EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF HOMEWORK ON SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS' LEISURE

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Copyright statement

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Abstract

This project investigated the extent to which homework affects secondary school adolescents' leisure. This was important because the majority of research within this area focused on the effects of homework on adolescents' academic development. This project explored the other, non-academic effects on leisure. An interpretivist sequential mixed methods research design was used to explore the actual versus expected time spent on homework, time spent on leisure and/or non-academic responsibilities. This was achieved from the perspective of the parents, adolescents, and teachers using questionnaire in stage one and then follow-up semi-structured interviews for parents and adolescents during stage two. The research project took place in three secondary schools in the East Midlands, United Kingdom.

The findings indicate that there is a lack of consistency in the time spent on homework, leisure, and non-academic responsibilities. The adolescents reported intense academic pressure but also indicated an awareness that engaging in leisure helps to cope with these pressures, however, they did not always have the opportunity to engage in leisure activities. Three themes emerged from the data: (1) wellbeing and holistic development, (2) perceptions of homework, and (3) parental influence. Conflicting findings were noted between parent and adolescent perspectives of leisure tie, with parents suggesting leisure time was present but the adolescent reporting they had none. Identification of this mirrored the emerging research highlighting that definitions of leisure vary from different perspectives. This means that parents and adolescents do not necessarily hold the same interpretations of leisure, thus what parents consider leisure, adolescents do not necessarily agree. Future research should consider the extent to which adolescents experience leisure and what this looks like from their perspective in relation to leisure time and their school's expectation of homework.

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Tables and Figures

1.0 Introduction

This thesis explored the effects of homework on secondary school adolescents' leisure. The scope of the project was based on the bodies of research about leisure and homework, both of which demonstrated that these concepts and the activities within them have the potential to make valuable contributions to adolescents through areas such as health, wellbeing, and holistic and academic development. However, the current body of literature about homework, in general, is dominated by studies exploring the association of time spent on homework with academic development. Other, non-academic on concepts such as leisure are less substantially researched. This hindered the rationale for the present project, by addressing this irregularity, and investigating how, as well as to what extent, homework affects secondary school adolescents' leisure, from this non-academic perspective.

This chapter first contextualises the body of research about leisure and the extent to which leisure contributes to the health, wellbeing, and holistic development of adolescents. The chapter then proceeds to contextualise the body of research about homework. Both leisure and homework literature are explored in the literature review chapter in detail, to evaluate the aforementioned contributions, and the extent of the impact on adolescents. Given that in general, both leisure and homework operate within the same free and after-school time, this chapter explores the importance of education to be sustainable, taking into account contemporary issues which reflect the needs of communities, and the relationship that this has with leisure and homework behaviours . The chapter explores this internationally across different education systems, which is then compared to the education system in England. Given the raising wellbeing concerns in communities, the impact of these education systems on academic success and wellbeing was explored, and the effects that education is having on adolescents through academic pressures. This contextualises the

original contribution that the present project makes by raising awareness of the extent to which a function of education such as homework, affects leisure, given the limitations of present leisure and homework literature.

1.1 Definition of leisure

There are several definitions of leisure. Brightbill (1960) and Smigel (1963) define leisure to include activities that do not involve working, doing chores or obligations. Additionally, Massimini and Carli (1988) extend this by including activities that stem from boredom and enable entertainment and recreation such as watching television. However, Larson and Verma (1999) refer to leisure which includes voluntary activities guided by autonomy, being intrinsically motivated, and based on self-initiative.

The term "leisure" will be used in this thesis to refer to free time (Frønes, 2009) that is not occupied by paid or unpaid work, chores, or obligations (Roberts, 1999). This definition has been created by merging Frønes' (2009) and Roberts' (1999) definitions of leisure to enable an exploration of the effects on leisure as a broader concept ranging from wellbeing to development, in that it is the time which is guided by personal autonomy, thus this is the time that is not occupied by work, chores or obligations, which can offer the opportunity for joy. This definition made the present investigation more precise, because it enabled an analysis of leisure as a multidimensional concept by considering the overall disposable after-school time available for autonomous engagement in leisure activities. This allowed an understanding of the extent to which adolescents can structure their time autonomously in order to experience joy, for the associations of leisure with wellbeing, health, and holistic development explored in the next chapter. Additionally, this definition enabled an understanding of the extent to which adolescents can select the activities within which they wish to participate, and the people with whom they want to engage in those activities, or spend their time, without external influence. In short, any

free time activity can be considered leisure, provided it is selected autonomously to bring joy to the individual experiencing it.

The nature of this definition is dominant within the current body of research about leisure. This multidimensional definition is vital because previous studies examining the quality of experiences, found that subjective satisfaction with a leisure activity can fluctuate, and thus it is essential to consider the subjective experience and the meaning of the leisure engagement (Freire et al., 2007; Delle-Fave and Massimini, 2000). Furthermore, autonomous leisure engagement is guided by the biological needs of an individual, and once those needs are satisfied, leisure is more likely to become a valuable source of contributions to subjective wellbeing (Diener et al., 1999; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008; Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2014). This is because the nature of leisure engagement is a likely predictor of the extent to which an individual experiences joy and satisfaction because autonomous leisure is indeed what an individual wants to do, in light of the discussed biological needs (Shikako-Thomas et al., 2012). This contextualises the definition of leisure within the focus of the present project.

1.2 Definition of homework

The body of research about homework presents a generalised, long-standing definition of the term "homework", and this indeed is suitable for the present project. The term "homework" has been previously defined as a task assigned to an adolescent by a school teacher, to be carried out during non-school hours (Cooper, 1989). Additionally, Sharp et al. (2001) highlight that adolescents can complete the homework alone or with their peers, at home or within an alternative environment such as a public library or an organised homework centre. The characteristics of these definitions have been taken into account when creating the definition of homework for the present study, because they enable a more precise understanding of homework effects on adolescents. However, Cooper updated his 1989 definition during an interview with Bembenutty (2011), in that initially

the author referred to homework to be carried out during non-school time. The author highlighted the status of non-instructional time, in that adolescents can complete homework at home and during non-instructional time at school; hence the qualifier non-instructional time being more accurate. This change, considering both instructional and non-instructional time, enabled a more precise understanding of the extent to which homework affects adolescents, whether at home or school, providing a more precise understanding of the effects of homework on adolescents.

The term “homework" will be used in this thesis to refer to a task assigned to an adolescent by a school teacher, to be carried out during non-instructional time, completed independently, or with peers, at home or within an alternative environment. While this is the most prominent definition of homework in literature, it is also the most suitable one for the present study because it accurately reflects the concept of homework in education. Recent literature publications continues to utilise this long-standing definition of homework (Pollard, 2023; Meng-Chun Chin et al., 2020; Dettmers et al., 2009; Guo et al., 2021).

1.3 Leisure and Homework within an internationally sustainable education context

There are various perspectives from which education can be portrayed, and this is important because it affects the extent to which education, and tools within it such as homework, are delivered and used sustainably. Education can be viewed through the lens of academic outcomes or overall quality (Cooper et al., 2006), which characterises the nature of the discussion regarding the extent to which education is implemented sustainably, depending on the perspective from which the debate is viewed. This is important because the perspective on education can impact expected time to be spent on completing homework. This is influenced by the perspective of education because of the effect that this perspective has on attitudes towards homework, which is also influenced

by educational, cultural, political and social factors that will be explored in the next chapter (Hallam and Cowman, 1998).

Education, and tools such as homework, are important in the context of enabling adolescents to live a successful life. McKeown (2013) argues that education equips adolescents with skills to deal with change and perpetuate societies. This is through adapting to this change and enabling adolescents to live a successful life, hence the need for sustainable education. Hellstrom et al. (2015) support this claim, explicitly adding that the world is changing more furiously than ever before, and the authors welcome sustainable developments in the delivery of education across the globe. Sustainability in education is important from the perspective of preparing adolescents to effectively process and adapt to frequent change (Sterling, 2001), and is referred to in the contexts of educators and their schools. This is important because accelerated technological and natural change introduced challenges to the current generation, such as an ageing population and the unsustainable use of natural resources, and adolescents need to develop abilities to respond to these challenges (Hellstrom et a., 2015). This highlights that adolescents need to be capable of addressing challenges in the future that are currently unknown, alongside being capable of living a successful life and responding to the discussed natural and technological developments. Thus, sustainable education is important.

While it is important to respond to these discussed needs, Hellstrom et al. (2015) claim that Western countries have fallen behind in their educational functioning, in that education systems aim to prepare adolescents for life through a hard curriculum, and high levels of educational pressures such as high-stake exams. England has a rigid national curriculum on which adolescents complete high-stake tests (DfE, 2014). Guidance on homework is absent in the curriculum. In contrast, Eastern countries, Singapore being a prime example, historically had a similar focus, however; on review recognised the risk

of critically prominent stress levels and low subjective wellbeing, which led to change of this focus, which is always challenging to achieve (Hubers, 2020). This is because cultural factors and stakeholder beliefs regarding homework shape the culture in education to be more rigid, and is therefore seen more challenging to change.

Historically, there have been cyclical perspectives of homework. The previously introduced two perspectives of education; (1) academic outcomes and (2) overall quality, created contradiction and conflict in the debate regarding the purpose of education, which in turn led to cyclical attitudes towards homework (Cooper et al., 2006). Gill and Schlossman (2003) highlight that these attitudes have been changing from positive to negative, and to positive again, from decade to decade, while Hallam and Cowman (1998) highlight that the role that homework plays within education depends on educational, cultural, political, and social developments. The range of literature reviewed in the literature review chapter will explain these cyclical perspectives of homework, through a lack of unity in the homework research conclusions, and the extent to which this is important in an attempt to understand the effects on adolescents' leisure. Cooper et al. (2006) found in their substantial review of 120 homework studies conducted in the United States that there is a societal misconception in that parents were under the impression that homework always supplemented academic success. The present study aims to establish if this misconception is present in England, through exploring the attitudes towards homework, which may differ from the findings in the United States. This is because there are cultural differences that define the delivery of education across the globe, thus consideration of the expected versus received effects of homework is important within a given societal context (Marshall, 2019).

There are cultural differences that impact how education needs to be delivered. Alongside knowledge, Eastern education systems such as Finland promote personal development through aspects such as self-management, and responsible decision-making, with higher

flexibility and meaningfulness in the curriculum (DfE, 2017). The intention is to support creative thinking in light of cultural factors which characterise the effectiveness of the delivery of education. However, this also mirrors the sustainable delivery of education. This is important because it demonstrates the contrast to the education system in England which focuses on knowledge and skill (DfE, 2017). There are cultural differences that define societies in different countries which characterise communities based on their needs, to which education needs to respond, thus it is vital to recognise the importance of cultural differences given the present international contextualisation of leisure and homework in education. As a result, education systems must differ to respond to these cultural differences. Hopkins (2013) supports this, but highlights the need for a re-defined focus on wellbeing in education to be the foundation of a sustainable approach in pursuit of a "good life".

Meanwhile, some researchers refer to emerging mental health crisis trends among higher education adolescents, who have been lately educated in mainstream compulsory education (Evans et al., 2018; Kadison and DiGeronimo, 2004). This is concerning because the number of adolescents that require mental health support has sharply increased, alongside a sharp rise in the seriousness of those mental health issues that those individuals are reporting (Lipson et al., 2019; Auerbach et al., 2018). Pressures and demands imposed by education on adolescents require adolescents to cope and deal with these challenges. Leisure offers methods of coping and dealing with these challenges, which will be explored throughout this thesis. When looking at adolescents' mental health, almost 1 in 7 adolescents meet the criteria for mental health disorder diagnosis accompanied by stress (Polanczyk et al., 2015). Additionally, Radez et al. (2021) highlight that anxiety and depression symptoms are most frequently accompanied by distress. Kim-Cohen et al. (2003) established that almost half of the mental health issues that individuals experience throughout their whole life are likely to emerge by the age of

15 years, while Ford et al. (2007) argue that these can persist into adulthood. Given this background literature, the interest in the focus of the present project emerged in order to respond to these contemporary issues in education, regarding the exploration of the association between time spent on leisure and time spent on homework. This introduces the topic of leisure and the associations that engagement in leisure has with wellbeing, in response to the discussed issues in education.

Several reviews of the leisure and wellbeing literature have concluded that engagement in leisure can contribute to greater subjective wellbeing (e.g. Gibson, 2018; Niu et al., 2018). However, self-determination theory claims that in order for wellbeing to increase, individuals need to feel the satisfaction of three foundational psychological needs which include namely: (1) autonomy, (2) relatedness, and (3) competence (Sheldon and Niemiec, 2006). Autonomy relates to adolescents being able to act upon self-desire during leisure and do what they wish to do. Relatedness refers to being able to socialise with family and peers, thus engaging in social activities to experience this sense of relatedness. Finally, competence refers to being able to do something successfully or efficiently for individual satisfaction. Dodge et al. (2012) highlight that autonomy is essential to associate leisure with subjective wellbeing because it satisfies biological and personal needs based on choice, in that the biological needs guide the choices. Leisure engagement therefore should be guided by the needs of individuals in order to satisfy those needs, which introduces the discussion regarding the extent to which autonomy is present in adolescents everyday environment.

There is a lack of autonomy when adolescents are at school because they are within an organised environment. With this in mind, Mayall (2002) highlights that autonomous leisure allows children to escape everyday life and adult control. Badia et al. (2013) claim that adolescents are more likely to be truly engaged in a leisure pursuit when it is autonomous. Additionally, Delle-Fave and Massimini (2003) state that individuals who

feel engage in leisure pursuits, are more likely to demonstrate traits of creativity, which the authors found had a higher probability of individuals engaging in satisfying experiences, and thus lead to more opportunities for associations with health and development. An aspect of self-centred activities during leisure is therefore essential for leisure to contribute to greater subjective wellbeing, as have been researched. Moreover, Vernon (2014) refers to subjective wellbeing as a foundation for a robust subjective perspective of a good life.

Homework is an integral part of the education experience. While leisure operates within the after-school disposable time, adolescents have been required to complete homework, also usually within this after-school time, ever since the mid-19th century. Thus homework is, historically, an integral part of the education experience, which operates within the same after-school disposable time (Gill and Schlossman, 2004). Xu and Yuan (2003) highlight that some parents and teachers are under the impression that homework enables the development of learning, achievement, and skills. On the other hand, Pomerantz et al. (2006) report that the time spent on homework is stressful and has effects that reach beyond academic success and include affects wellbeing and holistic development of adolescents when time spent on homework is excessive (Pomerantz et al., 2006). Homework has been researched extensively from the perspective of attempting to establish the association that it has with academic success, but the conclusions of that body of research are not united due to the wide range of contradictions in its results. Homework research, therefore, does not inform national homework policy, which means that schools in England are free to create their homework policies and decide on how to allocate homework. This introduces the discussion on the effects of the education systems.

Considering the argument for the need for education delivery to be sustainable considering adolescents' wellbeing, Hopkins (2013) defines sustainable education further, arguing that education should indeed be considered through an emerging long-term

wellbeing perspective, which the author considers to be sustainable through preparing adolescents to live a successful life. Hopkins (2013) argues that this is important because it enables adolescents to be emotionally skilled and competent to address to the needs of the changing world. Based on the discussed issues identified in the countries which previously focused on a hard curriculum delivery and high stakes exams, revision, and considerable time spent on homework, these countries have re-defined their delivery of education with sustainability as the foundation of their work. Hopkins (2013) therefore argues that an increase in the focus on long-term wellbeing and mental health contributes to an understanding of effectively preparing adolescents for a successful life in Western countries. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2018), the world's most comprehensive and reliable indicator of adolescents' capabilities, countersigns this, claiming that a sustainable approach is needed for adolescents to realise their full potential. This highlights the need for education systems to mirror the current needs of societies, which introduces the extent to which homework contributes to the sustainable approach.

Looking at the use of homework from an international perspective, countries within which academic success is high, appear to assign less homework than other countries with a lower academic success rate, and a higher use of homework (Baines and Slutsky 2009; Güven and Akçay 2019). Among other top countries for academic success, PISA identified Korea and Finland as highest for academic success, while setting the lowest homework (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016). This means that adolescents can experience academic success while enjoying a greater leisure time because homework times are lower, allowing leisure time to be present. The literature review chapter will provide an overview of the current body of research on the effects of both homework, and leisure, and the potential role that both concepts have in the attempt to deliver education sustainability.

1.4 Homework and leisure considering long-term health and wellbeing

While there are differences in education systems internationally, having here discussed the international focus on long-term wellbeing, it is important to review the current state of adolescents' health, and wellbeing in England, while trying to compare the effects of the education systems. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) revealed that, based on 540,000 adolescents from 72 countries, 66% of adolescents aged 15-16 years reported feeling stressed because of academic pressures (OECD, 2018). The OECD survey also found that 55% of adolescents reported anxiety due to testing, even when they were well prepared (OECD, 2018). This highlights the link with mental health. Looking more locally, The Not Making the grade report (2021) revealed that 96% of 1271 secondary school adolescents in England felt their mental health affected their academic performance, while 78% thought that the pressures that the school applied had made their mental health worse. Additionally, 48% of adolescents said that they have been punished for their behaviour due to the poor state of their mental health. This highlights some of the contemporary issues related to education and health. This is relevant because Kohn (2006) and Bonnet and Kalish (2006) argue against the imposition of homework, claiming that school teachers, in general, are not trained adequately to effectively use homework to consider the effects that it has on adolescents.

Data also reveals various effects of education on adolescents' wellbeing. PISA (2018) data highlights that based on data from 2018 focusing on 15-year-olds, young people in England ranked 24th (lowest) for life satisfaction in comparison to Romania which was top, followed by Finland and Croatia, 23rd for low sadness, second-highest level of sadness and 24th for the sense of life (lowest again). This suggests that young people in England are unhappy. Additionally, The Children's Worlds study represents children's perspectives regarding ten aspects of life which include, namely: (1) things, (2) health, (3) family, (4) home, (5) freedom, (6) time use, (7) friends, (8) appearance, (9) future and

(10) school. The most recent data from 2016 and 2019 is based on young people aged 8, 10 and 12 and highlights that in England, adolescents ranged below the international average for the extent to which they are satisfied with their social networks, their health and how they look. This is compared to 14 other countries and includes Croatia, Finland, and Romania. The most significant variation in the mean averages was for satisfaction with appearance; England's mean score was 8.13 (out of 10), in contrast to an average of 8.86 for the other 14 countries. The Children's Worlds study data highlights that young people need support in building friendships, being less afraid of what happens next, bring afraid of their actions leading to failure, but also feeling comfortable in their own bodies, within given societies. However, the average level of children's happiness in England has also been declining since 2009, and the school is reported to be the major contributing factor to children's unhappiness (The Good Childhood Report, 2020). It is, therefore, vital to consider the purpose of education and the effects that it is having because this contributes to the argument that children in England are unhappy, and pressures applied by education could be one of the contributing factors. These are explored in the literature review chapter in greater detail.

While PISA (2018) does has not included a measure of adolescents' feelings of pressure at school to represent adolescents' perspectives in light of the previously discussed wellbeing data, it has included a measure of the fear of failure, which is relevant from the perspective of adolescents' wellbeing. The report reveals that young people in England have the greatest fear of failure. Additionally, young people in England have the lowest life satisfaction. This is relevant because it contributes to an understanding of the contemporary issues in education. The present study aims to better understand the effects of homework in the context of sustainable education, and evaluate whether the current use of homework in England promotes sustainability in education. This leads to the discussed pressures and impact on health and wellbeing of the adolescents. The above

data demonstrates some of the characteristics defining the current state of adolescents' health and wellbeing in England. This will help to understand the rationale for adolescents completing homework, and parents and teachers enforcing it, in light of the extent to which this influences adolescents' homework and leisure behaviours.

1.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has set the scene for leisure and homework in the context of education, and has introduced the effects that both leisure and homework have on adolescents. Both concepts have the potential to positively effect a range of aspects of adolescents' lives, including health, wellbeing, holistic and academic development. While education systems aim to prepare adolescents for a successful life using approaches that respond to the cultural needs of societies within individual countries, the impact of these systems and their tools, varies, characterising education systems around the world. However, despite these cultural differences, based on the national data discussed in this chapter, the effects that the education system in England is having on adolescents calls for a greater understanding of tools in education such as homework, to better understand the effects that education is having. This is because of the associations that leisure has with the aforementioned factors of adolescents' lives, and the extent to which adolescents experience leisure, given the education pressures discussed in this chapter, as well as the extent to which opportunities to engage in leisure activities are limited. Literature on both leisure and homework are discussed in the next chapter.

