I don't like to receive homework and if I do, it will be once in a while.

Theme Two: Learners prefer the graded homework over the non -graded because it earns them extra marks.

These are some of their answers:

Question: Which do you prefer and why, the graded homework or the non-graded one?

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

Interviewee One: The graded one of course. If we consider that I don't approve of receiving homework in general and that I am obliged to do it, then I would rather choose the graded one because it can make me earn good marks or extra points. I do things for a reason. And grades are what make me do my homework.

Interviewee Two: As I said I don't like to receive homework, but if I were to choose, I would certainly prefer the graded homework....simply because to gain extra marks. I can't find ways to skip it or not hand it back when it is graded

Interviewee Three: I prefer the graded homework because if homework weren't graded, very few would do it. I prefer the graded homework for two reasons; the first, it makes me learn better and for a reason. The second, it earns me extra points.

Theme Three: Learners' attitudes towards homework affect their motivation to do it.

Question: Do you think that your attitudes towards homework affect your motivation to do it? How?

Interviewee One: Yes, my attitude towards homework can determine the way I behave towards receiving homework and the way of doing it. If the attitude is positive, the motivation is there to do homework. If it is negative however, then one could be unwilling to do it. In my case, the most important attitude I have regarding homework is that it is important and beneficial for me as a learner, which makes me intrinsically motivated to do my homework.

Interviewee Two: Yes, I guess so. because, if have a positive attitude towards it as being important and necessary for learning and developing one's skills, it will make motivated and more willing to do it. If you think for instance that it is a waste of time or just a way to please your teacher or your parents, you won't do it and if you do , you will learn very little from it if not at all.

Interviewee Three: Yes, I do. My attitude towards homework can determine the way I behave towards receiving homework and the way of doing it. If the attitude is positive, the motivation is there to do the homework. If it is negative however, then it would be difficult to do it. In my case, I do realize how important homework is, but this is not enough to

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

accept them wholeheartedly. I do them only when they are graded. I can manage my studies and do well too all without homework. I believe homework interfere with my personal life.

Theme Four: Homework frequency and difficulty prevent learners from doing their homework willingly.

Question: According to you, what are the reasons that prevent you from doing homework willingly?

Interviewee One: There are a lot of reasons that prevent me from doing my homework willingly: The homework is not graded or difficult, being sick, busy or because of lack of time to complete the homework. I don't understand the topic clearly. The homework contains a lot of questions and vague words. It is too late and there's still so much work left when all I want to do is sleep.

Interviewee Two: The number one reason I think is the social media and the virtual world we live in. We are part of this industrial and virtual world so it is really hard to spend a normal day without using Facebook or surfing on the net. This leaves very little time for us to do important things like homework. Also, when we get too much homework than we can handle or that it is challenging or too long to complete. I don't know how much is "too much" but I think teachers should remember that homework can interfere with a student's life. So, I always welcome the idea of receiving less homework.

Interviewee Three: My unwillingness to do homework can be issued from different factors such as difficult homework, too much homework, tiredness and exhaustion, not being in the mood of studies because of personal problems. These are all under the umbrella of lack of motivation.

Theme Five: Learners suggest that homework should be balanced in terms of difficulty and frequency.

Question: What do you suggest to make learners more willing to do their homework?

Interviewee One: The homework should be graded, have a relationship with the previous lesson not the next, short, well instructed, manageable and within our abilities. However, it should not be too much easy or too much difficult; the homework should not be continuously assigned.

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

Interviewee Two: I recommend that all students do their homework since it is very important to improve their level in the learning process. Teachers shouldn't assign learners much homework give Homework should be not too long, not too difficult, and designed in a way that makes learners really interested.

Interviewee Three: According to my experience as a student, giving pluses can do the job to motivate learners and get them do their homework. I bet very little would do their homework if it weren't graded. Teachers shouldn't assign learners too much homework and it should be enjoyable to do and not too difficult.

3.4 Discussion and interpretation of the findings

In this chapter we try to draw conclusion through the analysis and the triangulation of the collected data that were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively to reveal learners' attitudes towards educational assignments (homework). The study also aims at unveiling the reality behind learners' reluctance and unwillingness to do homework by highlighting the main factors that can cause them to behave in such a way towards homework.

