Article

Homework's Implications for the Well-Being of Primary School Pupils—Perceptions of Children, Parents, and Teachers

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Abstract: Teachers and educational researchers explore various approaches to make homework more engaging and enjoyable, intending to improve the well-being and academic performance of primary school students. The study aimed to identify practices with positive and negative effects on students' well-being when doing homework. The views of those involved in giving, doing, and assessing homework were captured from three perspectives, namely, teachers, students, and parents. In May–June 2022, six online focus groups were conducted with the participation of 13 teachers, 11 parents, and 16 primary school students from a Romanian school. The thematic analysis identified the homework that the children (do not) like; their reactions when they receive, do, and are assessed for such homework; and suggestions on how to improve the homework. The results revealed that homework assignments that make young schoolchildren feel capable, effective, appreciated, and rewarded; homework done in teams in the form of competitions or games; parental involvement in collaborative homework; and homework with creative elements are effective ways that contribute to the well-being of primary school pupils when doing homework. Repetitive, lengthy, tedious, overloaded homework generates frustration, discouragement, and emotional reactions such as crying, abandonment, anxiety, and sleep deprivation.

Keywords: homework; pupil well-being; primary education; focus group

1. Introduction

Homework can be characterized as a pedagogical tool used by teachers to engage students in learning outside the classroom, involving all educational actors: teachers, students, and parents [1–3]. Assigning homework is a common practice of teachers internationally [4], and doing homework provides an opportunity to practice and apply concepts learned in class and to develop study habits that will be useful during and after the school years [5]. Homework can serve as a means for teachers to assess student progress and communicate with parents about their children's academic performance [6]. Homework provides children with the experience of developing positive beliefs, responsible attitudes and behaviors [7], intellectual work skills, and self-management skills, especially in primary education, and it is necessary for developing key competencies [8,9].

In recent years, educational research and development has focused on the emotional and well-being development of students, in addition to improving their academic achievement [10–12]. Factors that provide students well-being when doing homework have been identified [12,13]. Various ways of assigning homework have been shown to make it more attractive and to enhance students' well-being when they do it: diversifying homework so that it meets students' needs and interests, setting tasks that are meaningful and do not demotivate them, assigning homework only when it can be justified that the tasks are beneficial, and creating a learning environment that supports the development of motivation and avoiding procrastination [8,12,14]. Well-designed homework has the potential to enhance children's learning and development [10]. However, research has focused more

on the contribution of homework to improving students' academic performance and less on the 'price' at which this performance is achieved, i.e., how the well-being of children and their families is affected by doing homework [7,8,10,15,16].

Studies describe student well-being as a positive emotional state that contributes to life satisfaction and is indicated by happiness, engagement, participation, and a sense of well-being at school [17,18]. Well-being is a complex and multidimensional concept, defined by attributes that highlight both its presence and absence, such as positive emotions; social relationships; the lack of negative emotions; engagement with school [19]; socio-emotional or mental health; quality of life [20]; being influenced by factors such as interpersonal factors, achievement [21], self-concept [22], motivation for learning, and performance [13,23,24]; or being influenced by factors such as school conditions, social relationships, means for self-fulfillment, and health status, all being brought together in the model of ensuring well-being in school [25]. The eco-social contexts in which children develop, primarily family and school, constantly and dynamically feed well-being or lack thereof, as the theory of child well-being explains [26], highlighting the evolutionary, dynamic nature of this construct [26,27].

Various factors can affect well-being, such as sleep deprivation; increased stress and pressure; and depriving children of play and leisure time, which affects social relationships [28]. Pupils' well-being is influenced by homework, which is the main source of stress for young school children [9].

Doing homework can lead to conflict in the family [29], especially when it is overloaded, repetitive, unattractive, or given as a punishment, as is sometimes the case for homework in Romania [30], which is why it is the subject of multiple controversies and positions calling for its elimination [8,10]. Excessive stress caused by the amount and nature of homework has an impact on a person's ability to remember information and make decisions [31]. Homework stress also influences children's sleep, and research suggests that staying up late to study is one of the main risk factors most associated with severe fatigue and depression [31,32].

From the perspective of parents' attitudes to supporting children in doing homework, we can speak of a continuum that has at its extremes parents who burden children with homework demands, wanting as much homework as possible, versus parents who are not interested in homework or who consider it to affect students' free and restorative time, being unnecessary. The quality of parental involvement in homework has been positively associated with students' academic performance and well-being [17], as evidenced by both the provision of a supportive learning environment and their attitude towards school and the contribution of homework to children's development [33–35]. Despite studies demonstrating that parents have a beneficial influence when students do homework, there is research that has shown that parental involvement in homework has not contributed to improved student academic achievement [36–39] but has contributed to boosting/lowering their children's well-being through their attitudes towards doing homework, being stimulating, encouraging, punitive, or derogatory. Especially when we are talking about parents who want a lot of homework and are very demanding and competitive, or parents at the opposite pole who are disinterested and reject the idea of homework, the impact on children's well-being can be negative [40,41]. Some parents would like to be involved in their children's homework but lack sufficient training or resources, which is why there are attitudes against homework seen as a source of increasing social and educational inequalities [38–40].

Given all these controversies and the fact that research has been less than eloquent in highlighting the views of all three actors involved in giving, doing, and assessing homework, about which homework assignments make children feel good by doing them, or, on the contrary, affect their well-being, through the present study we captured the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents about which homework assignments (do not) appeal to students. We captured, from their opinions, both situations in which doing homework harms pupils when they do it, and homework that makes them feel better,

homework that pupils (dis)like. The three actors interviewed also offered suggestions for improving educational practices in providing attractive, feel-good homework.

1.1. Homework—Perspectives of Students, Teachers, and Parents

Homework is a bridge between students, parents, and school, but mostly it is the part of children's education to which parents have the most access [10,34,42]. It is the way for parents to see what is being done at school, as well as to have benchmarks on their children's actual performance.

Homework has the potential to enhance children's learning and development, contributing both to the consolidation of intellectual work techniques and basic skills and to the growth of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-confidence; once it is done autonomously, they have a sense of duty accomplished, responsibility fulfilled, and a job well done [7,10,43], attributes that circumscribe well-being.

Primary school students appreciate the situations in which homework is given and completed that makes them feel good. Pupils note their usefulness and necessity, pointing out that the feedback they receive from the teacher when marking them is a stimulus to consolidate knowledge and increase confidence in what they have learned. When they do not receive feedback on homework, students feel that they are working without validation of their work [19]. They like to do homework when it is diverse so that it meets their needs and interests, when they have received meaningful assignments justifying the usefulness and benefit of doing them when they receive homework that highlights their interests and inclinations, when it satisfies their curiosity, when they can choose what to do, and when they can make decisions and give a personal grade [8,15,33]. Homework should also not be assigned if it goes beyond what students can do independently; for repetitive, monotonous, or long homework, students point out that they do not like to do such homework [10,15,34]. Students are more likely to be distracted when they consider their homework to be boring, leading to a negative emotional response on their part [44].