2.0 Literature review

This chapter reviews national and international literature on the role of leisure and homework to adolescents. This chapter draws from peer reviewed national and international literature published worldwide, but predominantly from the United States, where most homework research was undertaken. The review first explores the importance of leisure to adolescents from the perspective of wellbeing, health, and holistic development, which is based on a mixture of books, articles, and research reports. The review then examines research which focuses on an emerging trend of arranging adolescents' out-of-school time and explores the corresponding effects of this. There are theoretical concepts demonstrating the associations of leisure with these areas, but majority of research on this is absent for adolescents. As a result, the present study reviews application of this to adolescents, with justification of how this applies to adolescents.

The chapter then proceeds to review the importance of homework to adolescents, and the currently available body of literature and research on the effects of homework on academic success, and a more limited part of the homework literature, which focuses on the non-academic effects of homework. The chapter closes with an analysis of the available research which focuses on the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure. However, this is limited to studies exploring whether homework impacts leisure. There is an absence of literature to demonstrate the extent to which the imposition of homework affects adolescents' leisure. The review closes by highlighting the current gap in the literature surrounding the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure, introducing the rationale for the present study to make an original contribution to the existing body of research in England. The literature was identified through a specific search strategy which is explored below.

2.1 Searching technique

The literature was identified using core data bases, and include: (1) Australian Education Index, (2) British Education Index, (3) Educational Resources Information Centre and (4) Education Abstracts. These are the core education data bases at international level. The searching technique was strengthened by supplementary searching through the Nottingham Trent University Library One Search Pro and Google Scholar.

Sources were shortlisted based on their suitability to contribute to the current understanding of the effects of homework on secondary school adolescents' leisure and vice versa. Homework research on attainment and non-academic effects were included to gain a more holistic understanding of the current body of research to understand homework affects leisure.

The following descriptors have been used to identify literature and were broad enough to reflect the breadth and scope of the leisure and homework literature:

Homework: homework AND attainment OR academic effect OR performance OR non-academic effects OR effects

Leisure: leisure AND adolescents OR youth OR teenager OR adolescent AND benefits OR advantages OR limitations OR disadvantages OR weaknesses

Homework and leisure: Homework AND leisure OR free time

2.2 Leisure

Leisure is associated with a range of aspects ranging from health, wellbeing, to holistic development. While Larson (1994) has previously referred to leisure as having the potential to provide the opportunity for holistic development of adolescents, the focus of leisure research is predominately on adults (Caldwell, 2005). The theoretical extent to which leisure is associated with the mentioned factors will be explored in this chapter and

the extent to which autonomy is a contributing factor to adolescents experiencing these positive associations. This section will explore implications of organising leisure for adolescents, and the extent to which this impacts the opportunity for the associations with the aforementioned factors.

2.2.1 Leisure and wellbeing

Wellbeing is a multi-dimensional concept. It is linked to a range of factors ranging from satisfaction of life to the quality of life, happiness, personal growth, and overall joy (Sacker and Cable, 2006). There are two main definitions of wellbeing which dominate relevant discussions and those include subjective and objective wellbeing (Ross et al., 2020). Subjective wellbeing reflects a personal account of experiences and fulfilment including eudaemonic and hedonic wellbeing (Martin et al., 2017), while objective wellbeing reflects an account of material resources and social attributes (Western and Tomaszewski, 2016).

Literature includes a wide range of evidence regarding the associations of leisure with subjective wellbeing (Kang, 2004; Kim, 2003; Sacker and Cable, 2006; Onishi et al., 2006; Larson and Verma, 1999; Caldwell and Smith, 1988; Chalip, Thomas and Voyle, 1992). Santini et al. (2020, a) analysed data from a European secondary school survey project which included 2488 adolescents but was limited to 15–16-year-old adolescents. Authors found that engagement in multiple, regular, physical leisure activities was associated with greater subjective wellbeing through higher mental wellbeing, and lower probability of engaging in substance use and experiencing mental health issues through subjective satisfaction. The authors established these associations by looking at the extent to which individuals are socially disconnected, perceived symptoms of isolation, depression, and anxiety. The study found lower association probability when engaging in just one physical activity, thus recommendations were made for increasing opportunities for adolescent leisure engagement to enhance mental health. Additionally, Brooks and

Magnusson (2007) conducted a study based on focus groups with 429 13–16-year-old female adolescents and found that female adolescents found physical activities during leisure as important, and therefore used the engagement in physical activities as a tool to enhance their satisfaction with health through being more active, thus also increasing their subjective wellbeing through a more positive subjective outlook. This study was however limited to female participants only. However, Shin and You (2020) conducted a study with 3499 children transitioning rom primary to secondary school in a sequential multimethod research project in Korea and found that the leisure activity type was an important contributing factor influencing the extent to which leisure engagement was associated with subjective wellbeing, through the extent to which the adolescents were satisfied. This is important because it helps understand the importance of the reality of leisure from the perspective of wellbeing, thus the evidence indicates reasons for leisure to be present in adolescents' environment.

While leisure presents positive associations with wellbeing, literature also reveals negative associations of leisure with wellbeing. Santini et al. (2020, b) conducted a longitudinal mediation analysis with adults, and found that adults who did not have regular class mates were associated with lower rates of subjective wellbeing, and therefore were more likely to experience long-term mental health problems. The research found that the structure of social support and the functioning of it, are factors associated with anxiety and depressions with adults. While this is based on a sample of adults, theoretically, a social structure within adolescents' life could be as equally important. This highlights an association of leisure with mental health through the state of wellbeing through loneliness and unhappiness with social connections, which introduces research on adolescents' friendships and peer relationships which can be developed during leisure engagement within the context of wellbeing. This is important because it impacts

adolescents through the extent to which adolescents are subjectively satisfied with their wellbeing.

Friendships and peer relationships can be developed during leisure. Falvey and Rosenberg (1995) highlights that friendships and relationships developed during leisure can contribute to the development of social skills, intellectual growth, and the overall feeling of being part of a community, and feeling secure within it. Frones (2009) supports this claim. However, it is not leisure as an individual concept that is associated with greater wellbeing. Coatsworth et al. (2006) worked with 115 15-18-year-old secondary school adolescents in three communities in Pennsylvania in the United States. The authors found that self-defining, expressive and unstructured leisure engagement was more likely to secure the development of wellbeing from an individual's subjective perspective, while the nature of the leisure engagement, and the extent to which that engagement reflected autonomy, was essential when discussing leisure associations with other concepts. Additionally, Shikako-Thomas et al. (2012) highlights that autonomous leisure engagement has the potential to contribute to an increase in the quality of life through the experience of satisfaction of needs, while Niu et al. (2018) found that autonomous leisure is associated with enhanced mood and has the potential to conjure positive emotions through the experience of joy. However, Dodge et al. (2012) highlights autonomy and self-expression are important in the context of structuring leisure, because the presence of these factors is more likely to lead to the positive associations with leisure. In contrast, Bartko and Eccles (2003) highlight that unstructured leisure engagement can lead to a higher risk of antisocial behaviour engagement and substance use. Mahoney and Stattin (2000) support this claim, adding that unstructured leisure engagement does not offer the presence of a supportive adult or clear activity goals. This highlights the extent to which autonomy is important to be a present factor in the context of leisure.

While literature indicates the positive associations of leisure with wellbeing, there is literature highlighting that it is not necessarily leisure that ensures these associations. This is because Melamed et al. (1995) emphasizes that individuals can achieve a greater sense of subjective wellbeing not necessarily through leisure engagement, but through the relation of the leisure activity with their personality. This means that the association between leisure and wellbeing is possible to be incidental, rather than causal, and this is important to highlight considering trying to understand the importance of leisure to adolescents and the positive associations discussed. Trainor et al. (2010) confirm this to be the case in their study with 947 secondary school students, where the study found that personality variables were better predictors of adolescents' subjective wellbeing in the leisure context, rather than the extent of time engaged in leisure. This is important considering the discussed significance of autonomy, so that the leisure engagement reflects the personality of the leisure activity that is undertaken by the adolescent.

In addition, Sirard et al. (2006) worked with 1692 adolescents, and while the study was limited to working only with 12-14 year, the study identified that motivation for leisure engagement varied by gender, gender specific leisure engagement campaigns, as argued by the authors, could help ensure students' autonomous engagement in leisure experiences. For boys, contribution to social and fitness skills influenced motivation, while for girls social and general skill contributions, competition and fitness skills influenced motivation. The study used a questionnaire to collect this data during a single day data collection process during class time. This highlights that leisure engagement preferences can vary considering associations of leisure with wellbeing, but also highlights the complexity of understanding the reality of leisure.

A mixture of both leisure and work is important. While autonomous leisure is associated with greater subjective wellbeing, Iso-Ahola and Mannel (2004) highlight in their influential leisure and health book that a mixture of leisure and work is necessary for good

wellbeing in the argument that this is associated with greater mental health. Bryce and Haworth (2003) support this claim with conclusions of their study claiming that leisure is a need for a break from work, while Sharif et al. (2021) extend this through conclusions of their national study with 13,639 adults aged 18 years and above and found that it can be beneficial to have a little over two hours of leisure time per day. While this study was conducted with adults, associations of leisure with wellbeing is predominantly researched for adults.

However, in contrast, having too much leisure can be harmful to subjective wellbeing. This is because Sharif et al. (2021) found in that same study that having entire days disposable for leisure may leave individuals similarly unhappy to not having leisure at all. This is because having too much leisure introduces boredom. Haworth and Lewis (2005) highlight that there has been little focus on establishing a healthy work and leisure balance specifically at the secondary school level and the implications that this absence of guidance may have on adolescents' health through the discussed relationship of leisure with wellbeing. This discussion contributes to the claim that there are extremes in the time spent on leisure, in that some adolescents experience an excessive, and some inadequate, leisure time, which formed the foundation of the phrase used throughout this thesis as healthy/adequate balance between home and school. Healthy balance has been used as a phrase because the aforementioned literature presents the extremes in time spent on leisure. Given that there is a lack of guidance on achieving an adequate balance between home and school in an attempt to achieve a good state of subjective wellbeing at secondary school level. This is an opportunity for future research to establish characteristics of a healthy balance between home and school holistically, in order to define this more accurately to best inform practice and future research.

2.2.2 Leisure and health (physical and mental health)

Wellbeing and health are two separate concepts, however these concepts are closely associated with each other, and are both uniquely characterised, suggesting the rationale for health literature to follow straight after the wellbeing literature. The subjective measure of wellbeing is well-established in England and includes a measure of wellbeing from an individual, self-reported perspective (Dolan and Metcalfe, 2012). Given this individualistic perspective on wellbeing, this concept introduces the association of wellbeing with mental health because a state of subjective wellbeing can leave an individual with an understanding of life satisfaction, happiness, worthwhileness, and anxiety, thus reflecting some of the key characteristics of mental health (WHO, 2004).

Health is a multidimensional concept as it reflects both physical and mental health (Bengel et al., 1999). Mental health is defined as "a state of wellbeing in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (WHO, 2004). This consequently introduces the implication of subjective wellbeing on the state of mental health, because individuals are more likely to be subjectively satisfied with good health, while poor mental health is more likely to contribute to poorer subjective satisfaction, thus subjective wellbeing (Coatsworth et al., 2006). However, autonomous leisure which is more likely to result in the experience of joy by the individual engaged in the leisure pursuit, is more likely to be associated with greater subjective wellbeing and, as a result, greater mental health (Sacker and Cable, 2006). This is because of the satisfaction of biological needs which is likely to happen with the experience of joy during autonomous leisure.

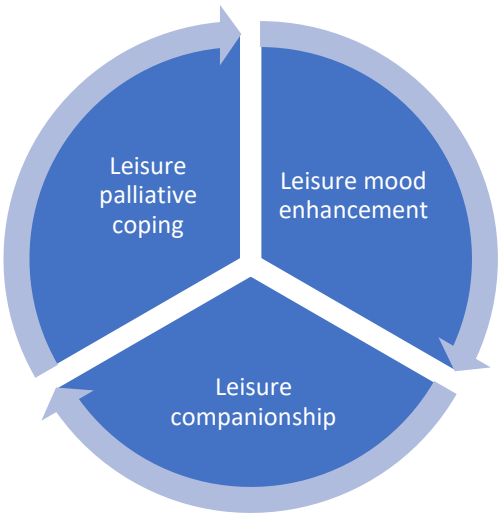
Mental health is at the forefront of various national and international agendas. The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2004) promotes the need for good mental health, and rationalises this through evidence that greater mental health is associated with greater

quality of life. However, this does not mean an absence of disorders or disabilities, but an overall satisfaction with both physical and mental health (Green et al. 2013). The British Government is committed to expanding access to mental health support to adolescents as part of the Green Paper for Transforming Children and Young People's Health (Department of Health and Social Care, 2017), and the National Health Service Long Term Plan (2019). Wellbeing and health are two separate concepts, but characteristics of these concepts work closely together. Health is important at the secondary school stage because it is common for initial mental health concerns to emerge at this age range, which makes adolescents vulnerable (Caldwell, 2005). de la Barra (2009) highlight that mental health issues in adolescence became a worldwide concern, while Kessler et al. (2005) highlight that these issues are likely to continue into adulthood. This is particularly concerning because Mills et al. (2006) highlight that many of the adolescents are not receiving the level of care which is required. Solmi et al. (2021) carried out a substantial meta-analysis of 192 epidemiological studies and agree with this claim, highlighting the peak risk age to be 14.5 years old. Clarke and Lovewell (2021) found that adolescents who experience poor mental health are more likely to experience adverse health outcomes throughout adulthood such as depression and anxiety and poor employment, highlighting the importance of good health during childhood. Additionally, Kuosmanen et al. (2019) conducted an evidence synthesis to support this, while highlighting that the current mental health support available to secondary school adolescents is insufficient to address the implications of mental health implications. This is important because leisure is associated with making valuable contributions to health, and the existing on the relationship between leisure and health can be generally divided into two categories: (1) prevention of a detriment to health and (2) coping with adverse life events, which are reviewed below.

2.2.2.1 Coping with pressures and demands of education and lifestyles

Adolescents believe that stress is higher than it should be in their lives, and that engagement in leisure offers a coping mechanism. Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993) highlight that a stressful lifestyle can induce long-term mental health consequences. Management of this stress and the extent of ability to do this can have implications on health (Skinner and Edge, 1998; Wills, 1986). Gottlieb (1997) agrees, highlights that it is not solely the experience of stress that has detrimental effects on health but how individuals cope with it, which partially defines the impact of stress. Iwasaki and Mannell (2000) identified three leisure-based coping mechanisms, as demonstrated in figure one below. Authors refer to this model as the leisure palliative:

Figure 1: Leisure-based coping mechanisms (Iwasaki and Mannel, 2000)



The leisure palliative includes experiences that give temporary relief from stress, such as going for a run. Leisure mood enhancement refers to participation in experiences that improve an individual's mood. Finally, leisure companionship is based on the time which is spent within social networks (Iwasaki and Mannell (2000). This highlights the extent to which leisure can act as a coping agent for individuals to deal with everyday challenges

and embeds this model into the association between leisure and health. This is due to the relevance of this concept with daily life and, as a result, is associated with preventing a detriment to health.

Research confirms these theoretical claims. Iwasaki et al. (2001) found that for individuals with higher stress levels, engagement in physical activity helps maintain good mental health by acting as a coping mechanism. This was based on an analysis conducted by Canada Statistics from 17,626 adolescents aged 12 years old and over in a quantitative study exploring associations between health, stress, and physically active leisure. Additionally, Hutchinson et al. (2006) similarly highlight associations of leisure with coping, and how this applies to both adults and adolescents. The authors conducted a study with 152 adolescents, but this was limited to 12–14-year-old participants recruited from one school. The study identified that shared family time and activities, TV and music engagement enabled a coping mechanism. Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993) conducted a qualitative study and used interviews to draw findings inductively with higher education adolescents. The authors found that engagement in leisure was positively associated with mental health through offering a coping mechanism with stress through the opportunity for social support (for example: socialising with friends and family members) and self-determination. However, Caltabiano (1994) found that too much social support could also be stressful and thus can be negatively associated with health, highlighting the need for an adequate balance between leisure and work.

The outdoor environment is a factor that has been found significant in understanding the coping perspective of leisure. Wells and Evans (2003) conducted a study and using qualitative interviews measuring the naturalness of the environment, children's stressful life events and psychological distress, the authors found that presence of the nature moderates the impact of life stress, and that outdoor play has the potential to help reduce stress. The authors worked with 337 participants, but the study was limited to working

with young children with a mean age of 9.2 years old in the United States. Kaplan and Kaplan (1983) present a similar argument in investigating the relationship between an individual and the environment, however, Lehto and Eskelinen (2020) and Karsten (2005) highlight that leisure is changing from self-organised and outdoor-based to adult-supervised and indoor-based. This highlights that adolescents are less likely to experience the discussed advantages associated with autonomous, outdoor leisure considering coping with the pressures and demands of education and lifestyles due to the emerging change in this nature of leisure. While leisure can offer a coping mechanism, literature also demonstrates evidence for associations of leisure with prevention of the detriment to health.

2.2.2.2 Prevention of the detriment to health

Leisure has the potential to prevent detriment to health. In light of the reports by the World Health Organisation (2020) that alcohol consumption and smoking is a soaring problems among young people which has detrimental effects on health through excess consumption and impact the quality of health, and the argument that experiences that have implications on the health of adolescents during their childhood are likely to have repercussions on their educational success and economic stability further down their life (Garner and Yogman, 2021), leisure offering prevention of the detriment to health is an important area for adolescents.

Santini et al. (2020a) conducted a national wide cross-sectional study in Denmark with 2488 adolescents aged between 15 and 16 years old. The authors found that engagement in leisure pursuits is associated with enhancing mental health. In a further, separate longitudinal mediation analysis study in the United States, Santini et al. (2020b) also found that organised leisure is specifically associated with a reduced risk of substance use, highlighting an aspect of the preventative perspective. Additionally, Passmore (2003) conducted a study with 850 12-18-year-old secondary school adolescents in Australia.

Using qualitative questionnaires, Passmore (2003) found that by enhancing social, behavioural, athletic, and educational competencies, leisure strengthens mental health through the opportunity to experience social inclusiveness and encourage self-expression. These findings are helpful to mental health through the chance to interact with friends and family and to develop new relationships, which introduce the opportunity for satisfaction of biological needs when this is successful. Passmore and French (2000) make these findings more accurate by the identification that uninvolving leisure typologies such as watching television or excessively being alone were associated with adverse effects on adolescents' mental health. This highlight that while, overall, leisure is positively associated with health, the nature and amount of leisure are important within the context of its effects and demonstrates rationale for influence on leisure engagement by the parents and carers.

Szabo et al. (2003) worked with 20 higher education adolescents in the United Kingdom in a qualitative study. Using the Spielberger State Anxiety Inventory, the abbreviated version of the profile of mood states inventory and exercising equipment, the authors found that humour, music appreciation and exercise engagement helped improve mood and decrease anxiety. Additionally, Snowball and Szabo (1999) found that viewing aesthetic scenery through video had a similar contribution and thus has the potential to help prevent a detriment of mental health through the experience of joy. The study concluded that the effects of participating in leisure pursuits on health are substantial through the opportunity to develop social, behavioural, athletic, and scholastic competencies, which, together with Passmore's (2003) findings regarding the development of competencies, helps strengthen self-efficacy and self-worth (Bandura, 1977). As found by Passmore (2003), these were strong predictors of the state of mental health. This highlights and introduces associations with adolescents' holistic development during leisure.