First, the 20 questionnaires that were addressed to students from different study cycles at the University of Ibn Khaldoun reveal that learners seem to have a negative attitude towards homework. This was deduced from their answers to question 10 which showed that the vast majority (90%) don't like to receive homework. However, most of them acknowledge that they do their homework (answers to question 1). Moreover, the majority of the respondents 60% claim that they realize the importance of homework (answers to question 5) and that it helps them understand better what they learn at class (answers to question 8). This later

Concerning learners' unwillingness to do homework, question 7 reveal that learners' motivation to do homework is not sufficiently present (40% never feel motivated, 15% always feel motivated). In an attempt to highlight any possible factors affecting students' tendency or reluctance to do homework, questions 2 and 3 were asked. Answers to question 2 show that 75% of students receive an amount of homework of no less than three times a week. As a matter of a fact, it could be deduced that learners' unwillingness to do

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

homework can be justified by the high frequency of homework that they receive. Homework difficulty seems to be another factor to be highlighted as shown by answers to question 3. This later reveals that 70% of students find the homework at least difficult. This denotes that homework frequency and difficulty could be factors affecting homework accomplishment. Answers to question 4 show that a percentage of 55% of students is shared between those who often finish their homework and those who always do so. This percentage fall short of the expectations behind which homework is assigned. As regard teacher's feedback and monitoring, answers to question 10 show that students receive enough and adequate feedback (50% often, 40% always). Answers to question 6 show that most learners rely on themselves and don't often need assistance (60% never need help)

The first question in the second part of the questionnaire intended to highlight the real incentive for doing homework explained why learners don't like to receive homework though they assert it is important for them. 100% of the respondents admit that the real incentive for them to do homework is getting grades. This data can help draw a cut-clear conclusion as regard learners' attitudes towards homework that many learners regard homework assignments as a compulsory practice that has to be accomplished in order to get grades. Answers to the second question targeting the reasons for not doing homework revealed that along with homework difficulty (30% of the answers), low motivation (70% of the answers) is a strong factor that refrain learners from doing homework.

Students' answers to the survey prove and confirm what was attained of data by means of the questionnaire. Learners' unwillingness to receive and do homework stress that they have a negative attitude regarding homework assignments (answers to question 7 and 9). Homework high frequency and difficulty seem to be the main reasons behind learners' unwillingness to do homework (answers to questions 1 and 2). Furthermore, what can be deduced from respondents' answers to questions 8 and 10 is a confirmation to the negative attitude deduced earlier through the questionnaire, that many learners view homework as a compulsory practice to get grades. However, it can be deduced from respondents' answers to question 6 that students are not aware of the importance of homework unlike what was proved by means of the questionnaire. Homework accomplishment and teacher's feedback

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

and monitoring don't seem to be serious factors causing learners' unwillingness to do homework (answers to question3 and 5 respectively).

As for the interview, the themes which dominated the respondents' answers' confirmed that the learners realize the importance of homework (theme one). The second theme shows that learners prefer the graded homework because it earns them extra marks. This later as a theme presents a clear and precise attitude towards homework, that it is a compulsory practice to get grades. It could also be deduced that the importance of homework to learners is subjected to the fact it earns them grades. A combination between the third and the fourth theme draws on the conclusion that learners' willingness to do homework can be affected by the degree of homework frequency and difficulty.

Therefore, one may say that the findings obtained from the three data collection instruments confirm both hypotheses that are attempted to answer to research questions of the in-hand study.

Conclusion:

Throughout this chapter one tries to provide a thorough analysis of the data collected through the triangulation of data collection tools .in Addition the interpretation of the data analysis is given in detail, which leads to the confirmation of the two hypotheses attempted for this research.

The main concern of this chapter was the analysis of the collected data and the establishment of the correlation of the results with the problematic of this study. The tools used to collect data were arranged and subdivided into sections of different questions as a way of answering to the problem of this research. The analysis of the findings was done step by step each in order to get to the results of this study. The students' questionnaire gathered a large amount of data from a population of chosen students grouped into a random sample. The survey in its multiple parts revealed to be parallel to the questionnaire. Some facts among the findings were quite unexpected. However, the major part of the results confirmed the speculations of the hypotheses of this research.

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

All in all, the analysis of the data worked out in this chapter allowed the researcher to reach some conclusions. The latter could be useful when disserting and discussing a proposal of tentative solutions in the recommendations.

General Conclusion:

The popularity gained by homework around the world was not a matter of chance. Homework in fact has been a long standing tradition ever since educational systems existed. Studies showed that when homework is used appropriately, students can retain what they were taught at class, they reinforce what they have learnt; they develop good study habits, and their cognitive understanding about the language increases. It can also acquire them good personality traits such as greater self-discipline and perseverance, better time organization, greater self-direction and responsibility. However important it is, still many learners don't seem to realize this and confront homework doing with a state of unwillingness and rejection.

