*Research Article*

# Perspectives of Primary Teachers, Students, and Parents on Homework

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The purpose of this research was to examine the experiences of teachers, students, and parents on homework purpose and student feedback in primary school. The qualitative methodology was adopted for this research. This qualitative study used data from 20 teachers, 20 students, and 20 parents of the fifth-grade primary school in four municipalities of Kosovo. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and were analyzed through the thematic analysis method. The research results provided an overview of the reality of the way teachers approached homework. Research showed that there was a lack of a general standard, in almost all schools, related to homework assignments and there was a lack of teachers' professional development for homework planning. Also, this research showed that the purpose of homework was closely related to how teachers planned and understood the role of homework, as well as how teachers built collaboration with students.

## 1. Introduction

Homework is a pedagogical practice as it plays an important role in the educational process for children. The issue of homework assignments has a long history. Homework is an important part of the teaching and learning process, which is practiced very often in teaching [1]. Homework research has historically been a concern for teachers, parents, and students, but the homework debate is still ongoing. Completing homework is complex, and it is unclear which steps of the homework completion cycle are most salient in determining whether or not homework gets turned-in to the teacher [2, p. 5].

Research suggests [3, 4–10] that when planning homework, teachers should give adequate consideration to the purpose of homework, effective implementation of homework, providing feedback to students, the time students spend on homework, and the parents' involvement in homework. Teachers should give students tasks with a certain purpose and appropriate to their learning styles. Teachers should not give students assignments without purpose, and they should only give assignments when there is a specific

purpose [11, p. 6]. So, it is very important that homework is clearly defined. Therefore, teachers should be aware of the literature available to their students when assigning homework based on the curriculum and level of the students in the class. Accordingly, teachers play a crucial role in the proper implementation of homework and these tasks are evident during the pedagogical process they develop. While implementing homework, of course, teachers face inevitable challenges. Due to the lack of studies that have been conducted about the challenges that teachers face during the implementation of homework, the main focus of the research area is to address the main question: what are the challenges that teachers face when assigning homework? By far, the biggest focus of homework studies has been on the purpose of homework, students' benefits and parental involvement, as well as the time students spend on homework. Therefore, this research aims to identify in-depth the challenges of teachers when practicing homework. The research also provides new theoretical knowledge about the importance of the context of the school and the teaching profession in relation to the treatment of homework as an essential element of teachers' work.

## 2. Purpose of the Present Study

The main purpose of the study has been to explore the challenges that teachers face during the implementation of homework, more specifically the process of homework planning, the time that students spend on homework, providing feedback on these tasks, and the possibilities of cooperation with parents about homework.

At the same time, the research analyzes teachers' experiences regarding the purpose of homework and the role of student feedback on homework. Finally, the research also analyzes parents' support on homework.

The research questions that this study aims to answer are as follows:

(RQ1) What are the challenges that teachers face related to homework?

(RQ2) How should teachers approach homework for it to be effective?

(RQ3) How do parents and students view homework?

## 3. Literature Review

Homework is considered a bridge between school and home. Many researchers, teachers, and parents have different opinions about teachers assigning homework. Like many other methods and strategies in the field of education, homework is sometimes considered useful and sometimes useless. Despite this objection, assigning homework has more positive effects than negative ones. The positive effects of homework are improving students' study skills and attitudes toward school and teaching students that learning can take place inside and outside the school [12, 13]. Even in the study conducted by Baş et al. [14], the purpose of homework is classified into two categories based on the research of many authors, which shows multiple purposes teachers give homework. These goals are classified into two categories: instructional goals and noninstructional goals.

The author is right when he says that homework is a unique educational practice as every child does not have the same experience with homework, thus practicing homework is quite challenging and very complex given the boundary between the school world and the home world [15].

The most important factor that affects the quality of homework is undoubtedly the purpose of the homework. It is very important that the teacher has a certain purpose in mind when planning homework for students. Well-designed, clearly intended homework has the potential to enhance a child's learning and development. Teachers should not give students assignments without purpose, but only when there is a specific purpose [7, 11]. Various researchers show that there are many reasons why teachers assign homework. They describe 10 goals for homework assignments: practice, preparation, participation, personal development, parent–child relationships, parent–teacher communication, peer interactions, politics, public relations, and punishment [3]. All these goals should be interrelated in order to include each student in the lesson, to increase the responsibility for work, to manage the time, and above all to gain self-confidence while doing homework.