2.2.3 Leisure and holistic development

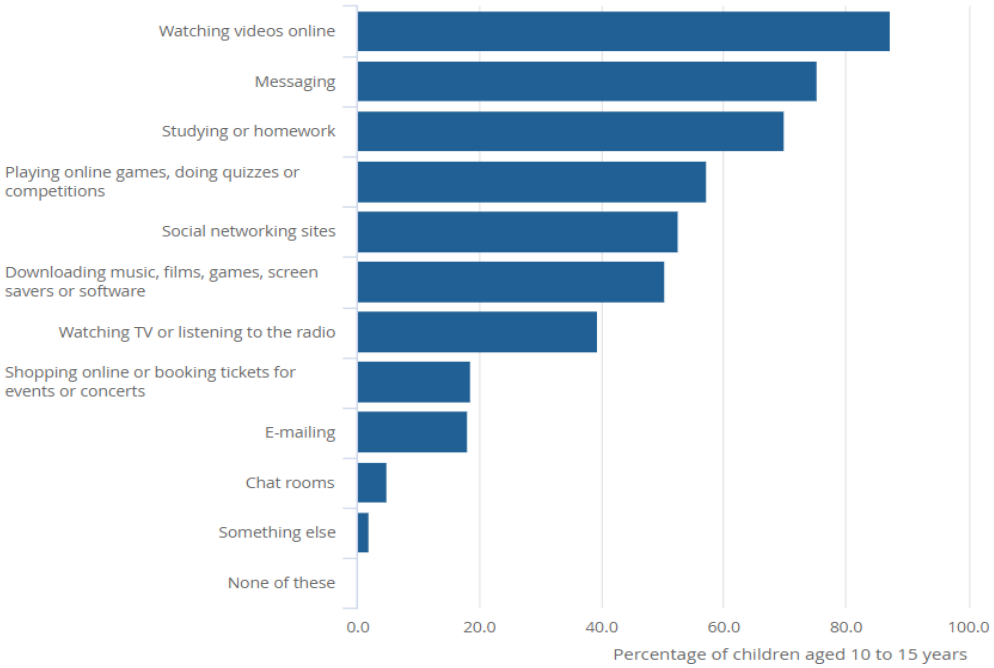
Leisure is a powerful context which offers adolescents an arena for holistic development. While the findings of Coatsworth et al. (2006) were previously discussed regarding the associations of leisure with wellbeing, the authors also highlight that meaningful leisure has a higher probability of making a valuable contribution to the development of identity, competence and initiative. This is through adolescents choosing to engage in leisure that they can use to define themselves. The study found that most adolescents were able to find contexts during leisure which allowed them to discover and/or create their identity. Eccles et al. (2003) provided a leisure literature summary and agreed that leisure is associated with holistic development. Additionally, Caldwell and Witt (2011) concur based on their literature overview. However, Rich (2003) highlights that involvement in meaningful and social leisure are the two required factors for achieving these benefits associated with identity development.

Leisure engagement allows adolescents to learn about themselves and the world while developing relationships with themselves, their families, friends, and their environment. Hunter and Csikszentmihalyi (2003) conducted a qualitative study with 1215 11-18-year-old adolescents in the United States. The authors argued that leisure engagement which offers an experience of interest, thus be self-expressive and autonomous, is more strongly associated with developing social and emotional skills. Larson (2000) supports this in his youth development work, claiming that adolescents identify their strengths and weaknesses during social leisure engagement, which contribute to developing personal skills. Asiliskender (2004) mirrors this, highlighting that personal characteristics developed during participation in leisure enables individuals to distinguish each other and their belonging within society. Adolescents who are conscious of their social skills-set, but also their weaknesses, as well as knowledge regarding their belonging within a society, are more likely to effectively respond to the fast-changing world and adapt (Hellstrom et

al., 2015). Fredricks and Eccles (2005) argues that through leisure engagement, adolescents develop an understanding of their values and worldviews and gain civic skills through interacting with friends and family. This contributes to the development of an identity. This is important because individuals who are conscious of their sense of belonging within society fulfil a vital function in developing healthy and robust societies through age-appropriate skills development (Karasu,2020). However, Shaw et al. (1995) worked with a sample of 73 15-16-year-old adolescents in the United States. The authors argued that participation in physical activities was more likely to make a valuable contribution to identity development for females, but not males. This highlights long-term implications of engagement in leisure during secondary school age range.

While leisure engagement known in a traditional in-person and outdoor nature has positive associations with holistic development, online engagement during leisure also has relevant associations. Iman and Boostani (2012) worked with 20 secondary school adolescents in Iran, and using qualitative interviews, found that almost 75% of adolescents have gone online during leisure. The Office for National Statistics (2021) data demonstrates a range of activities enabling online leisure engagement in England (figure 1.2), highlighting that the most common activities children undertook while online were watching videos online and messaging, followed by messaging, playing online games and visiting social network sites.

Figure 2: Adolescent online engagement (Office for National Statistics, 2021)



This is important because Taghi-Iman and Boostani (2012) identified that going online offered adolescents the power of choice and being free of adult supervision and control. This is because adolescents enjoyed watching romantic films due to the opportunity to relate to, for example, the loving characters in the films: adolescents who felt attraction towards a partner within their social crowd reported that watching romantic films helped develop the necessary skills to approach a partner. This highlights an aspect of identity development because adolescents are shaping their identity through social learning and are adapting the behaviour of the models in the films. Adolescents can enjoy their freedom and can autonomously explore the world around them and establish interests which are likely to continue into adulthood (Caldwell and Witt, 2011) and this is relevant because technological innovation led to an era of childhood fulfilled with technology, thus this reflects development. Scott and Willits (1998) conducted a longitudinal study with 1374 adolescents and found that adolescent leisure participation was one of the stronger predictors of adult leisure participation. Angelini et al. (2022) conducted a study with 744 secondary school adolescents in Italy and found that social media engagement is

supportive in the context of friendship relations during adolescence. This further strengthens the understanding of the association that leisure has with identity development.

However, adolescents take it upon themselves to expose themselves to the online world as education on this in schools is limited, because schools' management and in some cases, teachers lack resources, skills, and competencies to deliver education using innovative methods, yet alone educate their adolescents regarding digital technologies and the future in that context (Godhe et al., 2019). Iivari et al. (2020) highlight that schools have already been abruptly forced forward with their digital technology development due to the covid-19 pandemic and the need for remote and online education. However, the authors argue that education needs a digital transformation to promote sustainability in education by educating the young generation sustainably and enabling successful digital futures in its use and innovation. Putting this in the context of leisure and the associations with holistic development, adolescents are exploring the online world in their free time, highlighting an association with identity development because adolescents meet individuals (models) with whom they can build relationships. While associations of leisure with identity development discussed throughout this section have been identified, Caldwell and Faulk (2013) claim that additional research is required to gain an adequate understanding of the associations of leisure with forming an identity. While this body of research requires more work, it is an emerging area demonstrating benefits of leisure associated with identity development.

2.2.4 Influence on engagement in activities during leisure time

Benefits associated with leisure and how they affect adolescents have been explored through a wide range of lenses in this chapter. Evidence for the benefits associated with leisure encourages the organisation of out-of-school time to ensure optimum benefits. While extra-curricular activities are not included in the national curriculum, thus

participation in such activities is not obligatory, they are encouraged by schools and are usually organised by parents (Bartkus et al., 2012). However, the nature of the leisure and extra-curriculum engagement defines the extent to which these portray the discussed benefits because this defines whether adolescents find the experience meaningful through the extent to which the engagement is self-expressive and autonomous (Testoni et al., 2018). Strandell (2013) points out that out-of-school time is increasingly controlled, protected and organised through its structure and the environment in which it happens. Mayall (2002) supports this claim, highlighting that the balance between leisure and work has weakened, emphasising that education is often incorporated into leisure and extra-curricular activities. Dahlberg (2009) extends this by highlighting that the autonomy in the organisation of leisure, and self-centred play, are becoming a less often experienced luxury, while Strandell (2013) and Thomson and Philo (2004) highlight that it is common for autonomous leisure not to be available to all. There is an increased risk for conflict between adolescents' independent leisure desires and societal expectations for that time. Implications of this will be discussed in this section of the review demonstrating the risk for adolescents' autonomous and self-expressive leisure time to be limited through this time being fulfilled with responsibilities rather than leisure, unconsciously minimising the opportunity for the above discussed positive associations with subjective wellbeing, health, and holistic development.

2.2.5 Rationale for the influence on engagement in activities during leisure time

Forsberg and Strandell (2007) highlight that adolescents increasingly spend their leisure at home, and the authors highlight that this often leads to isolation. Imposing influence to organise leisure time to limit isolation can be understood from that point of view. Additionally, Pope and Miles (2013) found that 87% of 8838 adolescents attending 16 secondary schools enjoyed their organised after-school activities. This was the case providing that the engagement did not exceed 4 hours per day or 20 hours per week, after

which participants demonstrated emotional implications such as lack of sleep or higher stress levels in comparison to participants below this level of engagement.

However, the extent to which leisure time offers autonomous engagement in recreational activities is debatable based on Lehto and Eskelinen's (2020) research in Finland, who argued that adolescents do not see free time as leisure when it is organised for them. This is important because it defines the extent to which adolescents experience leisure and its associations. While leisure has positive associations with health, wellbeing and holistic development as explored in this chapter so far, Fredricks and Simpkins (2013) highlight that extra-curricular programmes, operating within leisure time alongside homework, are likely to positively affect adolescents' academic, social, and behavioural performance skills. As such, extra-curricular activities are more frequently incorporated into out-of-school time. Additionally, Denault and Dery (2015) highlight that extra-curricular participation leads to better psychological and behavioural outcomes. This is relevant because extra-curricular participation is increasingly organised and thus involves external control.

Research has established associations of organised out-of-school time with physical health, academic success, and reduced rates of early education dropout. Fröberg et al. (2020) worked with 3477 adolescents aged 11-18 in Sweden. Using online questionnaires, the authors established that adolescents that took part in organised physical extra-curricular activities, were generally, less sedentary. Additionally, participation of those individuals in the organised physical activities was more likely to make a meaningful contribution to those individuals reaching their physical activity recommendations because these activities were organised regularly, in contrast to adolescents who did not participate in such organised leisure. Covay and Carbanoro (2010) extend this, having worked with 21260 children aged 8-9 and found associations with higher test scores. The authors suggested a mediation tactic for the impact of the relationship between

socioeconomic status and achievement, claiming that it is possible for adolescents who participate in sports to benefit and perform better academically. Fredricks and Eccles (2006), Marsh and Kleitman (2002), and Morris (2015) support this claim. Additionally, Mahoney (2000) worked with 175 children aged 6-18 in Norway and found associations between extra-curricular participation and reduced rates of early education dropout and criminal arrest. Eccles and Barber (1999); Shernoff (2010); Neely and Vaquera (2016); Meier et al. (2018) support this claim, while Morris (2016), Mahoney et al. (2003) and Barber et al. (2001) found that participating in extra-curricular activities can lead to a higher probability of pursuing higher education. This highlights the rationale for a positive attitude towards influence on leisure time organisation.

While this literature demonstrates the rational for organising leisure time adolescents, Fredricks (2012) worked with 15362 adolescents aged 15-18 and found that when adolescents spent 14 hours or more per week on extra-curricular activities, negative effects began to emerge on adolescents' wellbeing. This was established using qualitative questionnaires in the United States. This highlights that there is a need for an adequate balance here, which goes in line with homework and leisure times, previously discussed in this review, introducing complications associated with arranging leisure time.

2.2.6 Complications associated with influence on adolescent engagement in activities during leisure time

Adolescents' autonomy and self-expression is often overlooked and not considered. James and James (2012) highlight that young people's perspectives should be taken into from a young age. This is because it should be the adolescents who construct their childhood. After all, they function within it, yet Haglund and Anderson (2009.) highlight that adolescents' experience is overlooked when their after-school time is organised. This is through arranging leisure activities or extra-curricular participation. This is important because Alanen (2009) found that adolescents' life is constructed through relationships

with adults and their peers in a wide range of institutions, such as schools and after-school activity providers, highlighting the extent to which influence is present in their lives. Stebbins (2005) argues that when leisure time is organised, it is likely to lack joy and freedom and spontaneity and can become obligatory. Pieper (2009) specifically highlights that organised leisure has a lower probability of offering the opportunity to experience joy. Frones (2009) supports this claim, highlighting that even though social and education requirements mean that leisure is organised with the agenda of better developmental effects, adolescents experiencing these leisure pursuits are less likely to find them meaningful because of little input in choice. As a result, these pursuits are less likely to convey the associated benefits to the adolescent (Testoni et al., 2018). This means that there is a risk for the parent or carer to reflect their interests in the organisation of leisure for their child, which may not reflect the interests of the adolescents, leading to adolescents not experiencing joy during their leisure engagement (Lester, 2013).

While there is the rationale for organisation of leisure time, Kostenius and Öhrling (2008) further highlight that organised out-of-school time can consist of goals, thus in some cases be associated with stress and contribute to lower self-esteem, while Ziersch and Baum (2004) and Melman et al. (2007) found that organised leisure can lead to increased anxiety because adolescents are controlled to engage in activities within a goal orientated environment. Leisure time has shifted from self-initiated and traditionally outdoor-based (Valentine and McKendrick, 1997) to adult-supervised, adult-organised and indoor-based (Karsten, 2005; Skar and Krogh, 2009). Karsten (2005) supports the claim that there has been a change in how adolescents engage in leisure. Lehto and Eskelinen (2020) worked with 175 participants aged 5-18 in Finland in a visual ethnographic study. The authors question whether organised leisure should be considered leisure at all and that adolescents in their research only found leisure engagement meaningful when they could play freely and found organised leisure as a disruption. Simoncini et al. (2015) worked with early

years settings in Australia and Elvstrand and Narvanen (2016) in Sweden, and both studies mirror the recent findings of Lehto and Eskelinen (2020). This is important because it introduces the extent to which parents and students may have various definitions of leisure, and as a result, the time spent on leisure as reported by the parents may be different to the time spent on leisure as reported by the adolescents.

What the leisure literature shows is that there is great potential for associations of leisure with wellbeing, health, and holistic development, however this requires autonomous, self-directed leisure engagement. This means that some adolescents may experience these associations, while others may not to that same extent due to the influences within the immediate environment such as influence through organisation, but also the extent to which leisure is experienced because of other factors such as homework. Homework is a further variable operating within the after-school disposable time which has performed an extension role of educational experiences from the school to home environment (Marzano and Pickering, 2007). Homework is a substantial function within the after-school disposable time known to school teachers because they are the source of homework, adolescents because they complete the set homework and their parents because they create the environment for learning in the home setting (Galloway et al., 2013). The literature on homework will be explored in the remaining part of this review.

2.3 Homework

Homework is a well-established concept in education. Suskind (2012) highlights that the time that adolescents are required to spend completing homework has been continuously increasing, while Walker (2007) argue that the time spent on homework has increased since the late 1990s by 51%. This is important because adolescents spend more time completing homework than before the late 1990s, and Demerath (2009) highlight that adolescents' work involved in completing homework became societally accepted, and homework is set at schools by school teachers and enforced at home by parents.

2.3.1 Homework and academic achievement

Majority of homework studies have focused on the association between time spent on homework and academic success. Cooper et al. (2006) conducted a substantial review of research on the association between time spent on homework and academic success, and was based on conclusions of 120 studies conducted in the United States. However, the reviewed research included a mixture of primary (3-11 years old) and secondary (11-16 years old) children and adolescents. The authors concluded that, overall, there was a statistically significant correlation between time spent on homework and academic success, and that time spent on homework was likely to be the causation for this correlation. This correlation was found to be strengthened when adolescents found homework meaningful (Marzano and Pickering, 2007). Cooper et al. (2006) identified 32 studies that acknowledged a correlation between time spent on homework (as reported either by the adolescent or parent) and various measures of academic success (ranging from class grades to standardised testing). This included a range of subjects (appendix one). Correlation between time spent on homework and academic success at secondary school level was identified as r=.25, highlighting the reason to set homework in secondary education from an attainment perspective.

However, while the review identified a statistically significant correlation between these two variables, other studies did not identify such correlation (Bents-Hill et al., 1988; Cooper et al., 1998; Epstein, 1998; Rozevink, 1995; Smith, 1990; Vazsonyi and Pickering, 2003; Wynstra, 1995). Moreover, those studies haven't identified the rationale for the increase in achievement, only a relationship between homework and academic development. Yet, studies such as by Carr (2013) refer to the review claiming that homework ensures academic success. Also, these correlations reported by Cooper et al. (2006) were modest (appendix one). This means that homework does not always improve academic outcomes, and this is important because of this contradiction, homework

research fails to inform national policy. Additionally, both Cooper et al. (2006) and Marzano and Pickering (2007) recommend that homework practices should be well-planned, and be guided by purpose rather than procedure. Homework has been researched extensively, but additional research is required to enhance the understanding of the effects of homework. Bempechat (2004) highlights that despite the long history of homework, it continues to be a contested practice. This is because of the various and contradictory findings regarding the effects of homework, despite extensive statistical homework research. Additionally, Trautwein and Koller (2003) highlight that the impact of homework on attainment is only partly understood because studies report conflicting results. Cooper et al. (2006) highlight this to be dependent on circumstances and influences from the surrounding environment of adolescents. Wilkins (2021) and Fernandez-Alonso et al. (2017) highlight that homework practices which do not consider unique circumstance student factors are ineffective. This highlights that the environment within which homework operates is important when attempting to understand the effects of homework.

While historically the research on homework has not been able to conclude on whether homework supplements academic success, recent research on homework is becoming more precise in the understanding of the association between time spent on homework and academic success. Al-Bahrani et al. (2022) conducted a quantitative study which found that the imposition of homework to adolescents with a high academic performance record is harmful to their academic progression based on their achievement measured through exam grades, while adolescents with lower academic performance were found to develop better academically with regular homework tasks considering their exam results. Dolean and Lervag (2022) found that setting homework and increasing it at regular intervals had a more meaningful effect on the standard of adolescents' writing, thus contributing to the argument that homework assists with academic development.

However, the study also found that a considerable increase was curvilinear. This study was homework limited to only working with 433 year three children from six primary schools in Romania. In contrast, Cooper et al. (2006) have previously concluded against the correlation between homework and achievement in primary schools. Hallam (2004) in a summary of homework evidence did not make recommendations for how much time adolescents should spend completing homework, while the UK Education Endowment Foundation toolkit advises teachings and school leaders that quality of homework tasks is more likely to make a meaningful contribution to academic success than the quantity of it.

Homework task type and task difficulty are two factors which are important considering effectiveness of homework. Ramdass and Zimmerman (2011) claims that homework task type is a far more substantial factor associated with academic success, rather than time spent on homework. Platonova et al. (2022) highlights that adolescents can become discouraged and begin to dislike a subject due to the homework task being too difficult. However, this review was limited to focusing on homework within the science subject. Fan et al. (2017) conducted a 30-year meta-analysis between 1986 and 2016 and agrees with this claim. Additionally, Medwell and Wray (2019) highlight that homework is most effective considering academic development when it is used as an extension to current school work rather than as a tool to introduce new topics. This was a mixed methods sequential study which utilised questionnaires in stage one and follow-up interview in stage two, but again is limited to investigating this in primary schools. Pan and Rickard (2018) highlight in their review of literature that completing homework through revising exam answers increases exam achievement. This highlights that homework set as exam revision is more likely to be associated with academic success. This also highlights the specification to which the relationship between homework and academic development is limited. These recent findings are more specific and enable a more accurate understanding

of the effects of homework. Rosario et al. (2015) worked with 26 teachers who teach English as a foreign language in Portugal in six secondary schools, and the authors agree, while Keith et al. (2004) conducted a study based on data drawn from a National Education Longitudinal Study in the United States. The data was sourced from secondary school adolescents, and the study concluded that only homework completed during out-of-school hours correlated with achievement, whereas homework completed during school hours did not. Additionally, Ozyildririm (2021) claims based on data sourced between 1995 and 2015 from 488 independent and international studies with a total sample of 429,970 adolescents, that adolescents who spend time on homework at a medium level were more likely to thrive academically. Based on this, it could be argued that moderate homework time can have the optimum effect on academic achievement.

What these studies have in common is that there is an absence of a conclusion on the optimum homework time other than a moderate homework time recommendation, which is vague. For example, Lam (1996) identified, based on a sample of Caucasian American and Asian American adolescents, that the associations between homework and attainment disappeared completely when adolescents reported 7 to 12 hours of homework per week. However, this study was limited to 6th form year 13 equivalent (referred to as 12th grade in the study). The Lam (1996) study suggests homework best effect on attainment to be when adolescents receive between 1.5 and 2.5 homework per night, but research on the optimum homework time is limited. Consequently, there is a misconception that homework is associated with academic success, with the assumption that higher time spent on homework is more likely to lead to academic success, which to the previously discussed societal assumptions which influence the amount of time spent on homework. However, research does not confirm this (Cooper, et al., 2006). This means that adolescents have less available time for leisure because the after school disposable time is dedicated to completing homework.