Thus, the present study aimed at uncovering the reality behind homework doing in the Algerian universities with reference to the students of Ibn Khaldoun University in the city of Tiaret. One tried through this endeavor to investigate learners' attitudes towards educational assignments as well as to highlight the factors that can cause their unwillingness to do homework. In this study, the researcher posed two research questions:

1. What are learners' attitudes towards educational assignment?
2. What are the main factors that can decrease or increase learners' motivation to do homework?

Based on the research questions above, the researchers hypothesize that:

1. Many learners regard homework assignments as a compulsory practice that has to be accomplished in order to get grades.
2. Many learners realize the importance of homework for their academic achievement and learning.
3. Many learners feel unwilling to do homework assignments because of their high levels of frequency and difficulty.

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

The attainment of the objective of this study was approach through the use of a sample of 46 students who were subjected to three different data collection instruments namely the questionnaire, the survey and the focus group interview. This triangulation of tools is needed to grant the research findings more validity and generalizability.

The results of this study show that learners are aware and conscious to the importance of homework as being an indispensable practice in the teaching learning process. However their behavior doesn't seem to be congruent with this acknowledged attitude. This is apparent from the fact that the majority don't like to receive homework. When all the respondents declare firmly that getting grades is the one true reason behind doing homework, this leads to uncovering a negative attitude; that homework is considered by learners as a compulsory practice for getting grades. This later should be regarded as a negative attitude because getting grades is not the genuine reason behind learning. As for grades, they can be obtained otherwise and they don't equal learning. As for their unwillingness to do homework it can be due to many factors as was shown in the study but the most suspected ones are the high levels of homework frequency and difficulty. The participants in this study attest that they were receiving too much homework than they can handle and that the high degree of homework difficulty usually hampers their motivation and will to do homework. Thus it is concluded that both hypotheses attempted for the present study are confirmed.

Limitations of the Study

However, some limitations should be noted before mentioning the finding of this study. The limitations of this design are wide and varied. Our instruments are open to interpretation and may not have conveyed the connotations we believed they did. Nevertheless, the data does seem to support our claim and the hypotheses set for this study. It should also be noted that students often tell us what we want to hear if it brings approval, so this may have played a role in the results. This data and the instruments do not definitively reflect the attitude that learners hold towards homework due to the fact that an attitude as a variable is immeasurable. It only reflects the common and widespread attitude between the participants in the sample of the study. Besides, the variables that have been

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

proven to be responsible behind learners' unwillingness to do homework apply only to our study and to the randomly chosen sample. Other studies might prove something different. Furthermore, only 46 students is not sufficiently large sampling to supply information about the issue. It should be recognized also that one semester is too short a time to get entirely convincing results. Even if there were not these weaknesses, still such an investigation could not result in a final or complete evaluation of homework because other than all the suspected factors in our study and the seemingly proven ones, still there are items other factors that must be considered in making such an appraisal. Regardless whether the attitude is positive or negative, doing homework can be at the cost of the health of the students or by forfeiting desirable social interests and other family activities. Other factors include readiness to assume responsibility, self discipline, and other personality qualities that can hamper objective measurement.

Recommendations

Basing on the findings of the in-hand research and the review of the relevant literature one may attempt some recommendations that tend to maximize the effectiveness of the homework assigning.

- Teachers should consider the amount of homework assigned to learners. Giving too much homework doesn't necessarily lead to better learning. After a long day at school, learners try to find pleasure and rest with the family away from homework. Thus when assigned continuously, homework can interfere with their personal lives.
- Homework assigning can be enhanced to its best use by considering its quality, variety, relevance, feedback and degree of difficulty.
Learners should be sensibilized to the importance of homework to their learning and academic achievement.

Implications for Further Studies:

Chapter three: Data Analysis and Recommendations

Homework is a complex issue that has not been given enough attention in Algeria. Future research should explore more deeply and more specifically attitudes and opinions on homework from the viewpoints of teachers. Moreover, trying to get a clue as to what extent are learners' academic achievement are enhanced by homework can lead to another endeavor. Replication of the present study on other areas can lead to generalizing the findings of this study.

Appendix 1

A Questionnaire about Homework Part one

Level:

Gender: male female

Directions: Answer each question honestly. Only choose one response for each question.