Several studies have demonstrated the relevance of emotions in homework completion: negative emotions, such as anxiety, lack of concentration, fear, and procrastination, affect students' academic achievement and well-being, while positive emotions support awareness, attention and coping, self-efficacy, self-confidence, and a sense of competence [45,46]. The longer-term benefits of homework for students may not be improved performance in targeted subjects but instead may be the development of good study practices and attitudes; the development of attitudes that promote positive learning behavior, self-confidence, and self-discipline as it requires unsupervised work; and the skills of time organization, curiosity, and problem-solving [7,14,15].

In addition to teaching and organizing classroom activities, teachers help to shape the character of students and provide examples of positive behavior, stimulation, and challenge [7]. Their support in doing homework involves several actions, including empowering students and motivating them by clarifying their purpose, relevance, and usefulness, as well as their manner of completion, assessment criteria, rewards, and positive reinforcement [13]. Teachers have discussed the different characteristics of quality homework, listing short homework, tailored to students' availability [35], which arouses their interest; helps them to understand, discover, and master the ecosystem they are part of; and develops life skills [8,33]. Despite most teachers' concern for children's mental and physical well-being when doing homework, some teachers are convinced that homework has no impact on children's social-emotional health [31,34].

Parents feel that homework brings them together with their children and is the way they have contact with what is being done at school, but it interferes with family time [31,36,43]. Also, according to parents, homework keeps students more prepared and active, and through homework, they observe whether or not their child has understood the class lessons and thus they can have benchmarks on their child's competencies [9], being able to support them in achieving competency and validating it. When parents are

involved in doing homework, children receive feedback and observe appreciation of their efforts and at the same time feel motivated to continue working [9,13].

1.2. Homework Practices in Primary Education in Romania

The views of parents, teachers, or pupils on the role and contribution of homework are also influenced by socio-cultural practices regarding homework in different countries.

In primary education (grades 0–4, ages 6–11), there is no homework in the preparatory class, or grade 0. Grades 0–2 constitute the fundamental acquisition cycle (FAC), and grades 3–4 are the developmental cycle (DC). Primary teachers teach all subjects taught throughout the five years, except religion, foreign language, and physical education. In this way, the primary teacher knows each child and their progress very well, following them every day throughout the five years. In addition, in primary school, children can also attend an optional after-school program for a fee, where they frequently do their homework. Often this program is run by the class teacher.

In Romania, homework is seen as a source of increasing performance; reinforcing learning; consolidating skills; stimulating curiosity, motivation, and responsibility; developing the ability to work independently; encouraging leisure learning; and developing teamwork skills [30]. Homework, however, is also a great source of stress, as it is often seen as burdensome, unattractive, repetitive, difficult, discouraging, and lacking in explanations or clarifications offered from the classroom by the teacher, who is often perceived as uncaring [30].

Teachers, students, and parents in Romania say that homework helps to better understand what is being taught in class and have different perspectives on its role, content, and duration. Teachers give homework for consolidation and deepening, while students want differentiated, creative homework. Parents state that homework is sometimes too tedious, but they support the reinforcement of what is done at school [30].

1.3. Present Study

Given the pros and cons of homework, because it has both positive and negative effects on children's well-being when they do it, it is important to identify the negative effects to ameliorate them, capitalizing on the positive ones to ensure children's well-being. To this end, six focus groups were organized, with the participation of teachers, children's parents, and primary school pupils from a secondary school in Romania. These meetings aimed to identify practices with negative impact and practices with positive impact on pupils' well-being when doing homework.

We attempt to contribute to clarifying the issue of the relationship between homework and children's well-being by highlighting the views and observations of teachers, parents, and children on their homework and its effects. The data analysis sought to answer the following questions:

(1)   Which practices make students feel good, and which make them feel bad when doing homework?
(2)   What types of homework improve student well-being?

2. Methodology

2.1. Design, Data Collection Methods, and Procedures

A descriptive, qualitative research design was used in this study.

Data collection took place between 5 May and 8 June 2022 and was conducted online through focus group discussions via the Google Meet platform. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis based on the informed consent of participants and caregivers.

The sampling technique was a snowball, in the sense that the teachers who participated in the interview provided access to parents and students from all primary grades at one secondary school in Romania. All 17 teachers in the school were contacted, and 13 agreed to volunteer to participate. Of these, 4 teachers were asked, one for each primary school class where homework is given, I-IV, to send a message to parents in their class groups, but

only 11 parents volunteered. Prior to interviewing the students, we contacted the parents of the children beforehand to complete the informed consent, so 16 students participated voluntarily.

The focus group discussions were conducted based on a semi-structured interview grid developed by the researchers by referring to the factors found in the literature, previously mentioned, and by drawing on approaches from complementary studies [8,47–50]. The methodological recommendations of Bradley and Harrel [48], and Seidman [49] for conducting semi-structured interviews and focus groups, respectively, were followed.

The semi-structured interview guide aimed at capturing aspects common to all respondents related to teacher involvement, parent involvement, homework that feels good, homework liked and disliked by the children, student reactions, checking and evaluating homework, and suggestions for improvement, but also differentiating aspects that highlight the perspective of the respective group of children/parents/teachers. All participants answered questions such as: What homework do pupils like to do best? [8,10,33,51]; Which homework gave the children a feeling of well-being, enthusiasm, and confidence in their strengths? [9,10,12]; Which homework do pupils dislike doing? [10,33]; What are pupils' reactions when they fail or don't know how to complete homework? [27]; How is homework assessed by the teacher? [6]; How do you get involved in doing homework? [35,52,53]; What suggestions do you have for improving homework practice? [8,10,33,35,51]; How are teachers involved in doing and assessing homework? [7,12].

The meetings lasted between 35 and 88 min and were moderated by the first author. Before the start of the interviews, participants were assured that anonymity would be maintained and the information obtained was strictly confidential and used for research purposes only, with consent being sought for audio/video recording, where appropriate, of online group discussions. Participants answered all questions and took turns speaking or jotting down ideas in the chat. We captured their candid views on homework from the point of view of teachers, children, and parents, which allowed us to identify nuanced data, with the possibility of comparing the views of educational actors.

2.2. Participants

The 40 participants in the study brought together, from a three-dimensional perspective, the voices of educational actors directly involved in giving, doing, and assessing homework: teachers (n = 13), parents with children in primary education (n = 11), and pupils (n = 16) in all primary grades. All participating teachers were female and had teaching experience between 5 and 38 years. Of the 11 parents who participated in the study, 9 participants were female and 2 participants were male. The majority of the parents had a higher education (9 parents had a university degree and 2 had only completed high school). A total of 13 girls and 3 boys participated in the study. Of the 16 participating pupils, 10 attend the after-school program. The performance levels of the children were high (6 children), medium (8 children), and low (2 children).