While there is evidence to believe that homework is a powerful tradition and is present in education, Cooper et al. (1989) highlight that homework is not always set by all school teachers. Additionally, the authors highlight that not all students complete the set homework tasks. This means that whatever the effects of homework on academic success are, it may vary between schools and adolescents, and this is likely to depend on the time that adolescents actually spend on homework, in contrast to the amount of time that they are expected to spend completing the set homework tasks. This highlights the significance of homework policy guiding the practice of homework.

With this debate in mind, the current body of research fails to confirm whether homework explicitly improves academic development or whether other factors influence this relationship. It has therefore not been possible for the homework literature to inform national education policy due to the controversy in the field of research. However, Scott and Glaze (2017) highlight that local school policies impact the practice of homework. Holland et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study with six secondary schools and found that only two of those schools had homework policies. This is important because school homework policies directly impact teacher practice through dictating the amount of time students are to be expected to spend completing homework, and whether homework is expected to be handed back in, highlighting motivation for completing homework (Pollard, 2023). National data reflecting that adolescents are stressed by the imposition of homework is also important in this context, because Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study (2020) found that based on data from 2018, England, along with six other countries (out of 45), ranked highest for the level of school work pressures among 15-year-olds. In addition, the Good Childhood report (2020) identified that adolescents in England are currently most stressed about school, specifically followed by homework. This demonstrates the effect of the current approach to education in England

and introduces the literature on non-academic impact of homework, considering inconclusive homework and achievement research.

2.3.2 Effects of homework on other, non-academic concepts such as leisure

While there is evidence that homework has the potential to positively affect academic outcomes at the secondary school level, the imposition of homework can also introduce other, non-academic, effects on adolescents. More recent research started to explore these non-academic effects, within the areas of health, wellbeing, and holistic development.

2.3.2.1 Health, wellbeing, and holistic development

Homework is likely to negatively affect the health, as well as wellbeing of adolescents. Pomerantz et al. (2006) argues both stress and conflict between teachers, adolescents and parents is likely to be caused by homework. Conner et al. (2010) conducted a study with 3645 12–16-year-old adolescents from seven secondary schools and found that 60.3% of those adolescents dropped a leisure activity because of homework. This study was based on questionnaires with open-ended questions. Moreover, 70% of the adolescents reported feeling stressed about the homework and were spending an average of 3.07 hours on homework per night. This highlights a non-academic effect of homework because adolescents reported decreasing a leisure activity. This is important considering the positive associations of leisure with health, wellbeing and holistic development discussed in the earlier section of this review.

Similarly, Galloway et al. (2013) conducted a study with 4317 14-18-year-old adolescents from ten high-performing secondary schools and identified that adolescents spent, on average, 3.11 hours on homework per night, which resulted in 72% of adolescents reporting often or always feeling stressed. Moreover, the authors found 82% adolescents reported at least one physical symptom. Only less than 1% confirmed that homework was not a stressor, while 63% reported that homework limited time to interact with family and

friends. Finally, 61% of the students indicated that they gave up an activity they enjoyed because of homework.

Kennedy and Kouzma (2002) conducted a study with 369 16–18-year-olds and based on one week homework diary and self-reported self-stress scale as measures, the authors established that adolescents spent between ten to 65 hours per week on homework. The authors also identified that time spent on homework was positively associated with stress, depression, and anxiety. However, this study was limited to working with the older age range, thus not across the year groups at secondary school level. These studies highlight associations with the wellbeing of adolescents through the concept of subjective wellbeing because stress appears to be associated with happiness and life satisfaction, which are the critical characteristics of subjective wellbeing (Dolan et al., 2012). This highlights the extent to which homework is associated with wellbeing. There is, however, an absence of explicit detail regarding the cause of stress in those two studies. Tuncay et al. (2020) extend this, arguing based on conclusions gathered using questionnaires with a Likert-type scale that measured related daily routines, educational stress, workload and exams and social relationships, that the application of high pressure on knowledge retention is a contributing factor to adolescents' stress. However, this study was conducted with higher education adolescents aged 18 years and above.

Gombert-Waldron (2020) published The Good Childhood Report, which reflected a national voice of both primary and secondary school children and revealed that 66% of children in England felt stressed about homework or exams, enriching the understanding of stress in education informed by research. This finding highlights a non-academic effect of homework. Additionally, Leung et al. (2010) investigated this further with 1173 9-13-year-old participants using questionnaires. Authors measured academic stress, emotional support, time spent with other children and the level of anxiety, arguing that feeling overwhelmed and stressed by homework time contributes explicitly to an increase in

anxiety, which is a further characteristic of subjective wellbeing (Dolan et al., 2012). The previously discussed study by Galloway et al. (2013) found that school pressure such as setting homework can hinder holistic development and mental health through stress. In contrast to imposition of high time spent on homework, the American Psychological Association (2014) found that reducing school pressures and stress can increase attainment through giving adolescents greater concentration. This demonstrates the extent to which homework effects have a range of dimensions and can impact health and wellbeing of adolescents through stress.

While reducing the school related pressures can help increase academic success, stress explicitly was found to be detrimental to holistic development of adolescents. Westheimer et al. (2011) highlight the significance of stress considering development because stress is a detriment to the cognition of an individual, the functioning, and the immune response, which Carrion and Wong (2012) highlight that stress can consequently lead to a detriment in critical thinking and the ability to make informed decisions. This means that there is a risk of impacting the holistic development, because of a stressful and overwhelming education environment.

The previously discussed Galloway et al. (2013) study found that an increase in time spent on homework led to adolescents reported better engagement with academic content, but at the same time adolescents reported stress, physical health problems and a lack of balance between work and leisure. Gilbert (1999) raises concerns due to a link of homework to insomnia, headaches, anxiety, and depression. Kralovec and Buell (2000) concur, while Warton (2001) extends this by highlighting that homework can deny access to leisure. This is because adolescents may not have time available to spend on leisure when homework is positioned to be completed during their non-instructional time, alongside non-academic responsibilities such as employment. Coutts (2004) supports this claim, while Kralovec and Buell (2000) highlight that family time is a different out-of-

school factor that takes up the disposable time available for leisure. Staff et al. (2020) discussed the results of a longitudinal study based on a sample of 25,210 13-19 year old adolescents and concluded that non-academic responsibilities such as employment are a risk factor for poor academic achievement and dropout of education, while Mortimer (2010) discussed results of another longitudinal study based on 1000 14-16 year old adolescents and highlighted that employment can have both positive and negative effects on adolescents, and that it is important for employment not to be extreme in intensity and duration, highlighting the need for a balance between work and school, however, the study did not include leisure within that context. The discussed factors highlight the importance to identify the amount of time spent on homework, non-academic responsibilities, and leisure, to explore the most current level of balance between work and leisure to understand the extent of pressure and stress experienced by adolescents considering the importance of leisure and homework to adolescents. This will enable a greater and more accurate understanding of the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure through the discussed wellbeing, health, and holistic development associations.

Sleep has also been found to be impacted by homework. Conner et al. (2010) found that adolescents were staying up late and getting up early to complete homework. Ren et al. (2017) concur, adding established associations with depression because of limited sleep, while Galloway et al. (2013) report that 63% of adolescents reported that homework was a barrier to achieving the national recommended 8.5-9.5 hours of sleep for the age range included in the sample. This means that adolescents feel tired because they do not get adequate rest explicitly because of homework. Moreover, Eide and Showalter (2012) found a negative correlation between r-0.285 and r=0.593 between sleep and academic achievement. Since tiredness reduces academic performance (Eide and Showalter, 2012), this highlights a potential risk of a non-academic effect of homework on achievement,

not just wellbeing. While homework can have positive associations with achievement, there is a claim to be made of the cost at which this comes to the wellbeing of adolescents.

Considering the research on the relationship between homework and academic achievement, there is reason to set homework from the perspective of academic success, however, homework will not always result in academic development. Furthermore, other non-academic effects of homework explicitly affect adolescents' sleep as discussed in this section, alongside the effects on wellbeing, health, and holistic development.

2.4 Rationale

This chapter has reviewed the current body of research focusing on the importance of leisure and homework to adolescents as two separate concepts. Both leisure and homework activities add value to adolescents' health, wellbeing, and holistic development. However, as argued by Cooper et al. (2006) and as reported by PISA (2018), the imposition of homework impacts adolescents' opportunity to engage in leisure activities. This is important because adolescents are typically assigned some sort of homework throughout their educational experience (Cooper et al., 2006; Moorhourse, 2021), therefore the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure are valuable of researching, considering the positive associations of leisure with health, wellbeing, and holistic development. Additionally, homework can deny leisure (Cooper and Valentine, 2010), and the understanding of the extent to which this affects adolescents' leisure remains unexplained. However, the substantial part of the homework research on its effects has been conducted in the United States. Research on this in England is more limited. The current body of homework research also highlights that homework affects leisure; however, the significant proportion of this research does not demonstrate the extent to which this is the case. The present study addresses these gaps. Considering that an investigation of such kind is absent within the existing body of literature, this work makes an original contribution to this field of literature in England. Furthermore, the present

study also aimed to respond to the need for further mixed methods research designs in homework research, offering a more thorough investigation into this area of education. As a result, the present study aimed to establish the time spent on leisure, homework, and non-academic responsibilities, as well as attitudes towards homework, considering the effects that homework has on adolescents' leisure. To achieve these aims, the following research questions have been put together to guide this original contribution through collecting data from secondary school adolescents, parents, and school teachers:

1. How much homework is being set?
2. How much time are adolescents spending on homework?
3. Do adolescents have non-academic responsibilities and if so, how much time are they spending on them?
4. How much leisure time are adolescents getting?
5. What attitudes do adolescents, parents and teachers have towards homework?
6. What effects of homework are being observed on the adolescents' leisure time?

3.0 Methodology

This chapter discusses the research paradigm which informed the selection of methods that were used to collect data. Ontological underpinnings and the epistemological stance both informed the selection of the mixed methods research design. Therefore, both of these concepts are discussed in this chapter as foundation factors. The chapter provides a critical overview of the selected methods to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, and the rationale for those methods in light of the research questions of the present study. This is structured systematically throughout this chapter, with discreet sections, each concluding the rationale for the undertaken approach for the present study in each section in this chapter.

3.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm represents the researcher's viewpoints, and guides research decisions through the set of beliefs, values, attitudes, procedures, and techniques (Trochim and Donnely, 2006). A range of methodologies are available for educational research is social sciences. However, both ontological and epistemological stances must dictate the chosen methodological approach in order to answer the research questions using objective practice (Bashir et al., 2008). This is because ontological underpinnings present the nature of reality that is to be investigated (Rawnsley, 1998), while the epistemological stances show the doctrine of knowing reality (Audi, 2010). Both ontology and epistemology must therefore inform the methodological choices to aid the objective process of answering the research questions, through reflecting on the nature of reality, and taking into account how new knowledge can be obtained within a particular reality.

3.1.1 Ontological underpinnings

The research philosophy is based on the currently available literature that led to the belief that there is no single reality of leisure. As noted in the literature review chapter, the body of research about leisure demonstrates that there is no single reality of leisure because the definitions of leisure are constructed by individuals with a range of different perspectives. This is because the literature about leisure revealed that in instances when a parent structures or organises a leisure activity for the adolescent, it is possible that this adolescent will not consider this to be a leisure activity because of the differences in the construction of the reality of leisure from that perspective. As discussed throughout the literature review chapter, this is because of the influences from within the immediate and wider contexts, the range in the level of autonomy in leisure engagement, and the extent of self-centred leisure experience. These factors are important in shaping the reality of leisure, that determine whether the associations of leisure with health, wellbeing, and holistic development are present in the given reality of leisure, and the extent to which this shapes that reality. Consequently, there is no single reality of leisure, and this reality is socially constructed within the given environment from the given perspective.

On the other hand, the reality of homework is more rigid, given that when school teachers set homework tasks, there is a single reality of this because the homework is set in its present form and needs to be completed, despite the adolescents' perspective on homework. The single reality of this is emphasized through the societal belief that homework is part of the educational experience, and the extent to which this influences homework behaviour (Hallam, 2004). However, interpretation of the effects of homework on adolescents are less rigid, which contributes to the interpretation of the single reality of homework.

Effects of homework can be interpreted differently from different perspectives. As noted by Cooper et al. (2006), the academic and non-academic effects of homework vary

through the range in effects that homework has on adolescents and contradictions in the conclusions regarding the effects of homework. According to the authors, these contradictions are likely to stem from various perspectives due to the environment within which homework operates such as home and school. For example, parents can create a positive or a negative environment for study at home, while different teachers can expect different amounts of time to be spent on homework based on attitudes towards homework. This influences the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure, because higher time spent on homework leaves less disposable time available for leisure. Additionally, adolescents are likely to view effects of homework on their leisure from the immediate perspective, in that their immediate effect on wellbeing through, for example, less disposable time on leisure. Parents and teachers on the other hand are likely to view effects of this from the long-term perspective, with academic success in mind, creating contradiction in the perception of the effects of homework on leisure from those various perspectives. This is important because it can lead to various interpretations of the effects of homework on leisure, however, the single reality of homework remains in place, which introduces the epistemological stance discussed in the below section.

3.1.2 Epistemological stance

The epistemological stance in light of the discussed ontological underpinnings was interpretative. Rationale for this was that there was no single reality of leisure, and that the reality of leisure was created and interpreted within the given social contexts. Homework, a function of education, operating within the socially constructed reality of leisure, introduced consequent effects on leisure, but these were socially constructed alongside the reality of leisure within the given contexts which were experienced during the construction of the reality of leisure. An epistemological stance was initially considered to be phenomenological, however, the interpretative stance was deemed more suitable for the reality of leisure, and the extent to which this reality was socially

constructed and interpreted by the individuals, while the effects of homework were also interpreted in the given context. In light of this, data had to be collected from various secondary schools to accurately establish an understanding of time spent on homework, and time available for leisure, and the effects that this has on adolescents' leisure from the perspective of adolescents, parents and school teachers. This was important as previously explained due to the various interpretations of the effects of homework. This stemmed from the currently available literature because this was likely to vary between schools given that previous research reports variations in the range of time spent on homework (Galloway et al., 2013; Kennedy and Kouzma, 2002). With this in mind, it was important to collect data from schools with and without homework policies to establish a more accurate understanding of time spent on homework and leisure in comparison to collecting data from one setting which would not enable such an extent of this understanding.

While it was important to gather quantitative leisure and homework time data from various schools, it was also important to collect data to represent the various perspectives. Parents are within the immediate home environment and are in position of influencing homework and leisure behaviour and observe effects of homework on leisure on a daily basis (Cooper et al., 2006). The adolescent perspective was crucial, because adolescents directly experienced the effects of homework on their leisure, so it was important to take their perspective into account. Finally, the teacher perspective was important because teachers set homework, and it was important to find out the rationale for setting homework because this can influence the expected time spent on homework (Coutts, 2004).

In addition, in this study, the parents and school headteachers were the gatekeepers to access to adolescents for recruitment, and as such, the voices of the parent, school teacher, and adolescent were all considered important to capture for this project. As such, this was

an interpretive study, so it was important to consider all three stakeholder perspectives with no extra weight for either. In this manner, all voices could be heard as each had a different perspective to tell.

3.2 Selection of mixed methods design

Researchers historically argued for either a quantitative or qualitative paradigm, which Gage (1989) referred to as the paradigm wars. Researchers tend to eliminate the originality of the other paradigm and argue for the relevance of their choice in light of the nature of their research. While both quantitative and qualitative paradigms offer unique characteristics contributing to a wide range of individual research requirements, mixed methods, a third paradigm, provides a mixture of quantitative and qualitative characteristics, and can be more robust than a single paradigm alone because of inclusion of quantitative and qualitative data (Coe et al., 2017). Creswell and Guetterman (2021) highlight that this methodological approach draws on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, while Denscombe (2008) highlights that this paradigm offers the stability of one paradigm to contribute to the weaker aspect of the other, contributing to the use of a more robust approach.

Triangulation is a characteristic enabled by a mixed methods design. Denscombe (2008) highlights that mixed methods offer triangulation, and that this helps to reduce bias and subjectivity within qualitative research. Flick (2002) highlights data triangulation to be defined by different sources of data. Wilson (2014) discusses a further type of triangulation, namely investigator triangulation, which involves using several people in the data collection process. Finally, methodological triangulation, which involves more than one method to collect data. Methodological triangulation enabled implementation of both objective quantitative and subjective qualitative paradigms into a single research

design. This is important because the qualitative data can help confirm the meaning of the quantitative data, which can help make the investigation more robust. The qualitative approach also enables an investigation into the why and how a phenomenon occurs, while the quantitative enables an investigation into the casual relationships, generalisability, and the magnitude of effect (Fetters, et al., 2013). Miles (2014) argue that a mixture of quantitative and qualitative paradigms is a strong mix. With this in mind, Denzin and Lincoln (2008) recognise that there is a need for a less divided approach to research paradigms to enable greater dialogue between quantitative and qualitative research, while Brannen (2005) adds that this would allow the researchers to take advantage of the convergence of both paradigms. Gorard and Taylor (2004) highlight this discussed approach has given way to mixed research.

The mixed methods research design is based on the utilisation of multiple methods to collect data to answer research questions within a single study (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). Draucker et al. (2020) argues that the mixed methods approach is popular within the social sciences research field because it answers complex research questions through a combination of two powerful paradigms, given opportunity to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, while Subedi (2016) highlights that it is flexible through a range of approaches which can be undertaken to collect data through being able to use multiple methods. The authors, argue that a mixed methods paradigm has the potential of moving towards research practices that improve educational standards through combining the two paradigms into a single study, thus having a more robust impact, in comparison to using a single paradigm alone. Edmonds and Kennedy (2019) highlight that there is an opportunity for the primary focus being either on the quantitative or qualitative paradigm. Qualitative data can be used to clarify quantitative findings, in which case the primary focus would be on the quantitative results because that would be the primary data source to answer the research questions. On the other hand, the quantitative data can facilitate

the general picture and context for the qualitative analysis to further explain the quantitative data. Therefore, the primary focus would be qualitative analysis in this case. Moreover, quantitative and qualitative methods can also have equal weight and be the primary focus.

The mixed methods approach can be used sequentially or concurrently. For example, Creswell and Guetterman (2021) highlight that quantitative and qualitative data collection can take place at the same time concurrently, working together to provide answers to the research questions. On the other hand, this can happen sequentially, with the follow-up not being possible until the initial data collection stage is complete. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018) highlight that the quantitative data is effective in providing the context for a qualitative follow-up, while Creswell and Guetterman (2021) extend this by claiming that the qualitative data can be used to understand the quantitative data while providing the context to enrich the opportunity for a more comprehensive follow-up. However, authors highlight that the explanatory aspect of the sequential approach is limited to a context within which stage one data emerges that begs for further investigation. This is important because it is not certain that data will emerge from stage one, which will appeal for further analysis.

The sequential approach also helps ensure that a complete data set is collected. De-Vaus (1996) highlights that using two methods sequentially helps avoid ending up with data which fails to contribute to answering the research questions, for example stage one data being vague or unclear. A sequential approach helps address this because if such data is identified during stage one, it can be explored further to gain clarity in stage two using probe questions to dig deeper into the insufficient data (Creswell and Guetterman, 2021). Consequently, this approach helps to limit the risk of ending up with preliminary data.

In the current project, two methods were working together sequentially, namely: (1) questionnaires collecting both quantitative and qualitative data and (2) follow-up semi-structured interviews collecting qualitative data. Qualitative follow-up data was the primary data collection means because it enabled the collection of richer data to emerge post questionnaire in stage one. The stage one open-ended questions in the questionnaire assisted to understand the follow-up interview data, and vice versa.

