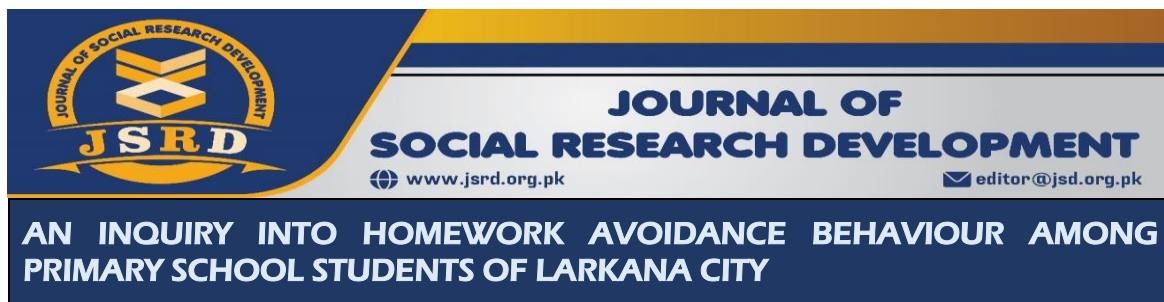




Sofia Sindhu¹, Dr. Shahid Mughal²

¹MS ELM Scholar, Department of Education, SZABIST University Larkana, Sindh, Pakistan,

Email: ssssofia222@gmail.com

²HOD, Department of Education, SZABIST University Larkana, Sindh, Pakistan,

Email: shahid.mughal@lrk.szabist.edu.pk

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Homework Avoidance Behavior, Motivation, Parental Support, Teacher Attitude, Emotional, Social, Environmental factors, Academic Performance.	Homework has long been regarded as a bridge between classroom instruction and independent learning, yet across primary schools in the developing world a persistent and under-examined problem quietly erodes this bridge: children who delay, resist, or altogether refuse to complete the tasks set for them at home. In the government primary schools of Larkana City, Sindh, this pattern of homework avoidance has been noticed by teachers for years but rarely investigated in its own right, leaving practitioners to address it through anecdote rather than evidence. This study set out to close that gap by asking, in the words of the students, teachers, and parents who live with the problem daily, what drives young children to avoid homework and what this avoidance costs them academically and emotionally. Guided by an interpretivist philosophy and a phenomenological research design, the study followed a qualitative, inductive, mono-method approach, gathering in-depth semi-structured interviews from ten purposively selected participants — four teachers, four students and two parents — drawn from two government primary schools in Larkana City, and analysed the data through reflexive thematic analysis. The findings reveal that homework avoidance among these children is neither laziness nor simple defiance but a rational response to converging structural and psychological pressures: parental illiteracy and the absence of home academic support, child labour and domestic obligations that consume the hours after school, overcrowded and under-resourced classrooms, and homework that is poorly matched to children's developmental level and home language. These conditions generate fear, anxiety and evaluation-related stress that erode students' academic self-efficacy and motivation, producing a self-reinforcing cycle of avoidance, disengagement and declining performance. The study concludes that reducing homework avoidance in Larkana's primary schools cannot rest on isolated classroom fixes alone; it requires a coordinated response spanning teachers, school administrators, parents and educational policymakers.
ARTICLE HISTORY Date of Submission: 27-07-2026 Date of Acceptance: 30-08-2026 Date of Publication: 08-09-2026	
Correspondence	Sofia Sindhu
Email:	ssssofia222@gmail.com
DOI	https://doi.org/10.59075/jsrd.v7i7.511
Volume/Issue	7(7), 2026, 115-126



2026 Journal of Social Research Development

Introduction

It has been long accepted that homework is a crucial part of the class program that can consolidate learning outside the classroom. It is generally described as work given by teachers to be completed outside the classroom. Homework is a learning activity that is carried out well can enhance the knowledge that has been taught in class, can give students practice and can train students to develop independent learning habits. Primary level homework usually consists of reading, short written tasks, problem solving tasks, and creative tasks which focus on building literacy and numeracy foundations, homework helps connect school and home, and gives parents insight into the quality of their child's work and gives them the opportunity to participate in their child's learning Xu (2022)

Homework avoidance behavior is defined as students' intentional avoidance, delay, /or refusal to complete homework assignments. This can be seen as procrastination, frequent excuses, avoiding opening notebooks, and relying on others to do assignments (Negru & Sava 2023). Homework behavior is also influenced by emotional factors. Anxiety, frustration, and low self-confidence may discourage children from doing academic activities(Özben, 2019).