In addition to the purpose of homework, another very important factor is giving clear instructions related to homework. Whenever homework is given, teachers should make sure that the instructions are clear so that there are no doubts or vagueness when the student starts doing homework. If the instructions are unclear, students will feel bored, confused, and have no interest in completing the homework, which force them to postpone completing or not doing properly [16].

Another important factor that affects the completion of homework is feedback that teachers provide to students. Likewise, the time spent by student on homework is of great importance as it also affects their results in the learning process. When assigning homework, teachers should consider students' age and capacity so that students show interest in completing homework and not copying homework from classmates. If teachers give too much homework, students will become disappointed and stressed [6, 16]. Respecting the "10 min" rule for each grade level would be in the best interest of students and parents because children will not be too busy with homework if this rule is followed [4]. Another factor of great importance is obviously the parents. Parents are the first teachers of their children until they start school, so parental involvement in homework is a bridge between students, parents, and schools, which makes an important triangle. In a study conducted by Cooper [17] on the effects of homework, among the positive effects mentioned are the parental involvement in homework. When parents are involved in homework, they increase their children's appreciation for their education and express positive attitudes toward them. Syla and Saqipi [18, p. 3] stated that "Indeed, when parents support their children dealing with homework, children receive feedback from the teacher and notice the appreciation of their efforts and at the same time, they feel motivated to do their homework." Students also learn that learning can take place anywhere and not just within the school.

The activity systems theory has been adapted to conduct this research using a variety of constructs for the needs of this research, so this theory is of great interest for the study as it has been shown to be fruitful for analyzing factors affecting the effectiveness of homework and challenges faced by teachers, students, and parents in implementing these tasks.

The activity systems theory as a framework was developed by Engeström based on Vygotsky's concept ([19], as cited in Engeström [20]). The activity systems theory in educational research offers a unique perspective for researchers who address the interactions between the individual and contextual aspects of an activity. This theory that aims at action, human practice, learning, and development can be considered as a new theory related to pedagogical practice [21, 22]. Roth and Lee [23, p. 32] stated that "of direct importance to teachers, systems activity theory has always been a theory based on practice and out of practice, so it aspires to be a theory of practice."

As shown in Figure 1, the activity system's fundamental components are subjects, objects, tools and instruments
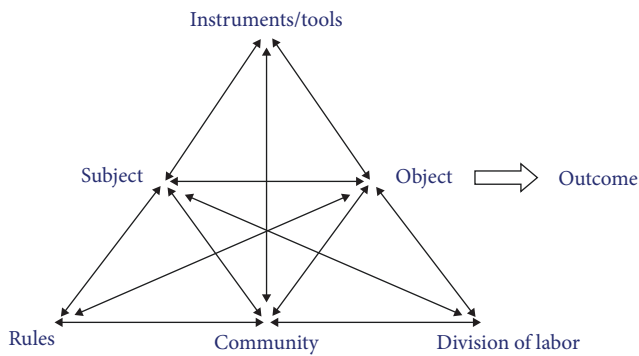
FIGURE 1: Activity system model. Source: Engeström [19, 20].

TABLE 1: Participants' demographic profile.

| Participants | Gender | Age | Location |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers | 18 F 2 M | 26–28 years (5 teachers) 34–36 years (6 teachers) 38–42 years (9 teachers) | 13 urban 7 rural |
| Parents | 16 F 4 M | 35–39 years (13 parents) 40–44 years (3 parents) 45–47 years (7 parents) | 11 urban 9 rural |
| Students | 11 F 9 M | 10 years (12 students) 11 years (8 students) | 11 urban 9 rural |

(mediating artifacts), rules, community, and division of tasks.

The subject represents the participants in the activity who work on achieving the object that represents the overall purpose of the activity. The object is the main purpose that the subject operates and transforms. Tools are the processes that the subject can use to reach the object. Rules represent standards that help the subject to achieve the overall goal. The community involves working with all stakeholders to achieve the overall goal. The last element that forms the activity system is the division of labor that presents the responsibilities of all participants in this activity system, including the community.

3.1. The Study Context. The educational system in Kosovo, in all periods of history, has faced a lot of challenges. After the end of the war in Kosovo, the system was in a process of educational reforms and innovations designed to help the system. After 1999, there were some major problems, which highlighted the need for change in the country's education system. Kosovo began to focus on the education of teaching and the professional development of teachers.