Without the initial quantitative data collected by the questionnaire, the qualitative follow-up interview would lack the depth of initial understanding of the current context to be explored in detail (Ivankova et al., 2006). The explanatory element would be limited because the methods would collect data simultaneously without the opportunity to inform one another. Using questionnaires and follow-up interviews concurrently would again limit the richness because the transfer of pure information from the participants to the researcher would be more limited (Oppenheim, 1992). This is because the aspect of enrichment of stage one data would be absent through the stage two process lacking the unpacking of data collected in stage one. As a result, a sequential approach offers a more prosperous explanatory aspect and enriches the output data compared to using two concurrent methods. The current body of literature concerning the effects of homework is contradictory due to the previously discussed single reality of homework. Given that there is no single reality of leisure, and the absence of an investigation of the effects of homework on leisure, the present project utilised the discussed research design to fulfil this gap in literature taking into account the realities of both leisure and homework. Given that the reality of leisure is socially constructed, an explanatory research design was deemed appropriate for an interpretative epistemology.

The sequential approach also offered a validation process during which the initial data was analysed and further investigated with the same respondent. In instances where the stage one data was not accurate, and the respondent provided contradictory or vague data,

this was clarified in the follow-up to collect data which reflects how respondents feel more accurately (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2018; Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006). Considering that questionnaires have been used online and were self-administrative, Duckworth and Yeager (2015) argue that this approach imposes a higher risk for the qualitative responses in the questionnaire to lack clarity, rigour and richness. This is because the respondents complete the questionnaires in their own environment, which introduce corresponding distractions, which means that respondents can lose focus. Thus, a follow-up interview can help explore and clarify that data further while enabling the initial data to be explored for a richer investigation in the follow-up. Moreover, the questionnaires are completed without the researcher's supervision. Thus, guidance is absent on areas of confusion in the questionnaire. The sequential follow-up reduces the risk of misinterpretation or misconception in stage one data because these can be spotted, clarified and explored further in stage two. A concurrent approach doesn't offer these opportunities.

The mixed methods design was particularly suitable for researching both homework and leisure. Hong and Milgram (2000, p.5) described the homework research "as the Mississippi River: a mile wide and an inch deep). Mansfield, Daykin and Kay (2020) highlight that a multiple-method approach is useful when exploring leisure because of the range of possible perspectives and contexts within which leisure operates; thus, the mixed methods approach enables a more thorough investigation to gain an understanding of these contexts. With this in mind, the mixed methods paradigm was suitable because it enabled an initial identification of the expected versus actual homework and leisure times using the quantitative paradigm, to then explore the effects of these quantitative data on adolescents' leisure using the qualitative paradigm. Considering the discussed scope and depth of this project and the current body of research, the use of the mixed paradigm is a suitable fit for investigating the effects of homework on leisure.

3.3 Consideration of methodologies

There is a wide range of methodologies available. This section reviews a range of methods which were not selected as they would not have answered the research questions. The section then reviews the more suitable methods.

3.3.1 Focus groups

Focus groups enable an organised group discussion within a pre-selected group of participants (Coe et al., 2017). In the instance of the present study, this could be a group of, for example, adolescents or a group of parents. A strength of this method is that within a group of participants, there may be individuals within a group who feel quite strongly about a topic, and thus enjoy the given debate and feel empowered by the dynamics of the group (Holcomb et al., 2007). As such, this can lead to collection of richer data. In addition, participants within a focus group environment may feel comfortable to talk about more sensitive topics that they would not feel comfortable discussing within a one-to-one interview (Hopkins, 2007). Moreover, focus groups offer the opportunity to implement change to the structure of the focus groups in between the running of the focus groups, thus amend the angle of the investigation to dig deeper into the answers to the research questions (Wilkinson, 2011). However, given that focus groups involve a group of participants, the level of depth and interpretation of views and opinions of those participants within a group environment is limited in contrast to a one-to-one interview (Cohen et al., 2018), therefore this method was not selected.

3.3.2 Observations

Observations enable systematic observation of people, and as such, enable the researcher to capture "live" events as they happen, rather than, for example, gain an insight into the events, based on asking participants question about these events at a later date (Wellington, 2015). Observations can be fact focused, for example, observation and identification of the time that an adolescent spends on leisure. In addition, observations can be event focused, therefore observation of behaviour within a classroom. Cohen et al.

(2018) highlight that observations can offer an authentic understanding of the events which occur through capturing verbal, non-verbal and physical observations. This highlights that this method has the potential to offer a rich and contextual collection of first-hand data (Clark et al., 2009). In addition, Robson (2002) highlight that participants do not always do as they say, thus an observation offers an opportunity for a check of reality through assessment on behaviour offered by the observation. However, this method, similarly to focus groups, does not enable a rich investigation into the views and opinions of the participants through being able to ask questions, and probe, thus this method was not selected for the present project.

3.3.3 Social media based tools

Given that social media is involved in the lives of a substantial proportion of adolescents, therefore conducting media-based research on platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and YouTube is a further potential tool to collecting data (Coe et al., 2017). Substantial proportion of data shared on social media such as photos and posts, are publicly available (Thelwall et al., 2015). Social media can be used to recruit participants, observe interactions to gain an insight into beliefs, but also gain a better understanding through analysing trends (Stirling, 2015). While ethical considerations must be adhered to, especially given that some of those users may be under the age of 18, social media offers a platform through which access to mass data and participants can be obtained. However, it is challenging to validate the population of the participants whom from the data came from, therefore this makes data collection more challenging and more complex to validate (Coe et al., 2017), therefore this method was not selected given the focus of the present project.

3.3.4 Online questionnaires

Using online questionnaires remotely is simple and time efficient. Bryman (2004) highlights that questionnaires can be instantly distributed to hundreds of participants while reducing the impact of location, time and access constraints compared to having to

distribute printed questionnaires. Lefever et al. (2007) highlight that this enables access to a more extensive and diverse population.

Ilieva et al. (2002) and Matz (1999) argue that the use of online questionnaires has the potential to increase the number of responses. However, Fincham (2008) highlights that participants are less likely to complete an online questionnaire, arguing that 30% is a typical response rate compared to handing out questionnaires in a school. This can have a 100% response rate. Furthermore, Sills and Song (2002) highlight that communication with the questionnaire can be considered spam, thus, again, be less likely to be completed. The data collection procedure fulfils a vital function when using online questionnaires because the procedure helps deal with these weaknesses through an initial invitation to take part in the project, followed by a reminder to take part. However, Champagne (2014) highlights that it is important not to put excessive strain on the respondents. Therefore, the number of reminders should be limited.

A relevant questionnaire design hasn't been identified to answer the outlined research questions. Consequently, a questionnaire design has been developed to answer the research questions most accurately. It is important to acknowledge that self-developed questionnaires take time to create and require sufficient pilot testing. Wilson and McLean (1994) highlight that questionnaire designs take time to develop, test and refine and that this is important because poorly developed questionnaires can collect inaccurate data. Cohen et al. (2018) highlight that self-developed questionnaires can place excessive strain on respondents by trying to maximise respondent recall. Champagne (2014) highlights that lengthy questionnaires can contribute to putting undue pressure on the respondents. Denscombe (2008) argues that this can lead to respondents feeling tired and not completing the questionnaire in full.

A pilot test can address these weaknesses through a "dress rehearsal" of the data collection procedure (Krosnick and Presser, 2010). The pilot test can facilitate a pretest, which is helpful because it enables collecting a sample of data for analysis before collecting official data. This enables the assurance that the questionnaire collects research-related data. In addition, this process allows pilot test participants to give feedback on the questions' length and complexity and the questionnaire's overall design (Presser, et al., 2004).

For the current project, online questionnaires were a suitable method to establish the expected versus actual homework and leisure times and the effects on adolescents' leisure. Questionnaires were capable of collecting the quantitative homework and leisure data using numerical Likert-type scale questions, followed by open-ended questions to get an insight into the effects of this on adolescents' leisure. Vaziri and Mohsenzadeh (2012) highlight that it is important to use a data collection method that fits the purpose and thus collects high-quality data that answer the research questions, and a questionnaire fulfilled that purpose. Alternative data collection methods, such as interviews, have been considered instead of questionnaires. An interview can introduce richness and extend the explanatory aspect; thus, this was taken into account. However, when considering the characteristics of the research design, it was essential to collect some general stage one data to create a context for the follow-up phase. A questionnaire fulfilled that stage one purpose effectively. From the desired sample size perspective and considering the limitation of physical access to school due to the covid-19 pandemic, remote questionnaires offered a convenient and relatively straightforward route to the distribution of a high volume of questionnaires. This helped increase the probability of reaching the desired sample size to collect the general stage one data for the context of the follow-up interviews within a restricted physical access environment.

3.3.4.1 Rating scales

Holt (2014) highlights that Likert psychometric scale questions can measure broader attitudes and values. A Likert-scale question can ask respondents to indicate their opinion by selecting from a range of options on the psychometric scale (Nemoto and Beglar, 2014). Data can be gathered quickly from a large sample of participants by guiding the respondents toward providing research-related data by offering a choice of items on the scale to select from, in comparison to providing an open response which is not guided for respondent ease (Coe et al., 2017). This enables a more user friendly (for the participants) method to providing data.

It is important to consider whether forcing a choice on a Liker-scale will compromise the truthfulness of the data, in that a participant is not able to proceed to the next question without providing an answer on the Likert scale and without being able to select a mid-point on the scale. Youngman (1984) highlights that it is a natural human tendency "sit on the fence" and opt for a mid-point. Therefore, forcing participants to either agree or disagree with a topic by eradicating a neutral point on a scale is a method which can be used to deal with this habit to extract a truthful attitude from a respondent. Newby (2010) extends this, claiming that eradicating the neutral point does not impact the validity of a rating scale.

However, Friedman and Amoo (1999) highlight that forcing respondents to express an opinion when they may not have one; thus, with a force function in place, respondents may select a response that does not accurately reflect their opinion. For example, while homework is an integral part of the education system in England (Cooper et al., 2006), some participants may not have an opinion about it because homework is not always set in every school (Cooper et al., 2006). Cohen et al. (2018) argue that forcing participants to decide by removing a neutral point may introduce flaws in the data set because participants are forced to choose at the moment, which may not accurately reflect how

they feel. To minimise the impact of this weakness on the robustness of the approach, a questionnaire design can include a Likert scale-type item with an open-ended follow-up question, which requires participants to justify their Likert scale response to increase the extent to which data is accurate in that the participant has to justify the selection (Check and Schutt, 2012). This is because these two questionnaire items together enable a comparison of the data provided to ensure that the answers are justifiable, thus, more likely to reflect how the respondents feel. This helps ensure that the data provided is more accurate though initially forcing the respondent willing to answer a question by either agreeing or disagreeing. Cohen et al. (2018) also highlight that using a Likert scale alone limits the extent to which response truthfulness can be assessed. This is because there is an absence of the possibility to determine the extent to which a respondent selects an honest answer.

In the context of the present study, the purpose of using a Likert scale was to identify attitudes towards homework. It was used to collect ordinal data to explore opinions and perspectives; thus, obtaining interval data was unnecessary because the Likert scale questions were used to identify variables without the need to measure differences between them. Therefore, treating data as ordinal was suitable (Oppenheim, 1992).

A 4-point scale was most suitable because it forced the respondents to either agree or disagree with homework by presenting the extent to which they agree or disagree by selecting from (1) agree, (2) slightly agree, (3) slightly disagree or (4) disagree with homework. A neutral point was eradicated to identify the attitude which is either in support homework or against homework. In addition, to support the accuracy of that data, an open-ended follow-up question was included in the questionnaire design to prompt the respondent to justify the Likert-scale answer, enabling greater assurance that the response reflects how the respondent feels.

3.3.4.2 Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions offer the opportunity to enrich a questionnaire by increasing the level of discovery. Bailey (1994) argues that enabling respondents to input a free response increases the level of discovery through the respondents being able to construct their responses in a personal way, reflecting their opinion, without being influenced by the pre-defined criteria on a scale (Foddy, 1993). This consequently can enrich the data through respondents being able to answer spontaneously without potential bias of a pre-defined criteria on a Likert-scale or closed-ended question (Antoun, 2020).

The design of an online questionnaire and the use of clear and mutually comprehensive language is crucial. Boynton (2004) highlights that a complicated design which gives the impression that the questionnaire is complex to complete is likely to result in it not being completed. Crawford et al. (2001) highlight that short length questions help the questionnaire look easier to complete through looking less comprehensive and at the same time collect more research-relevant data through minimising the range of required input within a single question. This is important because open-ended questions increase the risk for respondents to provide research-irrelevant answers through a free response (Bailey, 1994). O'Sullivan and Jefferson (2020) agree, highlighting this to be important to consider because respondents are more likely to provide answers that lack clarity, while Albudaiwi (2017) highlight that additional pressure is on the respondents through having to construct their own response. This means that there is a higher risk of overlooking instructions in the question because of the pressure to structure an answer. However, Hoffmann (2007) argues that the use of open-ended questions collects richer responses.

A pilot test with a pretesting stage helps deal with this challenge through ensuring that the questions are clear and use mutually comprehensive language to collect research-relevant data. This is through collecting a sample of data which can be analysed to ensure that the open-ended questions collect research-relevant data, but also enables an analysis

of the feedback provided by the pilot study participants regarding the language that is used to answer the questions and the overall design of the questionnaire (Ruel et al., 2016). This is helpful because it enables alterations to the structure of questions and design of the questionnaire prior to collecting real project data. Moreover, this enables a test of the open-ended question answer facilities to ensure that the online design displays adequately on various web browsers, enabling input of text (Reja et al., 2003).

Open-ended questions were an effective method in the present study because these served an initial purpose to validate the Likert-scale type questions and then in the latter part of the questionnaire to collected open responses to provide a general picture and context for the follow-up interviews. Consequently, there wasn't a strict requirement for the data to be rich and comprehensive to answer the research questions in full. As a result, the weaknesses of stage one open-ended question which have been explored in this section did not compromise the quality of the output data because the main emphasis was on the stage two follow-up.

3.3.5 Semi-structured interviews

There is a range of types of interviews which can be conducted. Cohen et al. (2018) highlights standardised, structured, in-depth, ethnographic, while Bogdan and Biklen (1992) add semi-structured interviews to that list. Standardised and structured interviews are effective in collecting comparable data, therefore this type of interview was not appropriate for the present study because it would lack the level of depth and understanding of participant perspectives. This is because there is an absence of flexibility, and adaptability to the given interview context. Qualitative, open-ended and less structured interviews were suitable for collecting non-standardised data. Semi-structured interviews can be tailored to the respondents to explore the deeper extent of their attitudes and opinions (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Jamshed (2014) highlights that interviews are the most common method used in qualitative research, while DiCicco-Bloom and

Crabtree (2006) highlight that the semi-structured format is the most frequent one in social sciences.

Guided by an interview protocol which is based on pre-defined core and probe questions, the interview remains on track through the interviewer gaining a richer understanding of the participant's feelings and opinions, through the use of the probe questions (Kvale, 1996). These conversations need to be accurately recorded using audio recording and transcription (Wengraf, 2001). The researcher individually interacts with every respondent to collect the data which highlights the time consumption of this method (Patton, 1990).While interviews are time consuming, they can convey more accurate and richer output data in comparison to a questionnaire or a structured interview through demonstrating the interviewee's knowledge regarding a particular topic more comprehensively taking into consideration the semi-structure of the interview and the opportunity to dig deeper, beyond the core structured questions.

Semi-structured interviews offer an explanatory approach to an investigation through conversation. This is beneficial because it enables a possibility for a direct, accurate and complete exchange of information from the interviewee to the interviewer enabling a complete understanding of the interviewee's feelings and opinions (Arksey and Knight, 1999). However, Oppenheim (1992) highlights that to reach this direct transfer of information, the interviewer must establish a rapport with the participants, while Galletta and Cross (2013) highlight the importance of the respondent's narrative, and not interrupting the questions being answered. This is because this can influence the comfort of the respondent and the respondent needs to feel comfortable within the interview environment to answer the questions honestly, without social or environmental influences which could consequently lead to answering questions based on societal norms or panic.

An interview protocol is crucial in helping the interviewer to stay focused because it lowers the risk of on-the-spot improvisation. Ten open-ended probe questions in the interview protocol were developed to elicit in-depth data from the participants (Minichiello et al., 1990), and thus guide the interview. This is important because interviews increase the risk of bias because an interview participant (researcher or the respondent) is more likely to view the purpose and content of the interview in a particular way (Kitwood, 1977). As such, emotions, unconscious needs and interpersonal influences, impose a degree of potential bias risk (Cohen et al., 2018). This is through these non-rational factors which influence human behaviour imposing the risk of unconsciously leading the interview in a particular direction based on a range of external influences. This is important because of the flexibility that semi-structured interviews offer through the interviewer being able to ask follow-up questions. The protocol acts as a structuring tool (Mills and Gay, 2016).

The present study being based on a mixed methods design which initially uses questionnaires and sequentially follow-up with semi-structured interview maximises the benefits associated with interviews because this approach offers the interviewer to prepare follow-up questions to gain a richer understanding during the interview (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2018). As a result, explanatory semi-structured interviews facilitated a sequential follow-up function and enabled these interviews to be tailored to the individual participants based on the initial stage one data to enrich the investigation in the follow-up, while maintaining a semi-structure to remain on track.

3.3.6 Pilot testing

Self-developed methods increase the risk of data validity and reliability issues because self-designed questionnaire often lack adequate testing (Creswell and Guetterman, 2021). This is important to take into account when developing own data collection instruments because if a questionnaire lacks validity, then it fails to measure what it intended to

measure and does not accurately represent the desired features (Winter, 2000). If a questionnaire item could be interpreted differently by different respondents, then it is lacking reliability because the questions in the questionnaire could lack precision and accuracy in the information that is being asked. This means that there is a risk that the same question could collect different, misinterpreted data from different participants, which highlights a threat to accurately answering the research questions.

A pilot test offers a "dress rehearsal" of the data collection procedure (Krosnick and Presser, 2010), with the opportunity for a pretesting stage, which using the self-developed method, collects a sample of test data for analysis to ensure that it is a valid and reliable method (Presser et al., 2004).

A pretest can pinpoint language and design issues. This is through the opportunity for feedback from the pilot study participants, on top of completing the test questionnaire (Morrison, 1993). This offers an opportunity to reflect and revise the method and ensure that, for example, questions are of appropriate length and are clear, and that the response features are adequate, which will enable a swift and simple completion process. This will also help ensure that respondents interpret the questions in a consistently equal manner in each participant group, helping create a valid data collection tool (Verma and Mallick, 1999). This is important because it helps ensure that the response features and the language used to ask the questions are comprehensive and mutually exclusive.

Dillman et al. (2014) highlight that a pilot test offers the opportunity to reflect and revise processes in advance of collecting data, while Ary et al. (2002) highlight the significance of a pretest by claiming that for a data collection to be valid, it needs to measure what it intends to measure. A pretesting stage helps achieve this through analysing the pilot test data sample in light of the research questions and ensuring that the data is research related. Dillman et al. (2014) support this claim. Oppenheim (1992) highlights that every part of

the method should be piloted to identify problem questions. It needs to be a true "dress rehearsal" of the data collection procedure (Krosnick and Presser, 2010).

A pilot test was crucial for the present project because the target audience included secondary school children, thus it was important that the questionnaire language, terminology and design were appropriate for the children to accurately investigate their opinions and feelings regarding the effects of homework on leisure. The questionnaire was also self-developed, thus a pilot study with a pretest was useful in ensuring a valid and reliable data collection method.

3.4 Conceptual framework

This section provides an overview of the conceptual framework which has been created for the present study, and subsequently, explores how this framework has been used to understand and explain the data. Gray and MacBlain (2015) highlight that the use of theoretical concepts can help explain or denote a set of data. This was particularly useful considering phenomena in leisure because there is no single reality of this concept. As discussed throughout the literature review chapter, the reality of leisure is socially constructed and interpreted by the individuals in a given context. A conceptual framework can help understand the interpretation of the individual of that reality, and the effects that a concept such as homework, rigid in its nature and within a single reality, is imposing on the individual.