Questions	Responses			
	1	2	3	4
1. Do you do your homework?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
2. How often do you receive homework?	Once a week	Twice a week	Three times a week	Daily
3. How do you usually find the homework?	Easy	Difficult	Very difficult	Extremely difficult
4. How often do you complete your homework?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
5. How often do you find the homework worth doing?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
6. Do you receive help to complete your homework?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
7. Do you feel motivated when doing your homework?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
8. Does homework help you better understand what you learn in class?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
9. How often do teachers monitor the completion of your homework?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
10. Do teachers check your homework?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
11. Do you receive comments or feedback on your homework?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
12. Do you like to receive homework?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always

Part Two:

Directions: Choose one answer. Circle one answer.

According to you, what makes learners do their homework?

- a) Getting good grades.
- b) Practicing skills learnt at class.
- c) Teacher's approval.
- d) Family approval.

According to you, what makes you refrain from doing homework?

- a) Homework difficulty.
- b) Low motivation.
- c) Inadequate teacher's feedback.
- d) Unclear idea about the value of homework.

Appendix 2

Students' Survey Questions

Student:

Date:

Student Gender: [] Male [] Female

Student Survey on Homework

	Strongly Disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. At Ibn Khaldoun University, students are given too much homework.					
2. The homework that students are assigned is difficult to accomplish.					
3. The homework that students are assigned takes too long to complete.					
4. Students don't receive enough feedback on their homework.					
5. Students receive inadequate feedback on their homework.					
6. Students don't realize the value of homework.					
7. Students don't like to receive homework.					
8. Students do their homework because they want to please their teachers.					
9. Many students don't feel motivated to do their homework.					
10. Students do their homework because it is graded.					

Appendix 3

Interview Questions

Direction: Answer these questions honestly

1. Do you like to receive homework? Why?

2. As a student, how important is the homework to you?

3. Do you think that your attitudes towards homework affect your motivation to do it? How?

4. Which do you prefer and why, the graded homework or the non-graded one?

5. Do you think that persistence affect doing homework? How?

6. Do you feel tired or bored when doing your homework? If yes, what do you do to motivate yourself?

7. What are the reasons that make you avoid doing homework?

8. In your opinion, why learners tend not to do their homework willingly?

9. What do you suggest to make learners more willing to do their homework?

List of References

Selected works

a) Books and Articles

- Alanne, N., & Macgregor, R. (2009) *Homework: What are the upsides and downsides? Towards a more effective policy and practice in Australian school communities* Australia. Australia.
- Anderson, G. (1990). *Fundamentals of educational research*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Bush, D. K. (2018) *The Relationship between Grade point Average and Understanding Homework's Purpose and Management in Economically Disadvantaged High School Students* (Doctoral Dissertation) Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA
- Cooper, H. (1989a). *Homework*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Cooper, H. (2007) *The Battle Over Homework: Common Ground for Administrators, Teachers and Parents – Third Edition*. Corwin Press: Thousand Oaks, California.
- Czerniawski, G., & Kidd, W. (2013) *Homework for Learning 300 Practical Strategies*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.
- Deci, E.L., Connell, J.P. and Ryan, R.M. (1989) Self-Determination in a Work Organization. *Journal of Applied Psychology*.
- Denscombe, M. (2010) *The Good Research Guide: For small-Scale Research Projects*. (4th Ed). Berkshire, England: Open Press University.
- Dilshad, M. R., & Latif, M. I (2015) Focus Group Interview as a Tool for Qualitative Research: An Analysis. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS)*. 33(1), 2-3
- Douglas, T.-R.M., & Smith, J. M. (2013). *Sociology of education: an A-to-Z guide*. (J. Ainsworth, Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Eddy, M. E. (2012) *On the involvement of cognitive processes in the acquisition of English grammar by Slovak learners*. Prešovská univerzita v Prešove.