In Kosovo, homework is part of students' daily routine, despite constant debates of teachers, parents, and students on how to implement it. The time that elementary school students spend in school is not sufficient for them to reinforce and expand their knowledge. Therefore, in these cases, there is a great necessity for homework as it provides a meaningful lesson outside the classroom. Although schools apply homework, teacher preparation is not at the right level to assign homework. The school system in Kosovo lacks a clear plan or a standard of how teachers should apply their homework in schools and they are not trained to properly assign homework.

## 4. Methodology

4.1. Data Collection Methods. This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. Qualitative research is used when less is known about a topic or phenomenon and when one wants to discover or learn more about it. It is commonly used to understand people's experiences and to express their perspectives [24]. The interview process was conducted through the "Zoom" platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collection was between June and July 2020. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Participants were guaranteed that the interview would only be used for research purposes.

4.2. Participants. For this research, interviews were conducted with five teachers, five students, and five parents in each municipality where the study was conducted, so a total of 20 teachers, 20 students, and 20 parents were participants in the study. The demographic data of interview participants are given in Table 1.

The criterion for the selection of teachers has been teaching fifth graders, after they have spent 5 years practicing homework and, therefore, had experience with homework practices in their classroom. The appropriate time to conduct the interview had already been arranged. Teachers helped the study author to conduct interviews with students and their parents. The appropriate time was initially set when participants were ready for interviews. Prior to the start of the interview, participants were assured of their anonymity. Participants signed the sound recording agreement, which informed them that the interview is confidential and will only be used for research issues with the guarantee that their identity will not be revealed under any circumstances.

4.3. Data Analysis. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interviews. To better answer the research questions, the focus was on identifying topics from the participants' perspectives. According to Bryman (2012), as cited by McNulty [25], thematic analysis is one of the most widely used approaches to qualitative data analysis. This analysis provides accessible and systematic procedures for extracting codes and themes from qualitative data [26]. Semistructured interviews were designed and conducted by the researcher. The researcher is interested in the content of the interview conversation as well as in the way the participants express themselves [27]. The first part of the study consisted of a semistructured questionnaire for teachers, while the second part of the study consisted of semistructured interviews with parents and students. The interviews were administered individually by a researcher. The familiarity of the researcher with the topic of research created the possibility for delivering in-depth questions when participants were not open enough in answering. Each interview lasted between 20 and 30 min, following open-ended questions prepared earlier. When greater clarity or in-depth answers were needed, the researcher used follow-up questions. After transcribing the interviews, the data were coded taking into account issues related to the purpose of the research. The codes were then

TABLE 2: Codes and themes derived from the thematic analysis of interview data on teachers' challenges.

| Codes | Themes |
| --- | --- |
| Homework as teachers' decision<br>Same homework<br>Different homework by teachers<br>Not obligated by the principal<br>No standard for homework | Need for standard in schools for homework planning |
| No trainings for homework in school<br>Training on critical thinking<br>Other mix trainings<br>Training on curriculum<br>Training on ICT application in teaching | The need for trainings on assigning homework |
| Correcting the homework at once<br>Frontal control<br>Checking the homework at home<br>Need for more time in class<br>Returning homework the next day<br>Large number of students in the class | Need to provide feedback |

ICT, information and communications technology.

grouped into topics to draw conclusions about teachers', parents', and students' perceptions.

## 5. Research Findings

Findings from the interviews are presented in three parts: interviews with teachers, interviews with parents, and interviews with students.

### 5.1. Findings from Interviews with Teachers

*5.1.1. The Challenges that Teachers Face Related to Homework.* Table 2 presents a summary of the topics that emerge from the interviews with teachers regarding the challenges they face regarding their professional preparation for homework assignments, homework assignment goals, and to provide feedback on homework.

Three important topics for the study have been identified, as well:

(1) Lack of a standard in schools for homework planning
(2) Lack of training for homework
(3) Inability to provide feedback on time

The first issue from the research has been the lack of a standard in schools for homework planning. Teachers point out that schools do not have any homework plans or standards. According to them, they are free to assign homework as they wish, as school does not oblige them to give homework. "*There is no written rule for assigning homework so we are the ones who define homework*" (Teacher, 4). "*School has no standard. Neither does Ministry of Education, nor the curriculum. You have to take some kind of responsibility whether you should give assignments or not*" (Teacher, 12). "*We have no obligation from school, we are free to act as we wish*" (Teacher, 7).