The previously discussed environmental factors can influence the effects that both leisure and homework have on adolescents, thus theoretical concepts, aiding interpretation of the data, are useful in making an investigation more robust. This is achieved through offering a framework that helps to understand adolescents' leisure and homework behaviours, in light of the effects that are imposed through the interaction of leisure and homework, in their characteristically varying realities. A conceptual framework has therefore been created based on a combination of two theories, namely: bioecological systems theory

(Bronfenbenner, 1986) and the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). These two theories were effecively working together because the bioecological systems theory enabled a framework to explore adolescents' wider social, political, and economic influences, while the social learning theory enabled a sequential exploration of the immediate environment and the interplay between behavioural, environmental and cognition factors, and how those factors influence leisure and homework behaviours. These two theories broke down the characteristics of the realities of leisure and homework, and have enabled an analysis of factors which influence adolescent leisure and homework behaviours. Consequently, this helped to understand the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure.

3.4.1 The bioecological systems theory

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory was developed in three stages: initially in stage one as the ecological systems theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which in stage two experienced changes concerning the importance of the role of individuals within the immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner and Crouter, 1983). In the third, mature stage, proximal processes were defined and formed the foundation of the current version of the theory (Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2000). The theory enables an exploration of influences surrounding adolescents through breaking down the surrounding social, political, and economic contexts into layers of influences (Rosa and Tudge, 2013). Bronfenbrenner (1961) referred to these as a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls.

Bronfenbrenner (1961) portrays a child at the centre of the bioecological systems model, with the foundational belief that the developing individual is influenced by their own biology. Previous studies have applied this theory to adolescents (Wiium and Wold, 2009). Bronfenbrenner (1961) included five layers of influences in his theory. The microsystem is the inner layer of influences and considers the immediate environment including activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing individual in

each setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1961). Proximal processes: for example, relations with others, personal characteristics and interactions with significant others, objects, or symbols, operate within this layer of influences (Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2000). The mesosystem is the follow-up layer which explores the relationships between two or more given settings within the discussed immediate environment, within which the developing person actively participates. The third layer is the exosystem, which can contain one or more settings within which the adolescent does not actively participate, yet in which events that occur still affect the developing person. A further layer of influence is a macrosystem which contains the blueprint of a society or a subculture, along with any current and/or future belief or ideology that influences the lower-order systems. The chronosystem represents a final layer of influences which include major events and the timing of these and the extent to which these layers of influence impact the developing individual.

However, while the indication of these factors from within each of the layers enable a consideration of the developing individual as well as the range of contexts, Bronfenbrenner (1961) argued that it is also the analysis of the interactions within each of the systems, as well as between them, that are important. Additionally, Tudge et al. (2009) highlight that it is a common misuse of the theory to map out the discussed contexts, while failing to analyse the interactions within and between the layers, which was the explicit intention of the theory. Moreover, Eriksson et al. (2018) critique the common misuse of bioecological systems theory because it is not used in full, in that the discussed developments that took place since its original inception are not considered. While the developments such as proximal processes are acknowledged, the use of the bioecological systems theory in the present study is intentionally limited to analysis of factors within the layers of influences, or indeed absence of factors within the layers of

influences and the effect that this has on the immediate environment, and the extent to which the interplay between the layers of influence impact the immediate environment.

Conclusions of previous literature and the nature of both leisure and homework paradigm realities make this theory pertinent for the present project. The previously discussed societal misconception regarding the association of homework with academic success (Cooper et al., 2006) which sits within the macro-hemisphere, influences parents' behaviour within the micro-hemisphere, because parents tend to measure the quality of schools based on the presence of homework practices (Hattie, 2012), but can also create either a positive or negative environment for homework to be completed and/or enforced (Galloway et al., 2013). This level of influence on adolescent behaviour was explored from the perspective of Foucault's (1977) theory of power, however the bioecological systems theory was found more suitable because the discussed influences lead to parents creating either a positive or negative environment for homework from the perspective of care for their children, and not from the perspective of power and discipline. Consequently, this is viewed from the perspective of the interactions between the layers of influences and how this influences adolescents' immediate environment. The discussed macro and micro-level influences influence school policies to be present, and their nature, through dictating the presence of homework practices to promote good school quality, because of the interaction between these layers of the bioecological systems theory. However, the absence of national policy on homework, a macro-level influence or indeed the absence of it, leads to variable times spent on homework because, as highlighted by Holland et al. (2021), not all schools have homework policies, therefore some students spend more time completing homework, than other students in other schools. This impacts the time spent on homework, which consequently dictates the disposable time available for leisure, and that in itself introduces the corresponding effects on adolescents' leisure. This is important because the direct, as well as indirect, interaction of an

adolescent with those contexts can influence the reality of leisure and homework to consequently introduce the effects on an adolescent. Effects of these influences on the immediate environment were sequentially explored by the social learning theory.

3.4.2 Social learning theory

The social learning theory is based on the belief that people learn from each other, based on the interactions with others in social contexts. Through observation, people are likely to develop similar behaviours (Nabavi, 2012). Bandura (1977) believed that the environmental and cognition factors within the immediate environment influence behaviour. Additionally, the theory presented the idea of reciprocal determinism between the environment, behaviour, and cognition, in that these determinants and the interplay between them is reciprocal, thus behaviour can influence cognition, which in turn can influence the environment (Distefan et al., 2004). However, for the influence on behaviour to take place there must be means of motivation, reinforcement, or punishment (Bandura, 1977). The theory essentially claims that these determinants are not independent; and Bandura believed that individuals do not live in isolation, and that the surrounding environment fulfils a considerable role in influencing behaviour. As such, the social learning theory is a framework which helps understand the rationale for behaviour.

The theory is based on three reciprocal factors: cognition, environment, and the actual behavioural experience (Bandura, 1977). The cognition determinant includes four personal process factors that govern observational learning. Those include: (1) attentional, (2) retention, (3) motor reproduction, and (4) motivational processes. The cognition determinant includes factors such as the beliefs and expectations of the individual. The environment determinant includes role models such as parents, teachers, peers, social interactions, and contexts within the individual's immediate environment. Partly due to the previously discussed personal processes, but also due to the remaining determinants

influencing social learning, the provision of models within the environment will not mean that the individual will imitate the modelled behaviour. This is because models within the environment have the potential to influence behaviour through either positive reinforcement or punishment (the extent of motivation to influence behaviour), thus increasing or decreasing behaviour concerning homework and leisure accordingly.

While cognition and the environment can influence behaviour, the theory claims that the results of behaviour can in turn alter cognition and the environment. Thus, while cognition can impact the remaining determinants, the theory claims that a behavioural experience can impact cognition through, for example, amending expectations or beliefs. This may be due to the nature of the experience in comparison to other theories, which only evaluate the impact on behaviour, without the acknowledgement that behaviour can impact other determinants of social learning (Mearns, 2009). This is important for the present study because it offers a multi-dimensional model to trying to understand leisure and homework behaviours, and the extent to which these are influenced, and in turn, to understand the extent to which these behaviours influence the remaining factors.

The social learning theory is evident in the case of the present study through various aspects of adolescents' educational experience. Environmental factors such as school teachers setting homework contributes to influencing homework behaviour through teachers having an expectation regarding the time adolescents should spend completing the set homework tasks. This may be influenced by wider contexts, as highlighted by the bioecological perspective. Additionally, the social learning theory helped understand behaviour through analysis of punishment as an environmental influence, in that school policies influence homework practices, and can outline whether homework is expected to be handed back in (Holland et al., 2021). This highlights a breakdown of an attempt to understand time spent on homework. Another example is parents creating either a positive or negative environment for learning through reinforcement to complete homework or

motivation not to complete it, which based on previous literature, could be based on their personal experiences and/or beliefs, which vary between households (Galloway et al., 2013). On the other hand, reinforcement provided by own behaviour enables adolescents to continue completing homework from the perspective of cognition, considering preparation for exams and adolescents finding this behaviour reinforcing because they go over resources in advance of exams (Mullenbruck et al., 1999). Such examples highlight whether the social learning theory can help understand behaviour and demonstrate how interactions within the immediate environment influence behaviour, to introduce the corresponding effects on adolescents' leisure depending on the time spent on homework. This in turn leaves the remaining disposable time available for leisure and for adolescents to experience the positive associations of this concept. The social learning model offered a multi-dimensional framework to understanding the effects of homework on leisure, and this highlights the extent to which this framework was appropriate for this investigation.

While the social learning theory was appropriate for the characteristics of the study, some critics question the capacity of the social learning theory. Bouchard et al. (1990) critique this model because it ignores genetic factors and the extent to which these factors influence behaviour. However, the social learning theory here serves the purpose of analysing the influences of the environment and cognition to better understand behaviour, rather than the influence of the models to retain long-term behaviour. The social learning perspective considers the personal processes of an individual, and while genetic factors are not considered, the theory enabled an exploration of the impact of the individuals within the immediate environment as a framework to understand behaviour.

3.4.3 The sequential use of the two theories

Adolescent behaviour is a substantial aspect when exploring the aims of this project because it dictates time spent on leisure and homework. Therefore, the bioecological systems theory and the social learning theory have been brought together to offer a richer

analysis of the influences on behaviour from the perspective of both the immediate and wider contexts. The bioecological perspective enabled a framework to break down the social, political, and economic wider contexts within which adolescent are not directly involved, but effects of which influence adolescents' immediate environment. The theory helped to analyse the interactions between the range of levels of influences, and how these influence the immediate environment. The social learning theory on the other hand was a sequential follow-up perspective, which enabled a framework to explore observational learning interactions within the immediate environment and how those influence homework and leisure behaviours, which lead to the consequent effects of homework on adolescents' leisure.

What makes this conceptual framework original, is the use of the bioecological approach in the identification of the discussed factors within each of the systems and the interactions within and between them, but also the exploration of the effects of an absence of a factor from any of the systems, rather than solely focusing on their presence as believed by Bronfenbrenner (1977). As a result, alongside the sequential use, this conceptual framework offers a richer framework through which behaviour can be understood whilst also considering immediate and wider context influences.

3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter provided a critical overview of the extent to which both ontological and epistemological underpinnings have informed the selection of a mixed methods research design, and the sequential use of online questionnaires in stage one, and semi-structured follow-up interviews in stage two. While the research paradigm has informed the use of this research design, the sequential use of these two methods and theories has also made this research design more robust. Initial stage one questionnaires enabled collection of data which was used to gather a general idea of the quantitative data, and qualitative

context for the follow-up interviews to gain a richer understanding of the stakeholder perspectives. With this in mind, the impact of limitations of using questionnaires with open-ended questions were limited on the present study because the data was further explored and enriched in a follow-up stage. Four-point Likert type scales were used to collect ordinal data representing opinions and attitudes, but again, these were followed-up with open-ended questions to increase the accuracy of responses. Additionally, these data were further explored in the follow-up stage, and the follow-up qualitative data helped understand the initial quantitative results. Explanatory semi-structured interviews were guided by a protocol to enable being tailored to the individual participants to gain as rich as possible understanding of the investigated perspectives, but also having a structure to ensure remaining on track. The next chapter describes replicable steps which were undertaken to collect and analyse data.

4.0 Methods

This chapter provides an overview of the steps that were taken to collect and analyse data to answer the research questions. A summary is provided of the steps which were taken to ensure ethical considerations that include confidentiality, anonymity, security, and ethical retention of data; method of recruitment of settings and participants; measures; procedures; pilot study; sampling and data analysis.

4.1 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was sought, and approval was provided by the Nottingham Trent University Ethics Committee. In addition, the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) guidelines have been used as an assurance benchmark for ethical consideration at all project stages.

4.1.1 Confidentiality, anonymity, security, and ethical retention of data

The following steps have been taken to ensure ethical conduct through confidentiality and security of data. Stage one questionnaires were hosted online using Qualtrics, which is a third-party online data server that is safe and secure. This service facilitated the design of questionnaires and the initial storage of collected data.

These steps have been taken to ensure the anonymity of the data. Once stage one data collection was complete, the data was moved to a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet. This was stored on the password-protected Nottingham Trent University OneDrive server. At that point, personal data was redacted from the spreadsheet and was replaced with a pseudonym key, which was a unique participant number that pseudonymised the data. It was important to initially collect this personal data to reach out to some of the respondents for a follow-up interview. This personal data included: (1) the respondent's full name, (2) email address and (3) telephone number, which were redacted from the spreadsheet, and were moved to a separate Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet that included information about the link between the personal data and the pseudonym key. The personal data was

kept until 1st October 2022, when the data were analysed. At the point of analysis, the pseudonym key file was deleted, and it was no longer possible to identify data which belonged to individual participants. Pseudonymisation of the data and storage of the pseudonym key enabled compliance with GDPR (2020) when a participant wanted to withdraw from the study. This is because the individual had to be verified to confirm identity before discussing personal information or requesting the withdrawal.

While stage one participation was pseudonymised after the data was collected, the stage two participants were pseudonymised at the start of each interview. The stage one and two data were then linked using the unique participant number.

While confidentiality, anonymity and security of data was important, in line with outlined by BERA (2018) guidelines responsibilities to stakeholders in research, consideration of implications of disclosure of information by the participants with implications on the policy or management of the schools would be reported to the gatekeeper to ensure adequate response. This was to ensure the best interest of both the participants and the schools. Such disclosure would not be included in the transcripts.

4.1.2 Headteacher (gatekeeper) informed consent

Headteacher consent had to be obtained before data collection could begin. BERA (2018) guidelines advise that gatekeeper consent is required before data collection can start, therefore headteachers were sent an email with the information document (appendix two) attached, which informed of: (1) the researcher's background (2) sample size expectations to present the extent of commitment, (3) information concerning the right to withdraw and how this can be requested, (4) information about how the collected data will be used, (5) information about publication locations and (6) statement concerning the availability of the output data.

The headteachers then proceeded to a Qualtrics online consent form (appendix three) which was accessible through a unique URL link in the previously discussed project information document. As part of this process, the following information was requested: (1) full name, (2) name of the school, (3) confirmation that written information about the project was given, read, and understood, and that opportunity to ask questions was provided, (4) that the gatekeeper understands that participation is voluntary and that there is a deadline for withdrawal, (5) that data will be anonymised and (6) that the gatekeeper freely and voluntarily agrees for the members of the school to participate in this project. The gatekeeper was required to electronically sign the consent form on Qualtrics, which documented gatekeeper informed consent.

4.1.3 Participant informed consent –parents, adolescents and teachers

While the gatekeeper consent was the initial informed consent step required before starting data collection, participant informed consent was also obtained before collecting data. BERA (2018) guidelines advise that participants' voluntary informed consent must be obtained before any data is collected. The following sections explain the process that was followed to ensure informed consent from all stakeholders.

4.1.3.1 Stage one participant consent

To obtain participant consent during the first stage of collecting data, both parents and adolescents were provided with the same online version of the project information document (appendix four), while teachers were provided with a separate information document (appendix five). The documents provided a rationale for: (1) invitation to take part, with a clear specification of the responsibilities involved in taking part, (2) the right to withdraw and information about how this can be requested and (3) information about the use, retention and sharing of collected data. This informed the participant of relevant information before providing consent to take part.

In addition, the documents included a unique URL link to the online questionnaire. Upon clicking that link to load the questionnaire, parents, adolescents, and teachers were presented with a consent statement, advising that by continuing with the questionnaire, their informed consent to participate in the project was being provided. The participant was, at that point, offered the opportunity not to participate by closing the window, as such explicit statement has been made advising to close the browser window if was not provided. If the participant progressed with the flow of the questionnaire, this was with the understanding of providing informed consent to take part.

4.1.3.2 Stage two participant consent

During second stage of collecting data, the participants were asked to confirm before the interview has started that (1) informed consent is provided to take part in the follow-up interview, (2) informed consent is provided for the interview to be recorded, (3) the participant voluntarily participates in the follow-up interview.

4.1.4 Parental informed consent for participants under the age of 18

While adolescent participant consent was required, parental consent had to be obtained from parents and/or carers because they are with the legal care responsibilities for children under the age of 18 wanting to take part in the project (BERA, 2018). To obtain parental consent, the project information was distributed directly, and only, to the parents. Adolescents were not approached directly, the adolescents were recruited through the parents. Since parents received the project information, the parent information document (appendix four) informed the parents and/or carers through an explicit statement that by providing access to the project information to a child, this was with their informed consent for the under 18 years of age individual to take part in the present project.

In addition, parents who completed the stage one questionnaire were asked as part of the questionnaire for their informed consent for their child to take part in an independent

adolescent stage two interview. This was through requesting parent to declare through a tick box function in the questionnaire that either consent is, or is not, provided for their child to take part in the independent interview without the parent present.

4.2. Recruitment

4.2.1 Recruitment of settings

Three schools were recruited through the relationship of the Nottingham Trent University Institute of Education with local schools in the East Midlands. Recruitment took eight months, which was longer than anticipated because of interruptions caused by the covid-19 pandemic. At this time, it was difficult to establish relationships with schools because of the uncertainty concerning safety and access.

To recruit settings, an email was sent to headteachers of all 72 participating schools in the Nottingham Institute of Education partnership, inviting the headteachers to express an interest in the project. The headteacher project information document attached to the email outlined: (1) the researcher's background (2) sample size expectations to present the extent of commitment, (3) information concerning the right to withdraw and how this can be requested, (4) information about how the collected data will be used, (5) information about publication locations and (6) statement concerning the availability of the output data (appendix two).

In the instance of headteacher interest, it was explored whether the school has a homework policy, because there was a need for a mixture of schools with, as well as without homework policies in the sample of settings. Depending on the already recruited schools, if the given school was suitable for the sample based on the presence or absence of a homework policy, a remote Microsoft Office Teams meeting was arranged to discuss the project information with the interested headteacher. Headteacher permission permitting, gatekeeper informed consent was requested through an online form, which was accessible through a unique URL link included in the headteacher project information

document. Once the headteacher provided gatekeeper consent, this concluded the process of recruiting a school to take part in the project. The project relied on convenience sampling, and this recruitment process was repeated until three schools have been recruited that enabled a mixture of schools with and without homework policies

4.2.2 Recruitment of participants

To recruit the participants, headteachers in the settings appointed a research champion to distribute the project information across the schools to all parents and teachers. Adolescents were not directly approached. The research champion was a member of staff who became a point of contact for research communications and distribution of the data collection instruments within each school. The following sections outline the process of recruiting parents, adolescents, and teachers.

4.2.2.1 Parents and adolescents

To recruit both parents and adolescents from each of the schools, the research champions distributed the parent and adolescent project information in one document directly to the parents. This communication outlined: (1) an invitation to take part, with a clear specification of the responsibilities involved in taking part; (2) the right to withdraw and information about how this can be requested and (3) information about the use, retention and sharing of collected data; (4) information about the access to the questionnaire (appendix four). In school one, this communication was distributed via a third-party communication platform, while in schools two and three this was via email. The parents and/or carers invited parents to provide access to the project information to the child, their informed parental consent permitting, at which point recruitment of adolescents happened through communication with the parents.

4.2.2.2 Teachers

To recruit teachers, the research champions distributed the electronic teacher project information documents via email at all three schools. This communication outlined: (1)

an invitation to take part, with a clear specification of the responsibilities involved in taking part; (2) the right to withdraw and information about how this can be requested; (3) information about the use, retention and sharing of collected data and (4) information about the access to the questionnaire (appendix five). This was done via internal email at all three schools.

4.3. Settings

Relationships were established with three mainstream secondary schools in total. This was the desired number of settings. Both stage one and stage two data were collected at all three schools. All settings were located within a radius of 20 miles from Nottingham city centre and operated on similar working hour schedules on Monday to Friday basis; schools one and two operated on a 9:00 am to 3:00 pm working day, and school three operated on an 8:45 am to 4:00 pm working day

School one was based in the Nottingham East constituency, and was a school which became an academy in 2018 and was uninspected at the time by Ofsted. It was larger than the average secondary school. The number of adolescents from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an Additional Language was above national averages. The number of adolescents supported by pupil premium and eligible for free school meals was also above the national average. This school had a homework policy requiring one piece of homework lasting 20-30 minutes per subject every two weeks in years 7, 8 and 9. In years 10 and 11, there was a requirement for one piece of homework lasting 20-30 minutes per subject every two weeks. The policy had not declared interventions for instances when homework is not completed by the adolescents.

School two was based in the Nottingham East constituency, and was a good secondary school, as reviewed by Ofsted in 2017. The school became an academy in 2012 and was larger than the average secondary school. The number of adolescents from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an Additional Language was well below national

averages, while adolescents who are supported by pupil premium and who are eligible for free school meals was average. This school does not have a homework policy.