- El Achachi, H. (2006). An exploration into the strategies used for Essay Writing across Three Languages: The Case of EFL University Students. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Tlemcen.
- Fawzy, N. (2012) *School teachers' Perspectives on Homework: A comparative study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation) The American University in Cairo, Cairo, Egypt.
- Grading.(2013). In J. Ainsworth (Ed.), *Sociology of education: an A-to-Z guide* (pp. 331-332).SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Hatch, E., & Lazaraton, A. (1991) *The research Manual: Design and statistics for Applied Linguistics*. Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle &Heinle publishers.
- Hong, E., & Milgram, R. M (2000) *Homework: motivation and learning preference*. Connecticut, London: Bergin & Garvey.
- Hummel, B. M. (2014) *Introducing Second Language Acquisition: Perspectives and Practices*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Khan, ME., & Manderson, L (1992) Focus Group in Tropical Diseases Research. *Health Policy Plan*.
- Kitsantas, A., & Zimmerman, B. J. (2006). Enhancing self-regulation of practice: The influence of graphing and self-evaluative standards. *Metacognition and Learning*, 3(1), 201-212.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus Groups. A Practical Guide for Applied Research* (3rd Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kubat, U. (2018). Identifying the Individual Differences Among Students During Learning and Teaching Process by Science Teachers. *International Journal of Research in Educational and Science*, (IJRES), 4(1), 30-38. [DOI:10.21890/ijres.369746](https://doi.org/10.21890/ijres.369746).
- Marzano, R. J., & Pickering, D. J. (2007) Special Topic / The Case For and Against Homework, *Educational Leadership*, 64(6)1
- Miliani, M. (2000). Teaching English in a multilingual context: The Algerian Case. *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies*, 6, 16-89.
- Painter, Lesley. Ed. Alan, M. (2003) *Homework*. Oxford, London: Oxford University Press.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and Evaluation Methods: Qualitative Interviewing*. Third Edition. Sage Publications, Inc

Programme of English as a Second Foreign Language (2003)

Rosário, P., Núñez, J. C., Vallejo, G., Cunha, J., Nunes, T., Mourão, R., & Pinto, R. (2015). Does homework design matter? The role of homework's purpose in student mathematics achievement. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 43, 10-24.

doi:10.1016/j.cedpsych.2015.08.001.

Şentürk, C., & Ciğerci, F. M (2017) Homework and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research *Issues in Educational Research*, 27(1) 31.

Vatterott, C. (2009). *Rethinking homework: Best practices that support diverse needs*.

Alexandria, VA.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Zughoul, M, R. (2003). "Globalization and EFL/ESL Pedagogy in the Arab World."

Journal of Language and Learning. Vol.1 N° 2: 106-138.

b) Webography

Antonius, R. (2003) *Interpreting Quantitative Data with SPSS*. London: Sage Publications Ltd. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781849209328>

Banaji, M. R., & Heiphetz, L. Mahzarin, R. (2010) *Attitudes*: Columbia University

Bhat, A. (2015) Simple Random Sampling: Definitions and Examples. QuestionPro.

Retrieved from: <https://www.questionpro.com/blog/simple-random-sampling/>

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>

Coutts, P.M. (2004). *Meanings of Homework and Implications for Practice*. *Theory into Practice*, 43(3), 182-188. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4303_3

Creswell, J. W. (nd) When to Use Mixed Methods, Center For Innovation in Research and Teaching. Retrieved from https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/research_ready/mixed_methods/when_to_use

Creswell, J. W. (nd) When to Use Mixed Methods, Center For Innovation in Research and Teaching. Retrieved from

https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/research_ready/mixed_methods/when_to_use

How much time should your child spend on homework (2016) School Days i.e. Retrieved from <http://www schooldays.ie/articles/Homework-how-much-time>

Jennifer, D. B. (June 7, 2018). *Why Students don't do their Homework-And what you can do about it*. Teach Thought. Retrieved from <https://www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/why-students-dont-do-their-homework-and-what-you-can-do-about-it/>

Laurie, S. (2016, October). How Important Is Homework to Student Success. Retrieved from <https://study.com/blog/how-important-is-homework-to-student-success.html>

Learner Differences and Learning needs, (2010) New Teachers guide using Educational psychology. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/a/npsd.org/new-teachers-guide-using-educational-psychology/home/learner-differences-and-learning-needs>

Purpose of Homework (n.d) Crayola. Retrieved from <http://www.crayola.co.uk/for-educators/resources-landing/articles/purpose-of-homework.aspx>

Pytel, B. (2007). *Homework: What Research Says?* Retrieved from <http://educationalissues.suite101.com> article.cfm/homework_what_research_says

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000) Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being. *American Psychologist*, 55 (1), 70-71. doi:10.7748/phc.2016.e1162

Seymen, A. F. (March 2015) Qualitative -Attitude Research To Determine the Employee Opinion of a Business Hotel in Istanbul – Turkey. Munich Personal RePEc Archive. 1-2. Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/65909/>

Sharma, R.M., & Sharma, A. (2016). What Students say about Homework – Views from a Secondary School Science Classroom in Trinidad and Tobago. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(7) 146-148. Retrieved from <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol41/iss7/9>

The Truth about Homework Stress: What parents and Students need to know (2019)

Mellowed. Enjoy life. Live Mellow. Retrieved from: <https://mellowed.com/meditation-tools/>