According to the teachers' answers, they are responsible for assigning homework as the school does not oblige them to give homework and in this case, the responsibility is even greater when the teachers give homework with no criterion.

If there was a detailed plan from the school, teachers would feel more secure in assigning the homework. According to Epstein and Van Voorhis [3], as cited by Peltier [28], it could be determined by school principals or education teams, the time students should spend on homework. While a homework assignment plan is lacking, teachers may encounter difficulties in managing homework at the elementary level.

The second issue of the research was the lack of training related to homework. Although teachers have attended numerous trainings to improve classroom teaching practices, they are not trained about assigning homework. Out of 20 teachers, five of them claim that the training of the Critical Thinking while Reading and Writing has helped them, to some extent, use different techniques in creating homework, as well as the training about curriculum, which has helped them design the tasks as attractively as possible. Below are some of the teachers' thoughts on this topic:

> *Nowadays, I haven't participated in any training specifically related to homework. It would be very useful for me if I had the opportunity to attend such training (Teacher, 13).*

> *Special homework training no, but for example, the last training "curriculum framework" has helped me with assigning homework; categorizing according to the age of students, making them as attractive as possible for students, also with adapting to the competencies that we want to achieve (Teacher, 3).*

> *I have never attended homework-related training. I am interested in any possibility to be a part of this kind of training, which would help me in creating homework but unfortunately, there is no such training in our country (Teacher, 7).*

Although they have different trainings for teaching, they have not attended any training only related to homework.

According to Landing-Corretjer [29], there is a critical necessity for teacher professional development about homework assignments. In a study conducted by Landing-Corretjer [29], 50% of the participants from the conducted study that were trained about homework assigned homework in the form of projects which participating students reported to prefer. The other half of the participants, who were never part of any homework training, have shown that they have difficulty in clearly designing homework. This proves the importance of the professional development of teachers for the proper implementation of homework.

The last issue of the research has been inability to provide timely feedback. Despite teachers giving homework, most of them point out that it is impossible for them to always give feedback on time. Due to the large number of students in the class and the short hours spent in class, they are obliged to give oral feedback or check homework after working hours. Here are some of the teachers' opinions about using feedback regarding homework.

> Unfortunately, I don't have enough time to provide written feedback. Because of a lack of time and a very large number of students in the class, I'm not able to give written feedback. Therefore, I take the assignments home to check them (Teacher, 5). In most cases, I return pupils' homework after two or three days, since I can't check them at school for many reasons (Teacher, 16).

From the interviews, it is understood that teachers sometimes do not even have the ability to check homework so they require that students only hand them in. Now the question arises: How motivated are students to complete homework when their homework is just handed in and they do not receive any feedback on time? When students receive constructive feedback, they will learn even more and feel more important; therefore, when teachers give homework, it is important to find the time and opportunity to give oral or written feedback.

*5.1.2. Teachers' Approach for Effective Homework.* Table 3 presents a summary of the topics that emerge from the interviews with teachers regarding their approach for effective homework.

Four important topics for the study have been identified, as well:

(1) Creating work habit and responsibility
(2) Assessment and reinforcement of learned units
(3) Encouragement for research and creativity
(4) Feedback in order to help reinforce knowledge

Creating work habits and responsibility has been the first issue of the research. Many topics about the purpose of giving homework come up from the teachers' answers. Teachers give homework for many reasons. According to most teachers, the reason for giving homework is the engagement of students in homework in order to gain work habits, to become independent and to become responsible for the given task, as well as to assess the knowledge through homework.

> The main goal is for the student to acquire work habits and to work independently on them (Teacher, 18).

> The purpose of my homework is to develop student's responsibility, to complete a task, and to establish a work habit. Usually, this is why I give homework (Teacher, 7).

Creating work habits and independence is of great importance to every child. Another reason that teachers give homework is to create responsibility for the task given. Of course, students also have a responsibility to do their homework. Creating responsibility at this age prepares the student for the future as well. When a person is responsible about a particular task, they are more likely to succeed. The purpose of homework should be to further facilitate learning, develop organizational skills, and make students disciplined and independent [10, 30].