School three was based in the Nottingham North constituency, and was a good secondary school, as reviewed by Ofsted in 2018. The school became an academy by joining a multi-academy trust in 2012 and was larger than the average secondary school. A quarter of adolescents were White British, and another quarter were Asian or Asian British Pakistani. The remainder of the adolescents represented a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of adolescents with English as an Additional Language was well above the national average. The number of adolescents supported by pupil premium and eligible for free school meals was also well above the national average. This school had a homework policy requiring one piece of homework lasting 20-30 minutes per subject every two weeks in years 7, 8 and 9. In years 10 and 11, there was a requirement for one piece of homework lasting 20-30 minutes per subject every two weeks. The policy has declared detention interventions for instances when homework is not completed by the adolescents.

Tables one below provides pupil population per school compared to national averages.

Table 1: Pupil population across the three school settings compared to the UK national average of school population (DfE, 2023)

Variable	School one	School two	School three	National average
Total number of pupils	1315	1548	1406	3567378
Pupils with SEN Education, Health and Care Plan	0.91%	0.58%	1.85%	2.15%
Pupils with SEN support	13.46%	16.93%	1.85%	11.92%

Pupils whose first language is not English	22.10%	7.00%	38.20%	17.48%
Pupils eligible for free school meals	49.28%	20.53%	39.09%	26.92%

Table two provides a comparison of GCSE attainment and Ofsted ratings by constituency to regional and national averages for Nottingham North and Nottingham East, within which the three schools were situated. These are presented per constituency in table two to prevent identification of the schools.

Table 2: GCSE attainment and Ofsted ratings by constituency comparison to national averages (Danechi and Roberts, 2023)

Variable	Nottingham North	Nottingham East	Region average	National average
GCSE average attainment 8 scores	39.2	41.7	47.7	48.8
Average process 8 scores	-0.53	-0.32	n/a	-0.03
% of pupils attending secondary school rated good or outstanding	35%	41%	75%	83%

4.4 Sample

The suitability of the sampling strategy can influence the quality of a research project; thus, it is important to select appropriate sampling strategies reflecting the expense of

access to participants, time available to collect data and access locations of settings and participants (Cohen et al., 2018).

4.4.1 Location

The settings were chosen based on the relationship of the Nottingham Trent University with local schools in Nottinghamshire. Given that the data was collected online, location was not a constraint, however, the Nottingham Trent University has relationships with schools just in Nottinghamshire, highlighting that access to schools was limited to this county in England.

4.4.2 Settings

Three secondary schools were included in the project, which was the desired number of settings. The three schools were from different parts of East Midlands and included a school that has not yet been inspected by Ofsted due to newly converting to an academy as part of a trust, and two other schools with good Ofsted ratings based on inspections conducted in 2017 and 2018. Two of the schools have a homework policy to guide the homework practice, with the remaining third school not having a homework policy.

4.4.3 Participants

Three groups of stakeholders were included in the sample. This included parents, adolescents and teachers in the stage one sample, and parents and adolescents in stage two sample. Teachers were intentionally excluded from the stage two sample because the project aimed to explore the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure, thus given that teachers operate within the school environment, there was no need to include that perspective in the stage two follow-up. This is because the main emphasis research design was on the stage two follow-up. All adolescents, parents, and teachers in the three school were invited to take part in the first stage. Some parents and adolescents were invited to take part in a stage two follow-up, and this was based on the data provided in the stage one questionnaire which begged for further investigation (Creswell and Guetterman, 2021), as well as their consent to be considered for a follow-up interview.

A total of 193 participants took part in the project. All 193 participants completed the stage one questionnaire, and 20 participants took part in the follow-up interview (Table three). The participants for both stages were recruited from all three schools. A power analysis test revealed that 30 participants within each group of participants would enable large enough power to detect meaningful effect. Power analysis enabled identification of a sample size which identified differences that actually exists, thus contribute to avoiding type II error, so that tests were able to correctly reject a false null hypothesis. Table 1 presents the sample size overview.

Table 3: Overview of the study sample

	Parents	**Adolescents**	**Teachers**
Stage one	59	82	52
Stage two	10	10	---

4.4.3.1 Parents

A total of 59 parents of children in school years 7 to 11 took part. All 59 parents completed the stage one questionnaire, while ten participated in the follow-up interview.

4.4.3.2 Adolescents

A total of 82 adolescents in school years 7 to 11 took part. All 82 adolescents completed the stage one questionnaire, while ten participated in the follow-up interview. The adolescent sample included the following gender classifications: 31 male, 51 female, 0 non-binary/third gender and 0 individuals who preferred not to say.

4.4.3.3 Teachers

A total of 52 teachers took part, sixteen who teach English, four Maths, fifteen Science, one Drama, none I.T., three Citizenship and seven Geography years 7 to 11. Teacher participation involved completing the stage one questionnaires. Teachers were intentionally not included in the stage two follow-up.

4.4.4 Potential benefits of participating in research for participants

A range of potential benefits for participating in the project has been noted for parents, adolescents and teachers. Parents were offered the opportunity to express their views and opinions regarding the use of homework, and effects that homework has within the home environment. This was important because Gonzalez et al. (2001) noted that parents can feel disengaged from the school decision making, and thus engagement in the present project enabled a potential mechanism to involve parents, and thus motivate further positive engagement. In turn, adolescents benefited from the opportunity to voice their ideas and opinions regarding the use of homework, which directly impacts their disposable after-school time (Cooper et al., 2006). This highlights the promotion of the child's right to having a voice in practice and research (UNCRC, 1986). Moreover, teachers benefited from the opportunity to justify their expectations in relation to time spent on homework, which enabled a more informed understanding of homework related behaviours based on homework related expectations. Taking into account these discussed benefits, the results of the project will be reported to the settings, with a further benefit, to inform their school homework policies, and the general use of homework, impacting all of the discussed stakeholders through how homework and leisure time is used.

4.5 Measures

4.5.1 Stage one measures

Stage one data collection consisted of three online questionnaire designs, each respectively for parent, adolescent, and teacher participants. The parent questionnaire requested parents to specify: (1) full name, (2) email address, (3) full names of children who attend a secondary school and (4) names of school(s) of attendance. Answers were required to be provided through a free text box facility. From the parent perspective, adolescents' time spent on homework, leisure and non-academic responsibilities in hours

and minutes per week were measured using a total of five Likert-type questionnaire items, which assessed variables during: (1) term time, (2) half term holidays, (3) christmas holidays, (4) easter holidays and (5) summer holidays by asking parents to specify time spent on homework, leisure, and non-academic responsibilities. In the latter part of the questionnaire, parents' attitudes were measured using a total of four Likert-type questionnaire scales, with four point intervals (one equals no effect/disagree and four equals great effect/agree) which required parents to present their attitude regarding: (1) the extent to which homework in general serves a useful purpose, (2) the extent to which participant agrees with the amount of homework, (3) the extent to which participant agrees with the focus of homework on adolescent learning, (4) the extent to which participant thinks that homework has an effect on adolescents' free time. Each Likert-type scale question was followed-up with a free text response facility where participants were required to justify their Likert-type scale answer (appendix six).

The adolescent questionnaire requested adolescent participants to specify: (1) full name, (2) year group and (3) name of the school of attendance. Adolescents were required to select their gender from a list of options which included (1) male, (2) female, (3) non-binary/third gender and (4) prefer not to say. Adolescents' time spent on homework, leisure and non-academic responsibilities in hours and minutes per week were measured using a total of five Likert-type questionnaire items, which assessed variables during: (1) term time, (2) half term holidays, (3) christmas holidays, (4) easter holidays and (5) summer holidays through asking adolescents to specify time spent on homework, leisure, and non-academic responsibilities. In the latter part of the questionnaire, adolescents' attitudes were measured using a four Likert-type questionnaire scales with four point intervals (one equals no effect/disagree and four equals great effect/ agree) which required adolescents to present their attitude regarding the extent to which the adolescent (1) enjoys completing homework, (2) agrees with the amount of homework received, (3)

agrees with the focus of homework on adolescent learning, (4) homework has an effect on leisure. Each Likert-type scale question was followed-up with a free text response facility where participants were required to justify their Likert-type scale answer. The adolescent questionnaire also asked if the adolescent had more leisure time, what would the additional leisure time be used for, which asked for a response using a free text facility (appendix seven).

The teacher questionnaire requested teacher participants to specify on a Table the expected adolescent time spent on homework per subject, per year group, as appropriate depending on the range of subjects for which the participant teaches during: (1) term time, (2) half term holidays, (3) christmas holidays, (4) easter holidays and (5) summer holidays. In the latter part of the questionnaire, teachers' attitudes were measured using three Likert-type scale items with four point intervals (one equals no effect/disagree and four equals great effect/ agree) per subject, which required presentation of attitude regarding the extent to which the teacher: (1) thinks that homework serves a useful purpose, (2) agrees with the amount of homework that adolescents are receiving and (3) agrees with the focus of homework on adolescent learning. Each Likert-type scale question was followed-up with a free text response facility where participants were required to justify their Likert-type scale answer. The teacher questionnaire also asked if the teacher thinks that homework has an effect on adolescents' leisure, as well as a request for personal views on homework and adolescents' leisure, both of which asked for a response using a free text facility (appendix eight).

4.5.2 Stage two measures

Stage two data collection consisted of two semi-structured follow-up interview agendas for parents and adolescents. The parent agenda asked the participant to discuss their opinion regarding (1) homework in general, (2) time adolescent spends on homework, (3) time adolescent spends on leisure, (4) effects that homework has on adolescents'

opportunity to engage in leisure, (5) adolescents' attitude towards homework, (6) effects of homework on adolescents' leisure (appendix nine).

The adolescent interview agenda asked the participant to discuss their opinion regarding (1) homework in general, (2) time spent on homework, (3) time spent on leisure, (4) rationale for the time spend on homework, (5) effects that homework has on leisure, (6) opportunity to engage in leisure and (7) solutions to achieve a balance between homework and leisure (appendix ten).

4.6 Procedures

4.6.1 Stage one procedures

To collect the stage one data, as explained in section 2.2.1 in this chapter, the research champion distributing the project information to parents, adolescents, and teachers. The project information sheet included a direct URL link to the parent questionnaire (appendix seven) and adolescent questionnaire (appendix eight), which parents, adolescents and teachers completed remotely in compliance with section 1.0 ethical considerations.

4.6.2 Stage two procedures

The parents and adolescents who completed the stage one questionnaire were invited to opt in for a follow-up interview. The invite to stage two participation was incorporated into the questionnaire design, in that the participant was asked a question regarding their preference on participating in a follow-up interview. In instances where participants opted-in, the questionnaire prompted a request for personal information from the participants, which included: (1) full name, (2) email address and (3) contact telephone number. The full name was used to confirm the participant's identity, the email address was used to send a confirmation email confirming the invite and the telephone number was used to send a reminder one day before the scheduled interview and a follow-up reminder on the day of the interview.

The interview invite sent via email (appendix 11) included a direct web link to the booking form, which prompted parents to confirm their email address and telephone number and select a suitable interview date and time slot. The booking form also prompted participants to specify the interview software, which included Zoom and Microsoft Office Teams. This communication was sent in three waves in one-week intervals between the communications being sent to encourage participants to take part. The initial wave invited the participants to book the interview, the second wave was the reminder, and the third was the final reminder. The participant's data was deleted if the participant did not book upon the third reminder.

For participants who booked using this discussed procedure, a booking confirmation email and a text message were sent to the specified email address within 24 hours of the booking (appendix 12). An interview reminder followed this up on the day via email and text message (appendix 13). Then, to participate in the interview, the participants joined the online meeting room through the automatically generated link by the online service provider, either Zoom or Microsoft Office Teams, depending on the participant's preference. The interviews were conducted in line with the interview protocols (appendices 12 and 13).

4.7 Pilot study

The pilot study was a complete "dress rehearsal" of the data collection procedures (Ruel et al., 2016) and included a pretesting stage to evaluate the measures discussed above (Converse and Presser, 1986). Stage one pilot included ten parents, ten adolescents and ten teachers, while stage two pilot included five parents and five adolescents (Table four). Participants for the pilot study were recruited using convenience sampling through professional acquaintances and included secondary school adolescents, their parents and secondary school teachers.

Table 4: Overview of number of pilot study participants

	Parents	Adolescents	Teachers
Stage one	10	10	10
Stage two	5	5	---

4.7.1 Stage one pilot

To test the robustness of the three questionnaire designs, the parent project information document was sent directly to ten parent participants via email, inviting both the parent and the adolescent (11-14 years old) to participate. The 10 teacher participants were sent a separate teacher project information document. The respondents were asked to follow the instructions on the questionnaire and complete it. At the end of the questionnaire, all parent, adolescent, and teacher participants were also asked for feedback regarding: (1) language used to ask the questions; (2) the response features and (3) the overall design of the questionnaire. The data provided by the participants matched the questions asked, therefore there were not any concerns regarding any of the three questionnaire designs. However, three adolescent participants reported that they did not understand the term "leisure", which as a result was replaced with "free time" in all three questionnaire designs for consistency assurance.

4.7.2 Stage two pilot

The follow-up interview invitation was sent to the participants via email. The interview invite was sent via email, which included a direct web link to the booking form, which prompted parents to confirm their email address and telephone number and select a suitable interview date and time slot. The booking form prompted participants to specify the interview software, which included Zoom and Microsoft Office Teams. For participants who booked using this discussed procedure, a booking confirmation email

and a text message were sent to the specified email address within 24 hours of the booking. An interview reminder followed this up on the day via email and text message.

To participate in the interview, parents and adolescents joined the online meeting separately through the automatically generated link by the online service provider, either Zoom or Microsoft Office Teams, depending on the participant's preference. The interviews were conducted in line with the interview protocols. At the end of the interviews, all parent and adolescent and participants were also asked for feedback regarding (1) the language used to ask the questions and (2) the structure of the interview. The responses provided by both parents and adolescents matched the questions asked, therefore there were not any concerns regarding the interview agendas. However, three adolescent participants reported that they did not understand the term “leisure” during the stage one pilot, which as a result was replaced with “free time” for the purpose of consistency.

4.8 Data analysis

Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data which included both quantitative and qualitative measures. Both stage one and stage two included demographic information about the participants. Demographic information was requested again at stage two to ensure an accurate match between the parent and adolescent data. All raw data was extracted to an excel document so that these could be reported in Tables.

4.8.1 Stage one analysis

The stage one quantitative homework, leisure and non-academic responsibilities data from all three schools were analysed individually to achieve a more specific analysis as a result of the quantitative data varying between the three schools, but also generally across the whole sample. This raw quantitative data as reported by the parents, adolescents and adolescents in hours and minutes was converted into from hours and minutes to minutes only format for all three groups of participants, and has been presented in separate Tables,

each at different term time intervals and was per school (appendix 14). This quantitative data was then exported to SPSS and was used to carry out the Mann-Whitney U test. The Pearson's correlation tests were not performed per school, but for the whole sample to achieve a more generalised analysis in addition to the Mann-Whitney U tests which was performed per school. This range in analysis enabled a combination of specific and generalised approaches to analysis of this data.

Distribution of the data was then assessed to identify a suitable test to compare the data as reported by the parents, adolescents, and teachers. The data was not normally distributed; therefore, a Mann-Whitney U test was selected to compare the time spent on homework and leisure as reported by parents, adolescents, and teachers.

4.8.1.1 Mann-Whitney U test: time spent on leisure and homework

The purpose of the Mann-Whiteny U test was to measure the difference between quantitative homework and leisure data from two participant groups at a time: (1) parents and adolescents, (2) parents and teachers and (3) teachers and adolescents. This was to make the understanding of the quantitative data more robust, through identifying the expected versus actual time spent on homework and leisure. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess the data distribution in each school to identify an appropriate method of analysis. Cohen (1988) highlights that a minimum of nine participants within each group is required to run a Mann-Whitney U test, which was suitable for this data set. The p-value within each school was recorded at $p=<.05$, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis of data in each group being normally distributed. While the data was not normally distributed, based on graphical analysis, the distribution of the participant variables across all three groups was similar to each other. The groups were not matched in pairs to measure the difference. A non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was suitable to compare two data groups at a time.

To compare the two groups of data using SPSS, the participant groups were labelled numerically: 1 = adolescents, 2 = parents and 3 = teachers.

Statistical difference was acknowledged at 95% significance P=<0.05. Values with this p-value were shortlisted to measure the effect size between the data in each participant group. Effect size (R) was then identified, representing the size of the difference between the two data groups ranging from .1 = small effect, .2 = medium effect and .5 = large effect (Cohen, 1988). This was done separately within each school.

4.8.1.2 Pearson's correlation test: association between time spent on leisure and time spent on homework

This test aimed to identify whether the amount of time spent on leisure increased when the amount of time spent on homework decreased. While the data was not normally distributed, considering the extent of the non-normal distribution and a sample size of 193 stage-one participants, the Pearson correlation was robust enough to represent the association between two groups of participants with respect to Type 1 error rate as confirmed by previous research (Bishara and Hittner, 2012). The data representing the whole sample was used to run the tests, thus the quantitative data was merged together, and was not tested per school. Statistical difference was again acknowledged at 95% significance P=<0.05. Values with this p-value were shortlisted assess association.

4.8.2 Stage two analysis: Thematic Analysis

Stage two data has been analysed using a reflective thematic analysis framework (Braun and Clarke, 2022). The interview transcripts were exported to NVIVO software, from where the reflective thematic analysis framework was used to analyse the data using an inductive approach to make meaning, develop codes and themes from the collected data (Howitt, 2010). In the present project, six stages were followed to analyse the qualitative data as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2022) which included: (1) initial familiarisation with the data in order to explore the nature of the data provided by both parents and

adolescents individually, (2) coding of the data using NVIVO through applying code labels to data which captured similar meaning, (3) generating initial themes, (4) developing and reviewing the themes, (5) refining, defining and naming themes and finally (6) writing up. After the codes were identified during the second stage of the framework, these were transferred to Tables, to develop themes by placing similar codes into the same Tables. Each Table became a separate theme, which was then reviewed, named, and developed in line with the thematic analysis framework (appendix 15).

4.9 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an overview of the method in which questionnaires and follow-up interviews have been used sequentially to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The chapter provided an overview of the ethical considerations and how ethical conduct assurance has been brought into the project during data collection. These considerations were also maintained throughout the remaining steps of the project, and have informed the discussed recruitment, measures, and procedures despite being named as an individual section.

5.0 Results

This chapter is structured into two sections, which only reports the result of this study. There is no attempt made in this chapter to make meaning of these results. The meaning of these results is discussed in chapter six. The first section reports the stage one quantitative results, which were based on 59 parents, 82 adolescents and 52 teachers. Stage one reports on the results from the questionnaires, and includes the time spent on leisure, homework and non-academic responsibilities per week, at term time intervals. The chapter also reports the Mann-Whitney U tests and Pearson's' correlation tests. Mann-Whitney U tests have been run individually based on data from each school, while the Pearson's correlation tests are based on merged data from all three schools. Stage two reports the qualitative themes which were identified from data collected using semi-structured interviews. Detail of extracts from some of the interviews has been included to present the emphasis of the themes.

5.1 Stage one results

The stage one questionnaires collected quantitative data which presents the median averages representing the amount of time adolescents spend on homework, leisure and non-academic responsibilities per week. This is presented in the below Tables. All stage one data has been collected from three schools and is presented separately per school by the median average score.