Parental education, socioeconomic status, household duties and access to learning materials are different which leads to inequities in regularity of homework completion among students (Hussain et al., 2022). Routine academic struggles can cause students to become increasingly disengaged with homework resulting in poor participation in class, assessment outcomes, and overall academic growth (Guo et al., 2024)

The issue is also linked to the worldwide education objective, namely Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) which is about inclusive, equitable and quality education for all learners (UNESCO, 2023). Homework is well planned to promote independence and development of pupils. But, it can create stress or inequity, and thus can impede progress toward educational equity. Poor home support is a risk factor for students' low performance, which in turn contributes to the achievement gap among the socioeconomic groups (Mzidabi et al., 2024).

Problem Statement

Homework is an integral part of primary education, designed to consolidate classroom learning and encourage good study habits. However, many primary school children demonstrate homework avoidance through procrastination, disinterest, and refusal, which can negatively affect school performance and engagement. In Larkana, students may face low parental involvement, poor economic conditions, domestic responsibilities, and unsupportive home environments that make homework difficult to complete independently. Poor homework design, excessive workload, and lack of teacher feedback can further contribute to homework avoidance (Akhtar et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2023). Therefore, this study explores the factors leading to homework avoidance behaviour among primary school students in Larkana City.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the key factors contributing to homework avoidance behaviour among government primary school students of Larkana.
2. To understand the perceived impacts of homework avoidance on students' academic performance and motivation among primary school students.

Research Questions

1. What are the main factors leading to homework avoidance behaviour among government primary school students of Larkana?
2. What is the relationship between homework avoidance and academic performance among primary school students?

Literature Review

Concept and Nature of Homework Avoidance

Homework avoidance behaviour refers to students' inclination to delay or incompletely perform homework, including excuses, copying another student's work, and a general lack of interest. The behaviour is common among primary school students, who are still developing self-regulation and a sense of responsibility (Xu, 2022), and does not necessarily reflect laziness; students may struggle with understanding homework, managing time, or securing support from home and school (Guo et al., 2024). It is multidimensional, connected to personal factors such as low motivation, emotional factors such as fear of punishment, social factors such as peer influence, and instructional factors such as excessive workload (Xu, 2022). Left unaddressed, it deprives students of opportunities to reinforce classroom learning, contributing to underachievement.

Importance of Homework and SDG4

Homework gives students an opportunity to practise fundamental concepts, reinforce classroom learning, and cultivate independent study habits and self-discipline (Guo et al., 2024; Xu, 2022; Li & Ding, 2024), and allows teachers to identify learning difficulties, though homework that is not age-appropriate risks overburdening students (Guo et al., 2022). This connects to Sustainable Development Goal 4, which addresses the quality of learning that promotes academic achievement (United Nations, 2015; UNESCO, 2023). A mismatch between homework and students' ability disconnects students from homework, a problem compounded in developing contexts by large class sizes and inconsistencies in parental literacy (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2012; Hussain et al., 2022).

Classroom Management and Contributing Factors

Effective classroom management, with clear rules and a positive teacher–student relationship, develops students' engagement, while poorly managed classrooms leave students confused and more inclined toward avoidance (Xu & Wu, 2023). Socially, peer attitudes and excessive use of television and mobile phones reduce the perceived value of homework (Xu, 2022). Emotionally, fear, anxiety and low self-esteem rooted in repeated struggles discourage engagement (Wijaya et al., 2022; Deng et al., 2022). A noisy or unsupportive home environment, combined with limited resources, is associated with greater avoidance (Li & Ding, 2024; Wang & Li, 2024), while unclear instructions and excessive workload from teachers reduce engagement, and supportive teacher attitudes reduce fear and motivate completion (Xu et al., 2022; Benckwitz et al., 2023). Students' own motivation strongly predicts completion: intrinsically motivated students show greater consistency, while unmotivated students see homework as a burden (Xu, 2022; Li & Ding, 2024).