As homework practices and the difficulty and volume of homework increase gradually as students progress through school, we sought to capture the views and experiences of stakeholders in all primary grades. We grouped participants in the focus group discussions into two distinct groups for each category: those in the fundamental acquisition cycle (grades I-II, FAC) and the developmental cycle (grades III-IV, DC). We sought to include both students who participate in after-school activities and children who do not participate in such non-formal activities. The 6 online meetings were conducted as follows: 1 meeting with teachers who teach in FAC (6 participants), 1 online meeting with teachers who teach in DC (7 participants), 1 meeting with parents whose children are in FAC (6 participants), 1 meeting with parents whose children are in DC (5 participants), 1 meeting with students in FAC (8 participants), and 1 meeting with students in DC (8 participants).

Interviews with teachers lasted approximately 88 minutes, those with parents lasted between 44 (FAC) and 75 min (DC), and those with children lasted between 35 (FAC) and 69 min (DC). Children in grades 1 and 2 responded shyly, afraid of saying the wrong thing,

and there was a clear lack of practice in giving their opinions on homework. Their older peers, those in grades 3 and 4, were more courageous, expressed themselves more correctly and coherently, and showed creativity when asked for homework suggestions. They used the sentence "If I were a teacher, I would give homework as follows. . .". For the students, the questions were shortened and more clearly worded, and some of the questions were not asked at all, as there was a lack of patience and the researcher had to adapt to the situation. The parent interviews were very interesting, with parents not being critical of homework practices. The teachers recounted their classroom experiences a lot and tended to get lost in the details, but with the researcher's help, they returned to the topic at hand.

2.3. Data Analysis

Inductive thematic analysis was used to process the empirical data gathered in the 6 focus group interviews. Thematic analysis is one of the most widely used approaches to qualitative data analysis [54] and, according to Clarke and Braun [55], this analysis provides accessible and systematic procedures for extracting codes and themes from qualitative data.

After transcribing the interviews and becoming familiar with the collected data, excerpts from the transcripts were organized into categories, searching for connecting threads and patterns, generating initial codes, searching for themes grouped into themes and subthemes, and defining and naming the themes, in congruence with the factors identified in the literature [48]. The themes were determined according to the purpose of the work: homework that feels good, liked homework, disliked homework, children's reactions when doing homework, suggestions for improvement, and teachers' and parents' involvement in doing homework. Codes were determined based on participants' responses inductively. After grouping the data and codes obtained, we named the homework for the coded data in each document separately. After coding, using MaxQDA version 2022, we analyzed the data in the Analysis, Code Frequencies function; entered subthemes; and selected the calculation of ratios for each theme. The derived codes can be seen in Tables 1–3 for each category of respondents.

Table 1. Codes derived from the thematic analysis with students.

Theme	Subtheme
Homeworks not popular with students	Homework given in the non-preferred subject; A lot of effort; Difficult homework; Long and tedious homework; Repetitive homework; Homework with limits.
Students' reactions when they don't know how to do homework	They feel bad and blame themselves when they forget information; They are disappointed; They get upset when they can't play; It builds frustration; Take a break and resume afterward; Ask parents to help them; They take an interest in solving it; They lose confidence in their strength.
Feel-good homeworks	Homework that involves the use of imagination; Homework that appeals to real life; Homework that makes children stand out; Creative homework; Homework that increases their confidence in their strengths; Homework is given a choice; Homework containing reading elements.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Theme	Subtheme
Homeworks students love	Homework containing elements of reading or writing, preferably with creative elements; Homework that makes children feel valued; The preparation homework for the evaluation, with self-evaluation grid; Homework containing exercises in mathematics; Attractive homework; Short homework; Projects.
Checking and assessing homework	Students check their homework with their classmate; Positive or negative verbal praise is given; Teachers reward for fairness; Pluses and minuses are given; Homework is not checked daily and students become sad; Homework is checked individually.
Suggestions for improvement	Assigning creative homework (decoupage, gluing, painting); Making homework in the form of a game; Organising competitions; Documenting and developing a project on a given homework; Homework containing elements of literary creation; Dividing the class into three groups and assigning three types of homework; Creating cards with homework ideas.

Table 2. Codes derived from the thematic analysis with teachers.

Theme	Subtheme
Homeworks not popular with students	Homework with imposed limits; Repetitive homework; Long and tedious homework; Homework that takes a lot of effort; Homework is considered difficult; Homework considered uninteresting; Homework that put them in difficulty.
Students' reactions when they don't know how to carry out homework	He flatly refuses to do them; Children cry; They get demotivated very quickly; They get discouraged and ask their parents to help them; They admit they don't know, but try; Child gets angry; They take an interest in solving them; I honestly don't know; They are disappointed; Child takes a break and resume afterward; She leaves her notebook at home with intent; Students ask for help.

Table 2. *Cont.*

Theme	Subtheme
Feel-good homeworks	Homework that involves the use of imagination; Homework that makes students feel valued; Homework that appeals to real life; Homework that is related to practical things; Homework to be checked with the teacher; Homework negotiated with the teacher; Homework in which a funny story is found; The projects they present to the class; Homework for which they are rewarded; Replacing the word 'homework' with something else; Team homework; Homework of investigation on a specific topic; Creative homework; Easy homework that is effortless to complete; Homework in the form of debates; Differentiated homework; Homework that increases their confidence in their strengths.
Homework students love	Practical homework; Homework that they do themselves; Homework that can be solved in a relatively short time; Attractive homework; Homeworks containing creative elements; Homework in the form of maths exercises; Homework in the form of a game; Homeworks containing elements of reading or writing; Homework that sparks curiosity; Project homework; Homework appreciated by teachers and colleagues; Homeworks that are carried through; Homework that doesn't involve much effort; Homework understood in class; Team homework; Homeworks of investigation.
Checking and assessing homework	I give positive and constructive verbal feedback; Stickers, stickers, and dots are awarded as rewards; They motivate students with good grades; Evaluate homework by awarding grades; They check and correct their homework upfront; Correct the homework, then put "seen"; They check students off homework when they take them to the blackboard; They check and correct their homework individually.
Suggestions for improvement	Homework in game form; Presentation of attractive material from the Internet; Alternating homework; Making worksheets more attractive; Replacing the word 'homework' with something else; Rewarding students; Efficient time organization; Diversifying homework; Children's choice of homework; Good combination of modern and traditional methods; Creating a suitable environment without distracting elements; Using digital applications; Parents don't interfere in students' homework; Creative homework (decoupage, gluing, painting); Homework in the form of competitions.

Table 3. Codes derived from the thematic analysis with parents.

Theme	Subtheme
Homeworks not popular with students	Homework that put them in difficulty; Difficult homework, above the student's level of knowledge; Homework given in a non-preferred subject; Homework they put a lot of effort into; Homework that makes students feel insecure about their strengths; Homework with limits; Homework that is not appreciated.
Students' reactions when they don't know how to do homework	The students resume their work after calm discussions, although they are disappointed; Students cry when they can't cope; Students are disappointed when they don't do well; Students are stressed; Students are losing patience; Students get demotivated very quickly; Students flatly refuse to do them; Students gather frustrations; Students take a break and restart afterward; Students get discouraged and ask parents to help them.
Feel-good homeworks	Preparatory homework for competitions; Homework to prepare for classroom assessments; Homework that makes children feel valued; Homework that involves the use of imagination; Homework that is related to practical things; Homework done in teams.
Homework students love	Maths exercises; Homework involving elements of reading; Homework in the form of projects; Homework that brings creative elements; Practical homework; Team homework; Homework that is appreciated by teachers.
Checking and assessing homework	Homework is not checked daily and students become sad; Some parents don't know how to assess and check; Rewarding with polka dots and stickers; Homework is assessed and checked especially at after-school; Homework is checked, then marked; Homework is checked, but not graded daily.
Suggestions for improvement	Parents refrain; Homework in game form; Team competition; Participation of teachers in training courses; Children should give suggestions; Story context; Using digital applications; Team projects; Homework regarding the reality of our days; Homework in the form of an experiment; Homework in the form of competitions.