Assessment and reinforcement of learned units have been another issue of the research. According to teachers, another reason they give homework is so students practice more for a better result, as well as to verify students' progress. Repetition of lessons and assessment of students are mentioned by most teachers as the purpose for giving homework.

> Of course, the first reason is also reinforcement. By assigning homework, we understand if we have managed to be clear during the learning process, by analyzing the results of homework we notice if we have managed to be clear with the explanations we have given in class. This is also feedback about our own work (Teacher, 2).

> I usually give homework that is useful to the students. In my opinion, they enhance acquisition and learning, develop the skills taught in the classroom, and verify students' progress in class (Teacher, 11).

Another issue of the research is the incentives for research and creativity. Some teachers emphasize that they give homework in order to expand knowledge and develop creativity. According to them, through attractive game-based tasks, students enjoy working on tasks and at the same time become encouraged to research.

> I don't overload with tasks which are not attractive to children. I try to give homework in such a way that the child has fun while doing homework. If we combine both learning and having fun, it won't ever be a burden to them (Teacher, 6).

TABLE 3: Codes and themes derived from the thematic analysis of interview data on teachers' approach for effective homework.

| Codes | Themes |
| --- | --- |
| Becoming independent<br>Gaining work habits<br>Preparation for future<br>Commitment<br>Becoming more responsible | Creating work habit and responsibility |
| Evaluation of students<br>Better results<br>Verification of student program<br>Motivation of students<br>Revision of learned units<br>Additional commitment<br>Revision techniques | Assessment and reinforcement of learned units |
| Expanding the knowledge<br>Expanding students' horizon<br>The need for research skills<br>Complementary learning<br>Enhance learning<br>Having fun<br>Pleasure<br>Develop creativity<br>Attractive tasks<br>Game-based tasks<br>Development of critical thinking—anagram, crossword puzzles | Encouragement for research and creativity |
| Content correction<br>Spelling correction<br>Grammar correction<br>Correction in the areas that need to be advanced<br>Underlining of errors<br>Praise for motivation<br>Praise and then criticism<br>Praise for calligraphy<br>Focus on quality<br>Emphasizing the best points<br>Creative work | Feedback in order to help reinforce knowledge |

> *I try to give tasks that are motivating or appealing to children or tasks that make children curious to learn something, to achieve result "learning by doing." I try to give attractive tasks for children; even very small, simple, or any research task to motivate the child and keep them curious, otherwise reproductive tasks that require only writing are not appropriate homework according to me (Teacher, 13).*

About seven teachers claim that the purpose of homework is to complement what have learned in school but always in the form of play and creative tasks. The purpose of homework should be practical, so that students apply the content in their daily lives, otherwise they will not have the motivation to do it. If homework is not interesting to students and does not encourage research, students will do the homework just to claim that they did them. Moreover, tasks that foster research and develop creativity and imagination make those tasks even more effective.

Based on teachers' opinion, they give homework feedback in order to reinforce knowledge. According to them, their biggest focus is on correcting mistakes, spelling, content, and areas, which should be developed. In addition, they focus on the strongest points as well as the creative work.

> *Now, depending on the subjects, in Albanian for example, I focus on spelling and grammar depending on what they have learned and I give them feedback about what they need or how they could improve what is necessary for them (Teacher, 3).*

> *To students who need correction, I give feedback on the parts they need improvement, but I give a comment for further motivation even to good students (Teacher, 14).*

While teachers assign homework, they should also evaluate student work. According to Costa et al. [31], homework should always be corrected, as this reinforces the importance and usefulness of homework to students.

5.2. *Findings from Interviews with Parents.* Table 4 summarizes the topics derived from interviews with parents

TABLE 4: Codes and themes derived from the thematic analysis of interview data with parents.

| Codes | Themes |
|---|---|
| Keeping students very active | |
| Preparation for school | |
| Necessity of homework | |
| Improving the thinking | |
| Satisfaction with students' homework | Prohomework |
| Parents support | |
| Homework improves students' learning | |
| Appropriate homework | |
| A lot of homework | |
| Spending too much time doing homework | |
| Repeating the same things | |
| Homework almost everyday | |
| Need for free time | Too much homework |
| Very busy with tasks | |
| Constantly having homework | |
| Inappropriate time for homework | |
| Need for continuous cooperation with the teacher | |
| Overcoming child stagnation | |
| Discussion with teacher | |
| Parent–child–teacher triangle | The need for cooperation |
| Using technology to communicate | |
| Meeting with teacher | |
| Check with sign | |
| No feedback—large-size classes (40 students) | |
| Evaluating the homework by grade or emojis | |
| Lack of time | Lack of feedback |
| No written feedback | |
| Usage of emojis (happy face, heart) | |

regarding their views on the homework that their children do. Four important topics emerged from the interviews that need elaboration. Parents agree that their children should have homework but not become overloaded by it. Parents see teacher–parent–student cooperation very important and necessary. They point out how to use teacher feedback. According to them, there is a lack of written feedback.