Related National and International Studies

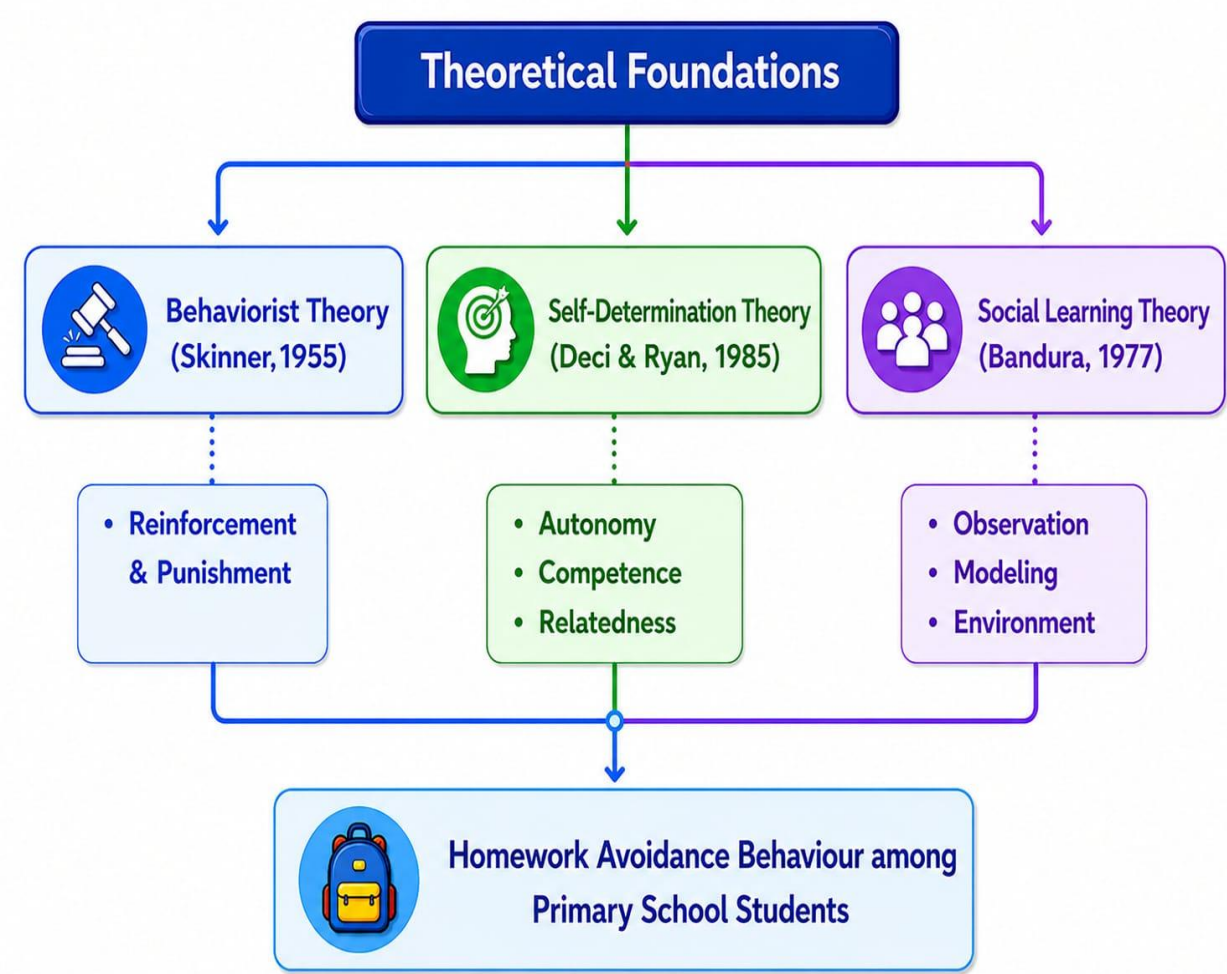
International research links low intrinsic motivation and weak self-regulation to homework delay, while motivated students manage time better and avoid less (Xu, 2022). Chaotic home environments heighten homework-related anxiety and avoidance, whereas parental guidance and encouragement rather than control reduce anxiety and increase motivation (Li & Ding, 2024). Frustration and boredom from overloaded homework significantly predict avoidance (Negru, 2023), and unclear academic goals are similarly associated with disengagement (Vietes, 2023). Homework refusal has been reframed as a signal of unmet needs rather than disobedience (Twinkl Educational Publishing, 2025), and Self-Determination Theory predicts that reliance on external reasons for doing homework leads to gradual avoidance (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