The percentages to be listed were calculated by referring to the responses of all respondents in a category of respondents, structured in separate tables by three groups of participants. For example, 16 participating students means 100%. That is, the homework was mentioned by different participants in the same group. We chose to list the percentages to show the intensity and the extent to which the issue is mentioned.

3. Research Findings

The data are grouped thematically for each of the three groups of participants from whom we obtained data from different perspectives, by schooling cycle, FAC, and DC.

From the thematic analysis of the data, the following forms of homework emerged: homework that feels good, homework liked by students, homework disliked by students, students' reactions when doing homework, checking and evaluating homework, and suggestions for improvement. From the listed homework assignments, we deduced practices of giving and evaluating that provide primary school students with a good feeling when doing homework, highlighted by all three categories of respondents. Thus, homework assignments that make pupils feel appreciated, those in the form of a game or competition, those that are collaborative in teams, and those that contain creative elements were highlighted by both children and teachers or parents as giving children a sense of well-being.

Tables 4 and 5 show how homework can be detrimental to students' well-being, and in Tables 6–9, we note how homework can be assigned and graded to have a positive effect on students' well-being. From the comparative presentation of the data, it can be seen that the pupils' opinions differed slightly from the opinions of parents and teachers.

3.1. Homework Not Liked by Students

Students, parents, and teachers, regardless of the age of the children, unanimously stated that students particularly dislike difficult homework, and their reactions when they are unable to do it were indicative of the extent of discomfort, which ranged from discouragement and procrastination to interruption, refusal, crying, etc. Other factors of discomfort are homework in subjects they do not prefer, being repetitive, long and boring, or those with imposed limits.

The tasks that students dislike are those that require too much effort, are long, and that they do not know how to do, whatever their nature (Table 4):

Table 4. Homework disliked by students.

Learning Cycle	Students	Parents	Teachers
Classes I–II	- homework in the subject in which they are not doing well (61.5%); - for which they put a lot of effort (23.1%); - considered difficult (15.4%).	- that put them in difficulty (30%); - difficult, above their level of knowledge (30%); - in a discipline they do not prefer (20%); - for which they put a lot of effort (20%).	- repetitive (35.7%); - long and tiring (28.6%); - for which a lot of effort is put in (14.3%); - considered difficult (14.3%); - considered uninteresting (7.1%).
Classes III–IV	- for which they put a lot of effort (38.5%); - long and tiring (30.8%); - difficult (15.4%); - repetitive (7.7%); - with imposed limits (7.7%).	- for which they put a lot of effort (42.9%); - make students feel insecure about their strengths (14.3%); - with imposed limits (14.3%); - that are not appreciated (14.3%); - in a particular discipline they do not prefer (14.3%).	- for which they put effort (30.8%); - long and tiring (23.1%); - that put them in difficulty (23.1%); - repetitive (15.4%); - with imposed limits (e.g., compositions with given homework or a limited number of lines) (7.7%).

Some of the children directly named the subject in which they do not like doing homework, regardless of the nature of the homework or whether they can get immediate help: "I don't like homework in maths because it is very boring and tiring. I don't like maths" (third-grade student, after-school).

However, there are also issues related to their intellectual hygiene and their degree of tiredness, wherein the discomfort is not related to the nature of their homework but to their capacity to work: "When I don't feel well or I'm tired, I don't want to do my homework, I don't have the energy" (fourth-grade student, no after-school).

Also, regardless of the nature of the homework, if they did not master the subject well enough, they were insecure, feeling uncomfortable doing homework "I say the ones they feel insecure about, for example, English. Homework they are insecure about they try to avoid". (fourth-grader parent, after-school).

Teachers, while naming homework that children do not like, tended to blame them, rather than identifying whether they are assigning homework poorly, generating negative effects: "They don't like to tell stories in writing or repeatedly practice the same type of exercises. I think they hate homework because of technology. It's hard homework because they don't have phone time. That's why I feel sorry for them". (third-grade teacher, after-school).

At the same time, teachers are aware that they cannot diversify the homework to suit every pupil, and it is not possible for one form of homework, whatever its nature, to be liked by all pupils, as they have different skills and inclinations: "It depends on the children, their abilities, their condition. The one who is good at writing compositions will like them, he will enjoy them. The one who likes maths will enjoy repetitive exercises. They know that homework is given and that they have to do it, but it depends on the child. I don't think any of us give homework that anyone ever doesn't like, with how much diversity there is out of 20-something kids". (fourth-grade teacher, after-school).

3.2. Students' Negative Reactions When Doing Homework

Students' reactions when they do homework they dislike range from self-blame—the most common, regardless of age—followed by disappointment in younger students and frustration in older students. When students do their homework, their reactions are closely observed by their parents, who confirm in the same order the most common reactions of their children. Teachers seem not to have a deep understanding of the effects on children, indicating mostly refusal to do homework, but also many other, somewhat diffuse reactions, such as deliberately forgetting homework. Pupils find it harder to manage their emotions about not doing homework, and parental support is needed, they report.

Especially when they fail to achieve them, students' reactions are eloquent, with negative emotions, but also, gradually, with resilience, depending on their self-control ability (Table 5).

The inability to do homework leads to frustration: "When I fail to do homework I get upset because I can't go out and play with my sister. I have to think about it". (first-grade student, no after-school), but this can also be compounded by low self-esteem, especially if they are doing them at the same time as other peers and other peers are coping: "Same feeling, frustration, at least for the moment. They become distrustful of their strengths and maybe a bit inferior to their peers who always manage to solve them on their own" (fourth-grader parent, after-school).

The more resilient children manage to overcome feelings of ineffectiveness when they do not get their homework right or when they do it too slowly, blaming themselves, or, sometimes with the support of parents or peers, reconsider: "I get a bit upset when I don't succeed at what I set out to do, but then I realize that if I had tried harder, I would have finished. We have a very intelligent colleague who writes very slowly, but we try to help her too because she is a bit behind, even though she has a lot of ideas". (third-grade student, after-school); "He's disappointed, stressed that he's not succeeding. If he gets something wrong, he takes a break and then goes back to his homework. I explained to him that every mistake is part of learning. If we knew how to do everything right, we wouldn't have anything to learn. In general, it's a calm atmosphere" (first-grader parent, no after-school).

Table 5. Negative reactions of students when doing homework.