According to parents' responses in interviews, homework is necessary for their children to improve. Homework keeps students more prepared and active. Some parents claim that through homework, they notice whether the child has understood the lessons in class. Here are some opinions from parents who find homework necessary:

> When we sit down to do the homework, I notice if they have understood the unit, the new learning units they have learned, or the difficulties they encounter. Through homework, I understand what I should practice more with them, so definitely I want my children to have homework (Parent, 5).

> Homework is necessary because if they do not have it at all, then the children lose the importance of learning (Parent, 12).

According to the parents, homework is very important as it inform the parents about their children's work, where the child stands with lessons and what he/she should work on more. In this way, the parents will be informed about the child's condition related to learning.

Homework can give parents the opportunity to see what is going on at school and to express positive attitudes toward achievement. In addition, parents should be involved in homework when appropriate. They should help children to summarize the information they have learned, but at the same time they should not feel like they need to act as teachers or police officers to make sure they do their homework [32, 33].

The majority of parents said that homework burdens the students. In addition to the fact that children have a lot of homework, considering their age, they have homework almost everyday, not excluding weekends. Here are some opinions from parents about their children's homework:

> Children are burdened with homework, which enable them to use their free time for any physical activity (Parent, 12).

> Children spend more than 2 hr on homework. These tasks are unnecessary because they are the continuation of class tasks, descriptive or memorizing tasks (Parent, 20).

As can be seen from the statements of the parents, the students are very busy with homework. This load denies

TABLE 5: Codes and themes derived from the thematic analysis of interview data with students.

| Codes | Themes |
| --- | --- |
| Good homework<br>Learning more<br>Repeating the lessons<br>Reinforcement for tasks<br>Exercise<br>Understanding the lessons<br>Preparing for tomorrow<br>Test preparation<br>Obligation to work<br>Students correct mistakes<br>Developing students' memory | Homework as a necessity for students |
| Helps improve tasks<br>Stimulus to learn<br>Informs about exercises<br>Advising<br>Accumulation of lessons<br>Motivation to work<br>Care for tasks<br>Incentives to exercise | Feedback as an incentive to reinforce knowledge |
| Individual conversation with the student<br>Direct communication of feedback<br>Lack of time<br>A large number of students in the classroom<br>Checking assignments with class<br>Lack of homework check | Inability to provide feedback to students |

them the free time that children should have after school. Including homework for 7 days a week without skipping the weekend is tedious for children and parents.

Parents who helped their children with homework believed that the volume of homework was too large and that the children did not have enough time for leisure activities.

Based on parental responses, cooperation with parents is necessary. Most parents claim that they constantly communicate with their teachers about the homework that their children do. For any ambiguity and stagnation of their children in homework, parents discuss with their children's teachers.

> We discuss them quite often and she is always ready to give us answers about the children's tasks, where she has difficulty, she gives us explanations. Parent, teacher, and child can cooperate and achieve something good with lessons (Parent, 17).

The teacher also benefits from family involvement. Teachers have more positive feelings about teaching in their schools when there is more parental involvement in the school [34, 35]. Teachers who communicate with parents tend to increase expectation and appreciation for all parents, and continue to increase family involvement activities [3].

Despite the fact that teachers say that they provide feedback, based on the answers of most parents, there is a lack of written feedback. One of the reasons that is pointed out by almost all parents is the limited time in relation to the large number of students in the class. Here are some of

the parents' comments that prove that they do not provide written feedback:

> In fact, it happens to notice an underlining of mistakes (Parent, 9).

> In most cases, the child has an oral comment because the large number of students in the class does not allow the teacher to inform each student in a written form (Parent, 15).

Highlighting mistakes in assignments not only shows that the teacher is not able to give written feedback properly, but it also shows that feedback does not focus too much on the individual which is very important for improving learning.