National evidence from Pakistan reinforces these patterns. Students in Punjab often perceive homework as repetitive and irrelevant, producing avoidance (Khalil & Andleeb, 2023), and routine, undifferentiated assignments given without regard to students' ability reduce engagement (Hussain et al., 2022). Poor feedback practices in early grades are linked to demotivation (Cheema, Malik & Shafiq, 2022), and the regularity of homework completion is directly associated with performance (Jamal & Rizvi, 2021). Excessive workloads produce stress and fatigue among Pakistani primary students (Pakistan Education Review, 2024), and educational stress from parents, teachers and schools can push students to delay or refuse homework a systemic problem rather than an individual defect (Pamir Times, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on three complementary theories. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan) holds that students engage in homework when their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are met; when homework feels imposed without support, avoidance increases. Social Learning Theory (Bandura) holds that children imitate behaviours observed in parents, teachers and peers, so supportive homes and encouraging teachers reduce avoidance. Behaviorist Theory (Skinner, 1953) explains homework behaviour through reinforcement: praise and reward increase

completion, while punishment and negative feedback produce stress and avoidance. Together these theories explain how motivational, social and reinforcement processes interact to shape homework avoidance among primary school children.



Research Gap

While student motivation, parental involvement, homework design and academic stress have each been studied in various contexts, little research has examined homework avoidance at the level of local communities such as Larkana, where cultural norms and educational facilities differ from the settings in much of the existing literature. This study addresses that gap by providing context-specific evidence on homework avoidance among primary school students in Larkana city.

Methodology

Introduction

This section explains the philosophical assumptions, research design, sampling procedures, data collection methods and ethical aspects of the study, guided by the Research Onion Model (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Research Onion Model

Following this model, the study adopted an interpretivist philosophy at the outermost layer, an inductive approach, and a phenomenological strategy, with a cross-sectional time frame and qualitative data collection and analysis.

Research Philosophy

The philosophy taken is Interpretivism, in which reality is a product of society, best explained through participants' lived experiences. Homework avoidance is a complex experience relying on the emotional, family and school experiences of the student, and this philosophy enabled a deep insight into these perceptions.

Research Approach

An inductive approach was employed, defining patterns and themes from the data rather than testing hypotheses the correct method given the paucity of local research on homework avoidance in Larkana city.

Research Strategy

A phenomenological research strategy was used to look at participants' lived experiences of homework avoidance, bracketing the researcher's own assumptions in favour of participants' narratives.

Methodological Choice

A qualitative approach was selected, as the research focused on meaning, perceptions and lived experience rather than quantifying variables, giving the depth and contextual understanding essential to phenomenological research.

Time Horizon

The design is cross-sectional, with data collected at one point in time, suitable for exploring students' current experience and perception of homework avoidance.

Data Collection Method

Semi-structured interviews were the main data collection technique, enabling flexibility while guaranteeing key research questions were covered, with open-ended questions eliciting rich narratives.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection followed formal and informed consent of participants and school authorities. Interviews were conducted in a quiet, confidential setting, recorded with consent, and transcribed word-to-word, with reflective notes documenting contextual observations.

Pilot Testing of the Interview

A pilot test of the interview protocol was conducted beforehand, using subjects similar to the target population but not in the final sample, to confirm clarity and identify ambiguous wording and question order.

Data Analysis Technique

Thematic analysis followed the steps of Braun and Clarke (2006): data familiarisation, coding, development of themes, and interpretation, obtained inductively in line with the study's qualitative approach.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in government primary schools of Larkana city, Sindh, chosen for their socio-economic diversity and the lack of research on this issue, in the natural school setting.

Population of the Study

The population comprised students, teachers and parents from selected government primary schools. Teachers with a minimum of four years' experience, students demonstrating homework avoidance, and their parents were involved to provide triangulation.

Sampling Technique

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used, chosen based on participants' first-hand experience of homework practices, to ensure information-rich cases.

Sample Size

The sample consisted of ten respondents students, teachers and parents. Data saturation, rather than numerical representation, determined the sample size.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation were ensured, with parental consent and child assent obtained given the involvement of children.

SZABIST Research Ethics Protocol

The SZABIST research ethics protocol was fully adhered to; approval was obtained prior to data collection, and no participant was harmed physically, emotionally or psychologically.

Discussion of Findings

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis of interviews with four teachers, four students and two parents at government primary schools in Larkana. Four integrated themes emerged from cross-group comparison: Socio-Economic and Family Environmental Barriers; Pedagogical and Institutional Factors; Psychological and Emotional Dimensions of Homework Avoidance; and Strategies and Interventions.

Objective One: Key Factors Contributing to Homework Avoidance

Parental illiteracy and the resulting absence of home academic support was one of the most overwhelming and repeatedly mentioned factors. Teachers commented that parental illiteracy was a cause of neglect of homework, and parents themselves indicated they were unable to help their children due to lack of education and heavy family and work responsibilities. This finding concurs with the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER Pakistan, 2023), which found that only 39%, 22% and 27% of children successfully passed Urdu, English and Mathematics tests respectively, and with international evidence that children born to illiterate parents face educational disadvantage (Muhammad et al., 2024; Hinduja et al., 2024).