Learning Cycle	Students	Parents	Teachers
Classes I–II	- feel bad and blame themselves for forgetting (50.0%); - are disappointed (37.5%); - get upset that they can't go to play because they can't finish promptly (12.5%).	- after calm discussions, they resume work even though they are disappointed (33.3%); - students cry when forced to do homework (16.7%); - students are disappointed (8.3%); - take a break and restart after (8.3%); - are stressed (8.3%); - lose patience (8.3%); - demotivate very quickly (8.3%); - categorically refuse to do them (8.3%).	- categorically refuse to do them (25.0%); - students cry when forced to do their homework (16.7%); - they intentionally forget their notebook at home (16.7%); - demotivate very quickly (8.3%); - get discouraged and ask their parents to help them (8.3%); - admit they don't know, but try (8.3%); - get angry (8.3%); - take an interest in solving them (8.3%).
Classes III–IV	- feel bad and blame themselves for forgetting (36.4%); - gather frustrations (27.3%); - take a break and resume after (9.1%); - get discouraged and ask their parents to help them (9.1%); - take an interest in solving (9.1%); - lose confidence in their strength (9.1%).	- they gather frustration and close themselves off (50.0%); - I take a break and restart after (20.0%); - after calm discussions resume their work (10.0%); - get discouraged and ask their parents to help them (10.0%); - lose confidence in their strength (10.0%).	- honestly say they don't know (16.7%); - refuse to solve their homework (16.7%); - are disappointed (16.7%); - get discouraged and ask their parents to help them (16.7%); - take a break and resume after (8.3%); - cry when forced to do their homework (8.3%); - they intentionally forget their notebook at home (8.3%); - students ask for help (8.3%).

Teachers are more adamant about the discomfort created by the inability to do homework, insisting that it be done: "My students have different reactions from carelessness to crying, depending on their emotionality and conscientiousness. We have come up with a rule, if they fail to do a homework assignment one day, they do double homework the next day, but not to leave it undone". (first-grade teacher).

3.3. Homework That Makes Children Feel Good

Students say they feel best when they do homework that contains creative elements or involves the use of imagination. Conversely, parents and teachers say children respond best to homework that makes them feel valued, appreciated, and confident.

Surprisingly, FAC parents see their children happy when preparing for national competitions or assessments. But the argument is that children achieve objective scores immediately after taking the test, and this awakens their joy of a job well done and gives them confidence in their strengths.

Teachers list a wider variety of homework that makes children feel good, some of which are also highlighted by the other categories of respondents.

Beyond the support given, the enjoyment of doing homework is influenced by the purpose and nature of the homework, as shown in the opinions recorded in Table 6:

Table 6. Feel-good homework.

Learning Cycle	Students	Parents	Teachers
Classes I–II	- contain creative elements (visual arts or text composition) (50.0%); - who value them and feel appreciated (16.7%); - reading (8.3%); - by choice (8.3%).	- those preparing for competitions (71.4%); - those in preparation for classroom assessments (28.6%).	- involve the use of imagination (22.2%); - homework that makes students feel valued (22.2%); - appeal to real life (11.1%); - are related to practical things (11.1%); - homework to be checked with the teacher (11.1%); - negotiated with the teacher (11.1%); - in which a funny story is found (11.1%).
Classes III–IV	- involve the use of imagination (30.8%); - value them and feel appreciated (23.1%); - creative (23.1%); - increasing their self-confidence (15.4%); - appeal to real life (7.7%).	- make them feel appreciated (62.5%); - involves the use of imagination (12.5%); - are related to practical things (12.5%); - carried out as a team (12.5%).	- value them and feel appreciated (21.1%); - the projects they present to the class (15.8%); - for which they are rewarded (10.5%); - involve the use of imagination (5.3%); - homework that appeals to real life (5.3%); - changing the word "homework" to something else (5.3%); - in teams (5.3%); - investigation on a specific topic (5.3%); - creative (5.3%); - easy, which is effortless (5.3%); - in the form of debates (5.3%); - differentiated (5.3%); - increasing their self-confidence (5.3%).

Children feel good when they are motivated and stimulated by homework: "I like homework in subject Romanian language, especially when it gives us to compose texts based on pictures, a few words, or a given title. I have a lot of fun when I do it because I like to imagine things and then write them down. That text becomes very interesting" (fourth-grade student, after-school).

Parents say that students feel good when they do homework and can immediately assess the accuracy of their homework, but they want to develop digital skills in giving homework: "The homework where the tests for Comper appear, that is, the preparatory ones, because after checking them he sees that he scores high. This gave him a good feeling" (first-grader parent, after-school); "Maybe the homework for which they were rewarded and congratulated. My child also goes to programming classes, of course, age-appropriate. The homework is different in that they create computer games. I see it very differently, that he wants to do more. It's depending on how he catches the pleasure for a certain subject" (third-grader parent, no after-school).

Teachers encourage appreciation over criticism among students and are creative in assigning homework. They observe that negotiated homework, homework that develops their creativity, and homework that develops their digital skills are homework that makes pupils feel good: "From what I have observed, children are more enthusiastic about negotiated homework. They also like homework when they have compositions like describing their best friend or talking about a family member or favorite animal. Then I see enthusiasm from them" (second-grade teacher, after-school); "Creative homework is what I look for. I also gave creative individual homework. They filmed themselves and posted the videos on the platform. They were allowed to do homework with another person and to read a text creatively because they didn't realize how they read aloud. That's how they figured out where the mistakes are, and where they need to improve. In the presentation, I used the

technique of "two stars and a wish". The stars are two appreciations and the wish reflects what I would have liked to have seen. It prompts them to give as much real feedback as possible. It's easy to criticize, but it's harder to come up with a solution" (fourth-grade teacher, after-school).

3.4. Homework Students Like

Students particularly value reading and writing tasks, with older students scoring higher on compositions. Parents and teachers are more likely to point to (short) math exercises. These dominants, also influenced by the types of homework they receive most often, are equally emphasized for short, practical homework, homework in the form of a game for the youngest, and in the form of a project for the oldest. Teachers also say that students like homework that is completed, checked, and appreciated.

While gratification and a sense of efficacy give a sense of well-being and self-confidence, the homework that is most liked by students is highlighted by subjects, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Homework that students like.

Learning Cycle	Students	Parents	Teachers
Classes I–II	- in the form of reading or writing (35.7%); - contain creative elements (28.6%); - make them feel appreciated (14.3%); - preparation for evaluation (14.3%).	- Maths exercises (62.5%); - reading (25.0%); - projects (12.5%).	- practice (15.8%); - that they carry out on their own (15.8%); - are resolved in a relatively short time (15.8%); - attractive (10.5%); - contain creative elements (10.5%); - Maths exercises (10.5%); - in the form of gambling (10.5%); - reading or writing (5.3%); - arouse curiosity (5.3%).
Classes III–IV	- contain creative elements (35.3%); - reading (35.3%); - Maths exercises (11.8%); - attractive (5.9%); - short (5.9%); - projects (5.9%).	- Maths exercises (27%); - projects (18%); - bring creative elements (18%); - practice (9%); - team homework (9%); - are appreciated by teachers (9%).	- projects (27.3%); - appreciated by teachers and colleagues (13.6%); - short (13.6%); - are completed (9.2%); - involves creativity (9.1%); - not involving much effort (9.1%); - understood in the classroom (4.5%); - in teams (4.5%); - investigation (4.5%).