Students work should be evaluated by giving clear and concrete feedback, which will help them to learn more about where their needs are, based on giving feedback [5, 36].

*5.2.1. Findings from Interviews with Students.* Table 5 presents a summary of topics derived from the interviews with students regarding their opinion on homework. Three important topics for this study emerged from the interview. Students consider homework necessary and feedback as an incentive to reinforce knowledge, but teachers do not always have the opportunity to provide written feedback.

In recent years, homework has been the topic of discussion about its impact on student learning [7, 17]. Despite the very heated debates in these discussions, the

students show very important experiences in doing homework. They emphasize that homework is good, and they learn a lot by reinforcing the lessons learned in the classroom. According to them, homework is necessary in order to repeat the lessons learned in class and prepare for the next day.

> Homework helps us learn to be better prepared for tomorrow (Student, 4). Homework plays a very important role for me and for other students as well. They are a revision of class assignments that the teacher gives us so in the future we become more advanced and develop our memory (Student, 10).

Homework is a powerful tool that can contribute to the preparation and progress of students if given by teachers in the right way. According to most of the students interviewed, using feedback on homework encourages them to improve.

> Feedback, I think, is very important because the teacher is very good at informing and advising us on what we have done. If we, did it right or wrong and that helps us a lot?! (Student, 6).

> Yes, the teacher gives us feedback, tells us if we did well or badly and this help us improve (Student, 9).

In their experience, homework feedback helps students to improve their homework, motivates to learn more, advises them for next time, and their lessons do not accumulate due to their constant follow-up and information through oral and written comments. Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on student learning and achievement [37].

Based on the interviews conducted with students, oral feedback has been more used than written feedback. Out of 20 students, whom the interview was conducted with, only three students claim that they receive written feedback, while 17 other students receive oral feedback.

> Oral feedback helps us a lot in returning information (Student, 5). Yes orally! In written form less often (Student, 2); we get confirmed that we have done it by giving a tick (✓) if we have a mistake, we correct it later in the class (Student, 11).

Oral feedback is used to correct mistakes, praise, evaluate, present a challenge, additional explanation, encouragement for reflection, and many other issues that help students learn more [38].

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. Challenges Faced by Teachers Related to Homework Practice.
The lack of a standard in schools for assigning homework is the most important factor in this study that can be seen as a critical point of this research. According to the interviews conducted with teachers, they do not possess any standard or plan from the school or the municipality for assigning homework. This proves that the problem addressed by teachers is deeper as no official document mentions the role of homework, much less a proper standard around these tasks.

The findings of research also correlate with research as schools lack a homework policy and have erroneous knowledge from parents and teachers about homework policies [39].

Interviews with teachers show that they have not attended any special homework training. According to the teachers, they are not professionally prepared enough to homework, so it often happens that they have dilemmas about the homework workload for students.

The findings of our study are in line with the study of Cooper [40], where the researcher shows that teachers are not trained much for homework and in particular for how to create homework and how to involve parents in homework. Skaggs [41] also pointed out that there is a lack of homework training. According to Skaggs [41], homework is mentioned in teacher trainings; however, there is no specific training related only to homework. In addition to homework training, Skaggs [41] found it necessary for teachers to be trained on what to do with homework after returning to class.

According to Landing-Corretjer [29], professional development of teachers to design homework is much needed. They can achieve this by attending homework training. Even in a study that examines teachers' practice and attitudes about homework, the authors call for teacher integration to be trained in homework [42].

The large number of students in the classroom and the short schedule do not allow teachers to control homework as they wish. According to teachers, they are forced to check homework during breaks or at home. This prevents feedback from being made in a timely manner, which is very important for student achievement.

The findings of this research are in line with the results of Forster's [43] study, where according to interviews conducted with teachers, the use of feedback on homework caused them difficulty and practicing it properly. One of the factors that made it difficult for or hindered teachers to use the feedback properly was the large number of students, which correlates with our study.

### 6.2. Teachers' Approach for Effective Homework.
Teachers' approach to homework is a strong point observed in the study. Teachers show many reasons for their approach to tasks. The reason they give homework is for the student to engage in homework, to gain work and responsibility habits, reinforce learning units, foster research and creativity, and assess students' knowledge.

The results provided by this study are consistent with many other studies [3, 7, 11, 31, 44], which have shown the importance of the professional development of teachers and the connection of this development with the teachers' approach to the effective implementation of homework.