Child labor, domestic obligations and time deprivation emerged as a second major factor. Students spoke about working in mechanics' shops, doing shopping, looking after animals and selling milk in the evening; female students spoke of heavy domestic burdens such as dishwashing, housecleaning and caring for siblings, making homework physically and temporally impossible, particularly where homes lacked electricity at night. This aligns with reports that around 26 million children in Pakistan were out of school or disengaged from education in 2024, with child labor as a major factor (U.S. Department of Labor, 2024), and that children from low-income households in Sindh are significantly more likely to be involved in child labor (Muhammad et al., 2024).

Overcrowding of classrooms, under-resourcing and institutional constraints were also consistently reported by teachers, who described classes of up to 30 or more students with limited access to projectors, textbooks and classroom management tools, making it difficult to design homework accessible to all ability levels. This is consistent with national reporting that only five percent of children in Pakistan receive a quality education (National Education Policy Development

Framework, 2024) and with evidence that homework only improves achievement when it fits students' understanding (Guo et al., 2024).

Developmentally inappropriate and linguistically inaccessible homework design was the fourth major factor. Teachers, students and parents all reported that homework was often too challenging and did not match students' abilities; homework instructions given in English to Sindhi-speaking children from illiterate homes were doubly inaccessible, a further rational coping response for avoidance, consistent with evidence that excessive and poorly designed homework leads to mental fatigue and lower motivation (Guo et al., 2024; Cheraghi & Rahimi, 2024).

Objective Two: Impacts of Homework Avoidance on Academic Performance and Motivation

Teachers, students and parents consistently indicated that lack of homework completion was directly related to poor achievement, with students who avoided homework progressively falling behind in classroom learning and performing poorly in evaluation. This is supported by international evidence that homework has a positive influence on academic performance when at an appropriate level, but that overloading and poor design leads to cognitive overload that undermines performance (Guo et al., 2024), and by national data showing only 22% of government school children in Sindh could pass an English test (ASER Pakistan, 2023).

Homework avoidance was also found to significantly affect learning motivation. Students expressed a clear desire to disengage from academic tasks, describing homework as "too much," while hiding their exercise books to avoid being checked and bargaining for leisure time in exchange for doing homework. Teachers and parents corroborated these observations of stress and avoidance during homework checking. Applying Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), homework-avoidant students in Larkana are denied autonomy (no choice in homework), competence (constant failure), and relatedness (absence of warm teacher encouragement or parental support), which together undermine intrinsic motivation and reinforce avoidance as a self-protective response to evaluation anxiety.

Overall, the findings indicate that homework avoidance in government schools at Larkana is as much the cause as it is the result of a vicious circle of academic and motivational deprivation, requiring a systemic response that addresses both the structural conditions identified under Objective One and the cycle of avoidance and demotivation identified under Objective Two.

Conclusion

This study examined the experiences, perceptions and reflections of teachers, students and parents regarding homework avoidance among primary school children in government schools of Larkana City. The findings show that homework avoidance in this context is not a matter of individual student failure or lack of effort, but a multi-faceted phenomenon rooted in poverty, parental illiteracy, child labour and institutional under-resourcing conditions that structurally deny children the time, energy, academic support, quiet study space and appropriately designed homework tasks needed to engage with learning at home. The study further shows that homework

avoidance is self-reinforcing: children who fall behind in classroom learning experience heightened evaluation anxiety and intrinsic demotivation, which in turn reduces their engagement with homework and further limits their ability to catch up. This is most severe among children in the most deprived circumstances, including those engaged in full-time child labour and those without electricity at home.

The study highlights a clear gap between current homework practices in Larkana's government primary schools and the principles of effective homework design established in the international literature, while also showing that the interventions proposed by teachers and students themselves activity-based tasks, positive reinforcement, linguistically accessible instructions, reduced volume, and stronger parental involvement are consistent with global evidence and can be implemented quickly and at low cost. As an empirical study set in the under-researched context of government primary education in Larkana, Sindh, this work documents the specific mechanisms of homework avoidance in this setting and adds to national and international research on educational disadvantage, homework, and academic motivation in low-resource contexts. Addressing homework avoidance in Larkana therefore requires not only pedagogical adjustments in the classroom but a systemic response that tackles the structural drivers of poverty and illiteracy, strengthens teachers' capacity in homework design, and builds compensatory support for students whose families are unable to provide academic support at home.