Students say they like homework based on their preferred subject, without thinking about what it is: "I like the subject Romanian communication the most. I like homework in communication the most" (first-grade student, after-school); "My favorite homework is in mathematics because I feel really good when I calculate the exercises, I just enjoy doing them. I am very happy" (third-grade student, no after-school).

The children's desire to be together and to strengthen their friendships with their classmates is noted by parents, who recognize that the pupils like projects where they work collaboratively in teams, they like short math assignments where they just mark the result: "Communication in Romanian, she likes the projects" (first-grader parent, no after-school); "Maths for sure-exercises where she only writes the result, where there is not much to write" (second-grader parent, after-school); "However, I think the homework she likes are the ones where they work together, there are fewer of them. They like those, the ones where they look for information and if they get together to work as a team, then it's even better" (fourth-grader parent, no after-school).

Teachers notice students' attraction to short, practical homework assignments, those that students complete on their own without help, homework assignments that encourage

them to search and use their imagination: "(...) practical homework, which they can solve by themselves and are attracted to because they know how to solve the task. It's much easier and quicker. If they have a worksheet to do they can solve it in 10 m. You need attractive homework, something that arouses their curiosity, different games, especially in maths, children are attracted by games" (first-grade teacher, after-school); "Mine too, I have seen that they are more attracted by projects where they can research, produce something. Then they are so proud. They like short homework. That's what they call them, short when they're easy, but if they don't like the lesson, however short the homework is, they find it long. It's a matter of the student's subjectivity" (fourth-grade teacher, after-school).

3.5. Checking and Assessing Homework

The main ways of assessing homework that (do not) make students feel good, as reported by teachers and students, are grades, positive and negative verbal assessments, rewards, or sanctions. Teachers mention that the assessment and checking of homework are of particular importance, resorting to checking it daily and most often giving positive verbal praise, or rewards and grades, as reinforcement and appreciation for the effort.

Parents are not aware of classroom assessment practices, they just see it being done, being written down in a notebook, believing they have some indication that it has been checked. They have only previously been able to appreciate those children like homework on which they receive immediate feedback because they can apply the accompanying assessment grid to tests and calculate the score, so children have real-time validation of the work they have done.

Students, on the other hand, appreciate being rewarded for their effort, as well as receiving praise and rewards. They like that they can also develop evaluative skills when they carry out pair assessment. Table 8 lists the effects and practices of homework assessment that (do not) feel good.

Teachers use motivational rewards and check homework with the whole class or individually: "I invented the Powerful 10. I told them that 10 was the top grade when I was a student and when I have to deal with really good homework, I also give them the Powerful 10 to motivate them. This 'Powerful 10' is a sticker" (first-grade teacher, no after-school), (third-grade teacher, after-school); "The children take turns showing me their homework, and if it's all right it gets applause, verbal and oral praise, and they enjoy it a lot". (first-grade teacher). Teachers say that pupils are happy when their homework is checked and assessed, which is also confirmed by children who say they are sad and disappointed if they have not had the opportunity to show and be appreciated for their work: "It rarely happens that I don't have time to check their homework. I like to show them that I care and I want to see if they understand the content they have gone through. When I fail to check homework, I can see they are disappointed". (second-grade teacher)

Table 8. Checking/assessing homework.

Learning Cycle	Students	Parents	Teachers
Classes I–II	- students correct their homework together with their classmates, guided by the teacher, and congratulate each other (38.5%); - positive or negative verbal comments are made (30.8%); - teachers give them rewards on checked homework, based on accuracy (15.4%); - homework is not checked daily and students become sad (7.7%); - they give themselves pluses and minuses (7.7%), being sure that they did (less/fairly) well.	- don't know how the assessment and verification is done, but are notified if problems occur (33%); - homework is assessed and checked, and students' work is validated (33%); - homework is not checked daily and students are sad, and disheartened (17%); - are rewarded with stickers and stickers, which are meant to make children happy (17%).	- give positive and constructive verbal feedback on homework (44.4%); - stickers, stickers as rewards (33.3%); - motivate students with good grades (22.2%).

Table 8. *Cont.*

Learning Cycle	Students	Parents	Teachers
Classes III–IV	- homework is checked and corrected individually (38.5%), bringing the satisfaction of a job well done; - students correct their homework together with their classmates, guided by the teacher, and congratulate each other (30.8%); - students don't get their homework checked every day and students get sad (7.7%); - give themselves pluses and minuses (23%), being confident that they did (less/fairly) well.	- do not know how homework is checked and assessed, but are notified if something is wrong (50.0%); - homework is checked, but no daily assessment is given (37.5%); - check, then make notes (12.5%).	- assess homework by awarding grades (33.3%); - check and correct their homework in front (33.3%); - correct the homework, then put "seen" (11.1%); - check students out of homework when they take them to the blackboard (11.1%); - checks and corrects their homework individually (11.1%).

Parents note the checking of homework: "Homework is checked in the vast majority of cases by ticks in the notebook, seen, I don't know how it's assessed, I don't have that much information on that side" (fourth-grader parent, no after-school). The state of well-being can be seen from what parents say about their children's enjoyment. Children show them at home that their work has been checked, appreciated, and validated.

3.6. Suggestions for Improving Educational Practices Regarding Homework

Suggestions for improving educational practices come from all sides, and students suggest creative homework (cutting, gluing, painting), wherein they will have homework in the form of a game. Older students have bolder ideas, such as creating worksheets with homework ideas, dividing the class into three groups with the possibility for students to choose from three types of homework, diversifying homework, having more attractive worksheets, and having projects on a particular theme.

Parents of FAC students want more homework in the form of games and story contexts than parents of DC students, who want homework with a reference to the reality of today, homework in the form of experiments, and homework where children can apply digital knowledge. Some parents feel they are not in a position to advise teachers.

Teachers seem to have no prominent suggestions, but rather varied suggestions, both in line with children's suggestions, but more homework in the form of play and artistic or literary creation, as well as suggestions for using digital resources. They suggest replacing the word "homework" with something else, alternating homework. Suggestions are documented in Table 9.

When asked for suggestions, older students (CD) put themselves in the teachers' shoes and imagined for a moment how they would do it. The pupils suggested giving homework in the form of projects on topics that the pupils like best, with a touch of creativity and group work: "If I were a teacher, I would give the children homework to research a certain topic and make a nice project about it. I would also give them homework to do some creative writing. Make it some fun homework, without so much writing and problems" (third-grade student, no after-school); "If I were a teacher, I would give the children as homework to create their own game and play afterward in the schoolyard or do a project on a theme, for example about animals or flowers. And I agree to give homework in groups, composition, poetry, drawing" (fourth-grade student, after-school).