Holland et al. [39] showed that the purpose of homework according to teachers is presented as a variety of goals for

homework. The main goals found in this study are to train students for practical work, to develop work ethic, and to make students independent and accountable.

On the other hand, Hassaan [5] presented important results, some of which are related to study, such as preparing for the next lesson and reviewing the material learned in class. The same goals are also found in the study conducted by Baş et al. [14] where the authors explain that homework can be assigned for guiding purposes, such as practice, review, reinforcement, and research.

*6.3. Parents' and Students' Views on Homework Assignments.* In terms of results for teachers, students, and parents, they find homework very necessary. Although parents support their children with homework, they constantly point out that their children are too busy with homework. Based on the opinions of parents, children spend many hours on homework and as a result, they do not have free time to play, so this is also a challenge that parents see as a burden for their children.

According to them, children are so busy with homework that neither weekends nor holidays are excluded. They constantly emphasize that they are for homework, but not too much. Even the study conducted by Kukk et al. [45] proved that parents believe that the volume of tasks that their children work on is too large and they do not have enough time to use their free time.

Parents see teacher–parent and student cooperation very necessary. For any ambiguity and stagnation of children in homework, they consider it very important to have constant communication with the teacher.

According to Cooper [17], when parents are involved in homework, they increase their children's appreciation for their education and express positive attitudes toward them. Another challenge that parents face when engaging in homework is homework instructions. They state that it often happens that they do not understand the tasks the teacher has asked their child to do, so they are forced to seek the help of teachers to better clarify the homework.

According to Huisman [6], teachers need to keep in mind that parents may not have the knowledge to help their children with homework. Finally, the results obtained from the interviews show that the factors that affect the effectiveness of homework are numerous, starting from the teacher's approach to homework, the standard of homework, the time that students spend on homework, giving clear instructions on homework, the number of students in the class, the daily schedule at school, giving feedback, and genuine cooperation with parents. All these factors are closely related to each other, so the lack of one factor makes it impossible to effectively manage homework; therefore, this issue also highlights the need for coordination and cooperation of all actors who are an integral part of this important dimension in the education system.

## 7. Conclusion

In the end, the research recommends that homework should be guided by a clear policy formed by policymakers, teachers, and parents. The education system should place homework within the framework of a homework policy that clearly articulates useful expectations, guidelines, and advice. Setting a standard for homework should be focused on the purpose of homework, the creation of homework, the time that students should spend on homework, providing feedback on homework tasks, and on cooperation with parents.

However, the idea of setting a standard and policy should not be misused to create a reality in which teachers' autonomy is diminished. Teachers should be able to define their approach for developing effective homework practices that are integral and meaningful to the teaching and learning process. This standard and policy should, therefore, not lead to the establishment of uniformity and defined actions that teachers should follow in managing students' homework in a template manner.

The inclusion of homework as part of daily practices requires a comprehensive approach to the preparation of teachers for professional development related to the real implementation of homework in primary education. Moreover, the implementation of the change from the current situation to the desired situation also implies the need for effective homework practices to be treated from the perspective of being a teacher and aspects of the functioning of the school and the education system.

The processing and filtering of the current reality of homework practices along with the reality of individual, organizational, and systemic dimensions of the teacher's work clearly defines the path to be followed by the development of homework assignments and practices by teachers. In these circumstances of managing change from the current situation, the need has arisen to perceive this change as a project in itself, which in fact is no more than managing change of teaching practice in a subsector and in which principle does not differ from the perception of teacher orientation in the task. Therefore, homework policy and the standard are seen only as a transition toward strengthening teachers' new approach to homework and integrating effective practices as part of teachers' professional identity and routine reality.

Only then will teachers continue to analyze their practice in view of continuous improvement in the field of homework. Such a model could be used as a generic model to understand and manage the transformation of teachers' professional practice.

This study has implications for institutions that create educational policies to engage experts in the provision of training related to homework. Among other things, the school should take initiatives to create an adequate standard that is suitable for the level of primary classes. Also, this study has implications for teachers to understand their role in creating a real standard for practicing their duties in comprehensive education, where the benefits will be for both students and parents. Likewise, teachers should undergo adequate training for homework in order to develop their skills for the effectiveness of homework.

## Data Availability

Data supporting this research article are available from the corresponding author or first author on reasonable request.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflicts of interest.

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