Recommendations

- Teachers should design homework that is contextually relevant and pitched at a level students can complete independently, reducing quantity in favour of quality. Teachers should adopt a supportive, formative approach.
- Schools should develop and enforce a clear, evidence-based homework policy and consider supervised after-school homework support sessions.
- Parents should establish a consistent daily homework routine and minimise competing activities such as screen time.
- Policymakers should treat child labour as an education policy priority and strengthen enforcement of existing laws. Homework design and motivational psychology should be integrated into teacher training curricula.

References

- Alhazmi, A. A., & Kaufmann, A. (2022). Phenomenological qualitative methods applied to the analysis of cross-cultural experience in novel educational social contexts. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 785134.
- Benckwitz, L., et al. (2023). Teacher attitudes and parental support in reducing homework avoidance among primary school students. *Journal of Educational Practice, 14*(2), 88–101.

- Bonyadi, A. (2023). Phenomenological research strategy in education: A methodological overview. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 36(4), 512–527.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Cheema, A. B., Ahmad, M., & Shafiq, F. (2022). Homework assignment and assessment practices in Grade 1 in public schools. *Journal of Early Childhood Care and Education*, 6(1), 41–64.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Deng, Y., et al. (2022). Self-esteem, failure experiences and homework avoidance among primary school students. *Educational Psychology Review*, 34(3), 601–618.
- Epstein, J. L., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2012). *The changing debate about homework*. National Education Association.
- Guo, J., Liu, Y., Wang, X., Li, Y., Wei, J., Lan, Z., & Zhao, M. (2024). The relationship between homework time and academic performance among K–12: A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 20(3), e1431.
- Hussain, B., Zulfiqar, A., & Hassan, Z. (2022). Homework: Exploring teachers' beliefs and practices in primary schools of Southern Punjab. *Review of Applied Management and Social Sciences*, 5(3), 451–465.
- Jamal, S., & Rizvi, N. (2021). Effects of homework on academic achievement of primary level learners in Pakistan. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 8(1), 55–70.
- Khalil, R., & Andleeb, S. (2023). Home environment and homework completion among elementary school students in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Education*, 40(1), 67–82.
- Li, J., & Ding, Y. (2024). Influence of parental structure and chaos on homework anxiety in elementary school students: The mediating role of homework motivation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1399507.
- Mzidabi, J., Goudeau, S., Delès, R., Claes, N., Easterbrook, M. J., Alexopoulos, T., & Rouet, J.-F. (2024). Unequal homework: The hidden forces of social class contexts and parental self-efficacy in shaping educational outcomes. *Journal of Social Issues*, 80, 1315–1344.
- Negru, I., & Sava, S. (2023). Homework's implications for the well-being of primary school pupils—Perceptions of children, parents, and teachers. *Education Sciences*, 13(10), 996.
- Özben, Ş. (2019). Students' attitudes toward homework and academic achievement. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 15(3), 109–122.
- Pakistan Educational Review. (2024). *Challenges in homework implementation in Pakistani schools*. Pakistan Educational Review.
- Pamir Times. (2024). *Educational stress and homework avoidance in Pakistani schools*. Pamir Times.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 61, 101860.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Skinner, B. F. (1953). *Science and human behavior*. Macmillan.

- Twinkl Educational Publishing. (2025). *Understanding homework refusal as a behavioural signal*.
Twinkl Educational Publishing.
- UNESCO. (2023). *Global education monitoring report 2023: Technology in education*. UNESCO.
- United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*.
United Nations.
- Vietes, C. (2023). Academic goals, homework participation and performance in elementary students. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1201456.
- Wang, H., & Li, M. (2024). Socio-economic factors and homework behaviour among primary school students. *Educational Studies*, 50(2), 233–249.
- Wijaya, A., et al. (2022). Academic pressure, emotional stress and homework engagement in primary education. *Journal of Child Psychology and Education*, 12(1), 44–59.
- Xu, J. (2020). Understanding homework avoidance behaviour and its long-term academic effects. *Journal of Educational Research*, 113(4), 265–277.
- Xu, J. (2022). More than minutes: A person-centered approach to homework time, homework time management, and homework procrastination. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 70, 102087.
- Xu, J., & Wu, H. (2023). Self-regulation, classroom management and homework behaviour in secondary education. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 116(1), 12–24.
- Xu, J., et al. (2023). Predictors of homework avoidance among elementary school students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 72, 102130.