Suggestions are not easily given by parents, and they think students are the ones who should give suggestions: "If you ask me, I'll give you another answer, we don't have to give suggestions to teachers. There are professional training courses for that and it is up to each teacher's ability to personalize their work. I think that students should be the ones who should ask for a certain way of working on homework. You work with them and we adapt" (first-grader parent, after-school). "I think every child is drawn to stories, to

drawings. It's all about method. As much as you can provide a story context, visually" (second-grader parent, after-school).

Table 9. Suggestions for improving educational practices.

Learning Cycle	Students	Parents	Teachers
Classes I–II	- creative homework (cutting, gluing, painting) (72.7%); - doing homework as a game (18.2%); - organization of team competitions (9.1%).	- some parents refrain and think teachers know better (33%); homework in the form of a game (22%); - team competition (11%); - participation in training courses (11%); - children should make suggestions, they are directly involved (11%); - story context (11%).	- creative homework (cutting, gluing, painting) (25.0%); - homework in the form of a game (16.7%); - presentation of attractive material on the Internet (16.7%); - alternating homework (16.7%); - making worksheets more attractive (16.7%); - replacing the word "homework" with something else (8.3%).
Classes III–IV	- homework in the form of a game (22.7%); - creative techniques (cutting, gluing, painting) (18.2%); - creative writing (13.6%); - documentation and elaboration of a project on a given homework (13.6%); - dividing the class into three groups and giving three types of homework (9.1%); -more attractive workplaces (9.1%); - creating cards with homework ideas (4.5%); - rewarding students (4.5%); - diversification of homework (4.5%);	- use of digital applications (25.0%); - homework in the form of a game (12.5%); - team projects (12.5%); - homework with a reference to modern-day reality (12.5%); - homework in the form of an experiment (12.5%); - homework in the form of competitions (12.5%); - some parents abstain (12.5%).	- rewarding students (12.5%); - better organization of after-school time (12.5%); - diversifying homework (12.5%); - children's choice of homework (6.3%); - a good combination of modern and traditional methods (6.3%); - creating a suitable environment, free of distracting elements (6.3%); -giving homework in the form of more attractive worksheets (6.3%); - use of digital applications (6.3%); - presentation of attractive material online (6.3%); - not permitting the parent to intervene directly in the students' homework (6.3%); - creative homework (cutting, gluing, painting) (6.3%); - homework in the form of competitions (6.3%); - homework in the form of a game (6.3%).

Teachers suggest that students enjoy doing homework on worksheets, which feature creative elements and homework that develop digital skills: "I've noticed that they like worksheets more than writing in a notebook. Just the day before yesterday I gave them a worksheet and at the end they had to color and they were happy. If they are accompanied by a little game, then they are more attractive. Since we've been working online, you should know that from 2nd grade onwards, homework can be given in PowerPoint. So you can also do presentations on the computer" (first-grade teacher, after-school); Teachers also encourage diversity and reward children who do their homework on time: "Diversity, let's not leave them in routines. Mine earned cards with a no-homework day. For assignments done on time and completely, they got rewards" (fourth-grade teacher, after-school).

4. Discussions

The current study was conducted in the context of a growing need to identify educational practices that help children feel cognitively, physically, and emotionally well when doing homework. The study aimed to identify feel-good practices and those that have negative effects on students' well-being when doing homework.

The analysis of the results obtained provides a series of data on the practices and assessments of all educational actors, teachers, pupils, and parents regarding the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of homework in primary education. The three-dimensional perspective, which also includes the voice of students and their family ecosystem, provides a broader and more credible picture of the impact of homework on students' well-being [17,55].

Practices with negative effects on students' well-being that students dislike when doing homework, as highlighted by the data presented, are homework that students work hard on; difficult, long, and tiring, homework in subjects where they are not doing well and are insecure; repetitive homework; or unassessed homework. Students' reactions in such situations are charged with negative emotions, easily observable by teachers at after-school and by parents at home. There is a need for teachers to be more aware of the negative effects of over-challenging homework, which generates frustration that gradually drives children away from school, reflecting on the short- and long-term implications of such non-pedagogical practices.

Also, non-pedagogical practices by parents are to be avoided, whether they are demanding and overloaded, disregarding homework, or unethical "excessive help" with homework. In all these situations, parental involvement is harmful in the short, medium, and long term, and teachers need to "educate" parents, reflecting with them on the negative effects of their not productive involvement or attitude to homework. Some parents who want as much homework as possible force their children to finish their homework without being concerned about their children's well-being, an action contradicted by other parents who want more extracurricular activities and free time. Such contradictory desires [56,57], even though we spoke of a small number of parents, are to be addressed by teachers, reflecting with the parents on the long-term implications of their behaviors and expectations.

Gaps, with negative effects on students' motivation to do homework, are linked to social inequalities in their background and parents' ability to support them. Educational contexts where homework is managed by children autonomously, without requiring parental help or intervention, can limit/eliminate the negative effects of homework generated by such conditioning. Teachers should scale the inequities in children's homework ecosystem through the homework they assign in order to give all children a sense of capability and of satisfaction for the full and qualitative achievement of homework [34,36,40,41]. Contexts such as enrolling children in after-school to receive specialized help, for a fee, are also necessary to not influence gaps between children in terms of homework and the effects it has on self-esteem, frustration, or other evoked emotions.

The negative effects on students, highlighted by them and their emotional reactions, which go as far as outright refusal, crying, self-blame, and frustration, are an expression of low resilience, which is typical of young ages, but perhaps amplified by the recent pandemic period. However, these situations require dedicated attention from adults to help children manage their emotions, balancing their demands, without exposing them to such extreme situations.

The study shows that the practices that produce positive effects on students' well-being when doing homework, mentioned by all three categories of educational actors interviewed, are related to the nature of homework (for example, artistic or literary homework, collaborative homework such as project works) and how it is carried out (homework in which they can make decisions and put their stamp on it, homework that involves collaboration between peers or with those in the vicinity, and so forth), or how it is sized and assessed (for example, homework where they receive immediate feedback, with, for example, a self-development grid).

Regardless of the purpose of homework, teachers should consider their pedagogical dosage, so that they can be managed by students and give them a sense of capability and of achievement, as findings suggest [2,18,58,59]. Although they list such situations, teachers seem to have a preference for consolidation homework [8], per subject, often repetitive,

additional homework that prepares for competitions, as can be inferred indirectly from children's and parents' narratives. To assign homework to students' liking, teachers should communicate more often with students on the types of homework they like, as suggested by parents.

Also not to be neglected are the positive effects of homework assessment practices, which make pupils feel good. If adults take the time to discuss homework, children will recognize that their efforts are valued at home and school [60]. Verbal encouragement, praise, or material rewards that children receive from homework assessments give students satisfaction. The constant, consistent evaluative effort by teachers is essential for the development of realistic self-assessment benchmarks, reinforcement, development of self-esteem and self-confidence, responsibility, and gratitude for a job well done.

Somewhat surprisingly, students and parents in grades 1 and 2 reported that they were enjoying their homework and assessments. Such results can be explained, on the one hand, by the fact that this is a school that produces high academic performance, with good results in school competitions, with the children being accustomed from an early age to a competitive approach, alongside preparations for competitions. On the other hand, this homework relates to certain types of assessments that are worked on beforehand in class, and they are already familiar with the exercises given as homework.

A special distinction needs the suggestions offered for improving homework practices to make young schoolchildren feel good, being related also to the second research question about the types of homework that improve student well-being. Children want different ways to improve their opportunities to participate in choosing and negotiating homework and to do homework more frequently and to a greater extent that they experience as positive for their well-being. Pupils want creative homework, homework in the form of games, an aspect also suggested by parents and teachers. The suggestions follow naturally as a reinforcement of practices with positive effects on children's well-being: practical homework, rooted in the reality of the environment; homework in the form of experiments; homework where children can learn and apply digital knowledge; and diversified homework, differentiated according to children's interests, accompanied by rewards and appreciation for their effort. The solutions are suggested by parents and teachers alike as good practices with educational implications.

Looking at the data so far, the strengths and limitations of the study can be easily spotted.

The strength of this study was that it captured perceptions, statements, and practices regarding homework from three different perspectives: teachers, parents, and students. Interviews were also conducted separately with each group, thus increasing the validity of the study and capturing the evolving perceptions and practices as they progressed through school. The aspects that we have identified as to be followed, as well as to be avoided, in order to ensure children's well-being when doing homework enjoyed a certain consensus amongst the three actors, confirming and reinforcing this way their validity. The contribution of the study in bringing these confirmations from three different perspectives is particularly strengthened by the inclusion of children's authentic perspectives. Less often do studies capture how children feel about homework, as they can express their feelings. It was possible to capture their honest opinions and observations, through the familiarity they feel with the first author, being a teacher at the school where they study. Reducing the gap and imbalance in the literature regarding the reflection of adults' and children's voices for a more accurate mutual understanding of different perspectives is certainly a notable contribution of the study.

Another strength of the study was the willingness of the three educational actors not only to share their experiences, ideas, expectations, and complaints about homework but also to offer suggestions for improving educational practices in the provision, implementation, and evaluation of homework. The suggestions offered are useful in formative terms, with implications for improving children's academic performance and development.

A strength of the study, and also a limitation, was the exclusive focus on the effects on well-being, on what students like or do not like when they have homework, not revealing the implications for learning, for their development through homework. The rationale for this assumed approach was related to the fact that the effects of homework on academic performance, on learning, are more captured in the literature [33,43,59], and the effects on well-being have been less well documented [9,12,38], let alone three-dimensionally grouped. Future research, possibly by mixed design, would be interesting to link both the academic and well-being planes of holistic development of young schoolchildren through learning that occurs in the context of homework solving.

Some limitations derive from the type of research, namely, qualitative research, and the number of participants being small. Firstly, the research was applied at the level of a single school in Romania, a school with good results in national competitions and assessments. In addition, the study has contextual limitations, also related to the nature of the respondents (e.g., whether or not they participated in after-school), which need to be interpreted with caution. Secondly, the majority of pupils at this school are children from well-off families with a high level of education. The participants in the study reproduce this advantageous situation. The literature [34,36,40] and educational practice show that pupils coming from socially advantaged families may be more likely to complete homework successfully, which affects pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds or not from such families. Consideration should be given to appropriately sizing the nature and difficulty of homework so that pupils can manage it independently, as well as autonomously, so that there is a positive impact on all children through homework completion, and so that the background does not influence the results of the research. Equally, it might be seen by readers as synonymous, somewhat repetitive to present as two separate homework that feel good and homework that pupils like. We have chosen to maintain this distinction, to show in the positive register of practices that stimulate and improve well-being, not only what is likely to ensure the maintenance of well-being, but also what is more likely to improve it. We are not only talking about accepted practices but also, moreover, loved practices.

Of course, the fact that they are enjoyable, as well as loved, does not edify whether doing homework has other implications, and future research is needed to illuminate other key questions worth answering, such as

- is homework worth the effort? The study provides partial data and arguments, adding to the arguments so far on student academic achievement. Yes, the homework contributes to the student's self-esteem, self-confidence, and satisfaction with the managed work, and is worth the effort, once there are mastered the pedagogical aspects of well-balanced homework.
- does it help students to learn more and better? Further research is needed to answer such a question, as the present research mainly signals the pedagogical practices that might push away the students from learning by badly administrated homework.
- does it help students to feel better about school and want to learn more? Does it contribute to positive relationships between parents, teachers, and students? And so on. The present research gave some hints but aimed to focus only on the emotional aspects of well-being or harm, not on other implications.

Despite such limitations, some practical implications can be derived. Thus, first of all, the results of the study reveal practices that provide well-being or lead to lack of it, highlighting congruent views of educational actors about them. Parents and teachers need to take this into account when providing or supporting students with homework. Secondly, highlighting and capturing suggestions for improving homework assignments, performance, and assessment practices are referential for better homework-related practices. They have the advantage that they are tailored for younger ages when children are first confronted with homework, and homework has a more specific role in acquiring and reinforcing independent intellectual work techniques and developing basic skills. Thirdly, frequent checking and assessment of homework will show pupils that their homework is valuable and that they are appreciated and rewarded for their work, which builds their

confidence, engagement, and well-being. Fourthly, the suggestions offered by parents, pupils, and teachers on homework that give a good feeling should also be taken into account concerning their formative character, as the suggestions offered are constructive and consistent. Of course, future research, especially quasi-experimental, is needed to validate such suggestions, both in terms of ensuring well-being and in terms of students' academic progress and their cognitive and emotional development.

5. Conclusions

Practices of assigning, doing, and evaluating homework that stimulate students' well-being seem to have been suggested convergently by all three educational actors involved, namely, students, parents, and teachers. Inductive teaching practices that give space for creativity and personal note-taking seem to be preferred. This is not to say that deductive teaching practices of reinforcement through structured exercises, accompanied by self-assessment grids, are not appreciated.

Whatever the nature of the homework, practices such as explaining and clarifying homework in class; giving differentiated homework; carefully dosing the effort required; providing homework for which they are rewarded and appreciated; providing homework that gives them immediate satisfaction and increased self-esteem because they can solve it themselves; and providing short homework that stimulates their imagination and problem-solving ability, anchoring them more in their life contexts are important for stimulating well-being. Evaluation and checking of homework should be done immediately after the pupils have done their homework so that constructive, reinforcing, and thorough feedback can be given on what the children have learned in order to reward them for their effort.

The findings of this qualitative study can be used for future research on formative practices to ensure children's well-being and may raise red flags about children's social-emotional development when doing homework.

Teachers should be particularly concerned with the balanced nature of homework assignments given and graded homework that motivates students and gives them the satisfaction of being able to manage it without overloading them. In other words, beyond the didactic goals of reinforcement, self-management, development of cognitive abilities, and improvement of school results, teachers first and foremost need to keep in mind the criteria of respecting well-being when assigning and assessing homework, so that the homework motivates, engages, stimulates young pupils to do it, and gives them satisfaction, without overloading them in their free time after school. At the same time, such conceptualizations must be transparent and clear to parents, informing them of their role and desirable practices in supporting children when they do homework.

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