5.1.1 Median average time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents and parents

Stage one questionnaires collected quantitative data to identify the time adolescents say to spend on leisure, and the time that parents think that adolescents spend on leisure per week. Adolescent data has been collected using adolescent questionnaire item number seven (appendix seven), while parent data has been collected using parent questionnaire item number eight (appendix six). Table five presents these results, and this is reported in minutes at the following term intervals:

Table 5: Median average time spent on leisure per week as reported by adolescents and their parents

Term time	Adolescents (mins)	Parents (mins)
School one	690.0	240.0
School two	1200.0	300.0
School three	360.0	300.0
Combined	750.0	280.0
Half term holidays		
School one	780.0	450.0
School two	2400.0	600.0
School three	600.0	400.0
Combined	1260.0	483.3
Christmas holidays		
School one	1170.0	300.0
School two	2400.0	600.0
School three	600.0	440.0
Combined	1390.0	446.6
Easter holidays		
School one	990.0	330.0
School two	2400.0	600.0
School three	600.0	425.0
Combined	1330.0	451.6
Summer holidays		
School one	1210.0	390.0
School two	1260.0	660.0
School three	600.0	540.0
Combined	1043.3	530.0

5.1.2 Median average time spent on homework as reported by adolescents, parents and teachers

Stage one questionnaires collected quantitative data to identify the time adolescents say to spend completing homework, the time that parents think that adolescents spend on completing homework, and the time that teachers expect adolescents to spend completing homework. Adolescent data has been collected using adolescent questionnaire item number five (appendix seven), while parent data has been collected using parent questionnaire item number six (appendix six). Teacher data has been collected using teacher questionnaire item three. Table six presents these results, and this is reported in minutes at the following term intervals:

Table 6: Median average time spent on homework per week as reported by adolescents, their parents and teachers

Term time	Adolescents (mins)	Parents (mins)	Teachers (mins)
School one	330.0	165.0	500.0
School two	170.0	300.0	200.0
School three	382.5	512.0	480.0
Combined	294.1	325.6	393.3
Half term holidays			
School one	300.0	120.0	600.0
School two	180.0	120.0	300.0
School three	540.0	499.5	300.0
Combined	340.0	246.5	400.0
Christmas holidays			
School one	300.0	60.0	400.0
School two	120.0	0.0	300.0
School three	360.0	520.0	300.0
Combined	260.0	193.3	333.3
Easter holidays			
School one	240.0	120.0	500.0
School two	180.0	0.0	300.0
School three	405.0	520.0	300.0
Combined	275.0	213.3	366.6
Summer holidays			
School one	60.0	30.0	500.0
School two	240.0	0.0	0.0
School three	240.0	200.0	0.0
Combined	180.0	76.6	166.6

5.1.3 Median average time spent on non-academic responsibilities as reported by adolescents and parents

Stage one questionnaires collected quantitative data to identify the time adolescents say to spend on engagement in non-academic responsibilities, and the time that parents think that adolescents spend on engagement in non-academic responsibilities. Adolescent data has been collected using adolescent questionnaire item number six (appendix seven), while the parent data has been collected using parent questionnaire item number seven (appendix six). Table seven presents these results, and this is reported in minutes at the following term intervals:

Table 7: Median average time spent on non-academic responsibilities per week as reported by adolescents and their parents

Term time	Adolescents (mins)	Parents (mins)
School one	300.0	60.0
School two	240.0	60.0
School three	300.0	135.0
Combined	280.0	85.0
Half term holidays		
School one	570.0	75.0
School two	300.0	0.0
School three	300.0	110.0
Combined	390.0	61.6
Christmas holidays		
School one	390.0	75.0
School two	180.0	60.0
School three	300.0	110.0
Combined	290.0	81.6
Easter holidays		
School one	600.0	75.0
School two	180.0	60.0
School three	240.0	160.0
Combined	340.0	98.3
Summer holidays		
School one	900.0	75.0
School two	300.0	150.0
School three	360.0	400.0
Combined	520.0	625.0

5.1.4 Statistical tests

Mann-Whitney U tests and Pearson's correlation tests were run to aid analysis of time spent on homework and time spent on leisure. The Tables five, six and seven above show that the median averages for time spent on leisure, homework and non-academic responsibilities vary between the three schools, therefore the Mann-Whitney U tests were run separately for every school to ensure accurate representation of the whole data set. In both Mann-Whitney U tests and Pearson's correlation tests a 95% confidence interval was selected to determine statistical significance. Results of the individual tests are presented below with the Mann-Whitney U test focusing on a comparison of the quantitative data provided by parents, adolescents, and teachers, while the Pearson's correlation test focused on assessing the linear relationship between the time spent on homework and the time spent on leisure as reported by the adolescents and the parents. Statistically significant variables are highlighted in the individual Tables.

5.1.4.1 Mann-Whitney U test: times spent on leisure and homework

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on leisure and time spent on homework as reported by the parents to the times reported by the adolescents. In order to run this test, the data was tested for normality using The Shapiro-Wilk test. Data was not normally distributed, therefore the Mann Whitney U test was selected to analyse the findings. Cohen (1988) highlights that a minimum of nine participants within each group is required to run a Mann-Whitney U test, which was suitable for this data set. The p-value within each school was recorded at $p=<.05$, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis of data in each group being normally distributed. While the data was not normally distributed, based on graphical analysis, the distribution of the participant variables across all three groups was similar to each other. The groups were not matched in pairs to measure the difference. A non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was suitable to compare two data groups at a time. All statistical analysis was undertaken using IBM SPSS.

In instances when a statistical significance variation was identified, the null hypothesis was rejected. When no statistically significant variation was detected, the null hypothesis was maintained. The results of this are presented below at term time intervals.

5.1.4.1.1 School one

5.1.4.1.1.1 Time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents and parents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on leisure as reported by the adolescents and the parents in school one. Table eight presents the results which revealed a statistically significant variation during term time U(NAdolescents=18, NParents=24)=137.500, z=-2.028, p=.43, r=.3129. The size of this difference is represented by the r value, and is considered as medium effect (Cohen, 1998). The results did not reveal any statistically significant variations for the remainder of the academic year.

Table 8: Median average time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents and parents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	42 Adolescents n=18 Parents n=24	-2.028	137.500	0.43	0.3129
Half term holidays*	42 Adolescents n=18 Parents n=24	---	---	.267	---
Christmas Holidays*	42 Adolescents n=18 Parents n=24	---	---	.128	---
Easter holidays*	42 Adolescents n=18 Parents n=24	---	---	.115	---
Summer holidays*	42 Adolescents n=18 Parents n=24	---	---	.176	---

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.1.1.2 Time spent on homework as reported by adolescents and parents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on homework as reported by the adolescents and the parents in school one. Results of this are presented in Table

nine which revealed statistically significant variations during term time U(NParents=24, NAdolescents=16)=115.000, z=-2.134, p=.033, r=.3370, half term holidays U(NParents=24, NAdolescents=15)=109.500, z=2.047, p=.041, r=.32, and Christmas holidays U(NParents=24, NAdolescents=13)=76.500, z=2.580, p=.010, r=.42. The size of these differences is represented by the r value, and for term time and half term holidays it is considered as medium effect, while for the Christmas holidays between medium and large effect (Cohen, 1998). The reported time during Easter and Summer holidays remained consistent.

Table 9: Median average time spent on homework as reported by adolescents and parents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	40 Adolescents n= 16 Parents n=24	-2.134	115.000	.033	0.3370
Half term holidays*	39 Adolescents n=15 Parent n=24	-2.047	109.500	.041	0.3277
Christmas Holidays*	37 Adolescents n=13 Parents n=24	-2.580	76.500	.010	0.4241
Easter holidays*	38 Adolescents n=14 Parents n=24	---	---	.071	---
Summer holidays*	39 Adolescents n=15 Parents n=24	---	---	.369	---

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.1.1.3 Time spent on homework as reported by teachers and adolescents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on homework as reported by the teachers and the adolescents in school one. Table 10 presents results which did not reveal any statistically significant variations throughout the academic year.

Table 10: Median average time spent on homework as reported by teachers and adolescents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	32 Teachers n=16 Adolescents n=16	---	---	.678	---
Half term holidays*	31 Teachers n=16 Adolescents n=15	---	---	.266	---
Christmas Holidays*	24 Teachers n=11 Adolescents n=13	---	---	.110	---
Easter holidays*	24 Teachers n=11 Adolescents n=14	---	---	.111	---
Summer holidays*	31 Teachers n=16 Adolescents n=15	---	---	.202	---

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.1.1.1.4 Time spent on homework as reported by teachers and parents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on homework as reported by the teachers and the parents in school one. Table 9 shows the results of the Mann-Whitney U tests which were run to compare the reported homework time by teachers and parents. Table 11 presents the results, which revealed statistically significant variations during term time U(NTeachers=16, NParents=24)=91.000, z=-2.799, p=.005, r=.4425, half term holidays U(NTeachers=16, NParents=24)=66.500, z=-3.486, p=.001, r=.5511, Christmas holidays U(NTeachers=11, NParents=24)=41.500, z=-3.275, p=.001, r=.5535, Easter holidays U(NTeachers=11, NParents=24)=44.500, z=-3.149, p=.002, r=.5322, Easter holidays U(NTeachers=11, NParents=24)=44.500, z=-3.149, p=.002, r=.5322 and Summer holidays U(NTeachers=16, NParents=24)=123.000, z=-1.961, p=.050, r= . The size of these differences is represented by the r value, and for term time it is considered as between medium and large effect, half term, Christmas and Easter holidays as large effect and summer holidays as medium effect (Cohen, 1998).

Table 11: Median average time spent on homework as reported by teachers and parents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	40 Teachers n=16 Parents n=24	-2.799	91.000	.005	0.4425
Half term holidays*	40 Teachers n=16 Parents n=24	-3.486	66.500	.001	0.5511
Christmas Holidays*	35 Teachers n=11 Parents n=24	-3.275	41.500	.001	0.5535
Easter holidays*	35 Teachers n=11 Parents n=24	-3.149	44.500	.002	0.5322
Summer holidays*	40 Teachers n=16 Parents n=24	-1.961	123.000	.050	0.3100

*Mann-Whitey U test

5.1.4.1.5 School two

5.1.4.1.5.1 Time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents and parents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on leisure as reported by the adolescents and the parents in school two. Table 12 presents the results which revealed statistically significant variations during term time U(NAdolescents=15, NParents=17)=61.500, z=2.509, p=.012, r=.4435, halt term holidays U(NAdolescents=15, NParents=17)=56.500, z=-2.693, p=.007, r=.4760, Christmas holidays U(NAdolescents=15, NParents=17)=61.000, z=-2.522, p=.012, r=.4458 and Easter holidays U(NAdolescents=15, NParents=17)=67.000, z=-2.29, p=.002, r=.4062. The size of these differences is represented by the r value, and is considered as between medium and large for all the identified variations (Cohen, 1998). The results did not reveal any statistically significant variations during the Summer holidays.

Table 12: Median average time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents and parents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	32 Adolescents n=15 Parents n=17	-2.509	61.500	.012	0.4435
Half term holidays*	32 Adolescents n=15 Parents n=17	-2.693	56.500	.007	0.4760
Christmas Holidays*	32 Adolescents n=15 Parents n=17	-2.522	61.000	.012	0.4458
Easter holidays*	32 Adolescents n=15 Parents n=17	-2.298	67.000	.002	0.4062
Summer holidays*	33 Adolescents n=15 Parents n=18	---	---	.173	---

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.1.5.2 Time spent on homework as reported by adolescents and parents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on homework as reported by the adolescents and the parents in school two. Table 13 presents the results which revealed statistically significant variations during the Summer holidays U(NAdolescents=13, NParents=22)=69.500, z=-2.835, p=.005, r=.4792. The size of this difference is represented by the r value, and is considered as between medium and large effect (Cohen, 1998). The results did not reveal any statistically significant variations in the reported homework times for the remainder of the academic year.

Table 13: Median average time spent on homework as reported by adolescents and parents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	37 Adolescents n=15 Parents n=22	---	---	.132	---
Half term holidays*	35 Adolescents n=13 Parents n=22	---	---	.862	---
Christmas Holidays*	35 Adolescents n=13 Parents n=22	---	---	.414	---
Easter holidays*	35 Adolescents n=13 Parents n=22	---	---	.374	---
Summer holidays*	35 Adolescents n=13 Parents n=22	-2.835	69.500	.005	0.4792

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.1.5.3 Time spent on homework as reported by teachers and adolescents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on homework as reported by the teachers and the adolescents in school two. Table 14 presents the results which revealed statistically significant variations during the Christmas holidays U(NTeachers=17, NAdolescents=13)=62.500, z=-2.020, p=.043, r=.3687 and during the Summer holidays U(NTeachers=17, NAdolescents=13)=55.000, z=-2.487, p=.013, r=.4540. The size of these differences is represented by the r value, and during the Christmas holidays is considered as medium effect, while during he Summer holidays is considered as between medium and large effect (Cohen, 1998). The results did not reveal any statistically significant variations for the remainder of the academic year.

Table 14: Median average time spent on homework as reported by teachers and adolescents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	32 Teachers n=17 Adolescents n=15	---	---	.421	---
Half term holidays*	30 Teachers n=17 Adolescents n=13	---	---	.423	---
Christmas Holidays*	30 Teachers n=17 Adolescents n=13	-2.020	62.500	.043	0.3687
Easter holidays*	30 Teachers n=17 Adolescents n=13	---	---	.247	---
Summer holidays*	30 Teachers n=17 Adolescents n=13	-2.487	55.000	.013	0.4540

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.1.5.4 Time spent on homework as reported by teachers and parents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on homework as reported by the teachers and the parents in school two. Table 15 presents the results which revealed statistically significant variations during the Christmas holidays U(NTeachers=17,

NParents=22)=116.000, z=-2.062, p=.039, r=.3301 and during the Easter holidays U(NTeachers=17, NParents=22)=102.000, z=-2.447, p=.014, r=.3918. The size of these differences is represented by the r value, and is considered as medium for both Christmas and Easter holidays (Cohen, 1998). The results did not reveal any statistically significant variations for the remainder of the academic year.

Table 15: Median average time spent on homework as reported by teachers and parents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	39 Teachers n=17 Parents n=22	---	---	.299	---
Half term holidays*	39 Teachers n=17 Parents n=22	---	---	.199	---
Christmas Holidays*	39 Teachers n=17 Parents n=22	-2.062	116.000	.039	0.3301
Easter holidays*	39 Teachers n=17 Parents n=22	-2.447	102.000	.014	0.3918
Summer holidays*	39 Teachers n=17 Parents n=22	---	---	.668	---

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.1.4 School three

5.1.4.1.4.1 Time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents and parents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on leisure as reported by the adolescents and the parents in school three. Table 16 presents the results which did not reveal any statistically significant variations throughout the year.

Table 16: Median average time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents and parents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	56 Adolescents n=44 Parents n=12	---	---	.316	---
Half term holidays*	55 Adolescents n=43 Parents n=12	---	---	.230	---
Christmas Holidays*	55 Adolescents n=43 Parents n=12	---	---	.334	---
Easter holidays*	55 Adolescents n=43 Parents n=12	---	---	.411	---
Summer holidays*	55 Adolescents n=43 Parents n=12	---	---	.259	---

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.1.4.2 Time spent on homework as reported by adolescents and parents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on homework as reported by the adolescents and the parents in school three. Table 17 presents the results which did not reveal any statistically significant variations throughout the academic year.

Table 17: Median average time spent on homework as reported by adolescents and parents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	58 Adolescents n=46 Parents n=12	---	---	.313	---
Half term holidays*	55 Adolescents n=43 Parents n=12	---	---	.951	---
Christmas Holidays*	52 Adolescents n=40 Parents n=12	---	---	.571	---
Easter holidays*	53 Adolescents n=41 Parents n=12	---	---	.686	---
Summer holidays*	53 Adolescents n=41 Parents n=12	---	---	.475	---

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.1.4.3 Time spent on homework as reported by teachers and adolescents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on homework as reported by the teachers and the adolescents in school three. Table 18 presents the results which

revealed statistically significant variations during the half term holidays U(NTeachers=19, NAdolescents=43)=262.500, z=-2.235, p=.025, r=.2838, Easter holidays U(NTeachers=19, NAdolescents=41)=263.500, z=-2.007, p=.045, r=.2591 and the Summer holidays U(NTeachers=19, NAdolescents=41)=170.000, z=-3.623, p=.001, r=.4677. The size of these differences is represented by the r value, and is considered between small and medium effect during half term and Easter holidays, while during the Summer holidays it is considered as between medium and large effect (Cohen, 1998). The results did not reveal any statistically significant variations during term time and the Christmas holidays.

Table 18: Median average time spent on homework as reported by teachers and adolescents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	65 Teachers n=19 Adolescents n=46	---	---	.209	---
Half term holidays*	62 Teachers n=19 Adolescents n=43	-2.235	262.500	.025	0.2838
Christmas Holidays*	59 Teachers n=19 Adolescents n=40	---	---	.120	---
Easter holidays*	60 Teachers n=19 Adolescents n=41	-2.007	263.500	.045	0.2591
Summer holidays*	60 Teachers n=19 Adolescents n=41	-3.623	170.000	.001	0.4677

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.1.4.4 Time spent on homework as reported by teachers and parents

The Mann-Whitney U tests were run to compare the time spent on homework as reported by the teachers and the parents in school three. Table 19 presents the results which revealed statistically significant variations during the Christmas holidays U(NTeachers=19, NParents=12)=64.500, z=-2.020, p=.043, r=.3628. The size of this difference is represented by the r value, and is considered as medium effect (Cohen, 1998).

The results did not reveal any statistically significant variations during the reminder of the academic year.

Table 19: Median average time spent on homework as reported by teachers and parents

Variables	Number of participants	Z value	Mann-Whitney (U value)	Significance (P value)	Effect size
Term time*	31 Teachers n=19 Parents n=12	---	---	0.67	---
Half term holidays*	31 Teachers n=19 Parents n=12	---	---	0.49	---
Christmas Holidays*	31 Teachers n=19 Parents n=12	-2.020	64.500	.043	0.3628
Easter holidays*	31 Teachers n=19 Parents n=12	---	---	0.48	---
Summer holidays*	31 Teachers n=19 Parents n=12	--	--	0.25	--

*Mann-Whitney U test

5.1.4.2 Pearson's correlation: time spent on homework and leisure

The Pearson correlation coefficient tests were run to assess the linear relationship between the time spent on homework and the time spent on leisure as reported by the adolescents and the parents. Teachers were not included in this test because they have not been asked to provide leisure time data. The results of these test are presented below, as previously during: (1) term time, (2) half term holidays, (3) Christmas holidays, (4) Easter holidays and (4) Summer holidays, however for the purpose of the Pearson's correlation test, the data has been merged together and is not reported separately per school.

While the data was not normally distributed, considering the extent of the non-normal distribution and a sample size of 193 stage-one participants, the Pearson correlation was robust enough to represent the association between two groups of participants with respect to Type 1 error rate as confirmed by previous research (Bishara and Hittner, 2012). The data representing the whole sample was used to run the tests, thus the quantitative data was merged together, and was not tested per school. Statistical difference was

acknowledged at 95% significance P=<0.05. Values with this p-value were shortlisted to assess association.

5.1.4.2.1 Correlation between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents

Pearson's correlation test was run to assess the linear relationship between the time spent on homework and the time spent on leisure as reported by all 82 adolescents from three schools. Table 20 presents the results which revealed that there was a negative correlation between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure during the Christmas holidays, r(80)=-.411, p=.001 and during the Easter holidays r(80)=-.298, p=.005. The results did not reveal any statistically significant correlations during the remaining term intervals.

Table 20: Correlation between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents

Variables	Pearson Correlation value (R value)	P value Significance
Term time*	-.108	.356
Half term holidays*	-.152	.217
Christmas Holidays*	-.411	.001
Easter holidays*	-.298	.005
Summer holidays*	.057	.649

*Pearson's correlation test

5.1.4.2.2 Correlation between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure as reported by parents

Pearson's correlation test was run to assess the linear relationship between the time spent on homework and the time spent on leisure as reported by all 59 parent from three schools. Table 21 presents the results which revealed that there was a negative correlation between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure during term time, r(57)=-.298, p=.005. The results did not reveal any statistically significant correlations during the remaining term intervals.

Table 21: Correlation between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure as reported by parents

Variables	Pearson Correlation value (R value)	P value Significance
Term time*	-.298	.005
Half term holidays*	-.215	.123
Christmas Holidays*	-.178	.201
Easter holidays*	-.163	.245
Summer holidays*	-.204	.140

*Pearson's correlation test

5.2 Stage two results

The results of the stage two follow-up semi-structured interviews with parents and adolescents are presented in Table 22 and Table 24. The Tables present the themes, corresponding sub themes and codes which are based on the follow-up interviews.

Both Tables show that the data provided by the two groups of participants aligns into the same themes and includes: (1) wellbeing and holistic development, (2) perspectives of homework and (3) parental involvement. The parent data is first presented in Table 22, and the adolescent data follows in Table 24.

Subjectivity and ambiguity are concepts which were used to advantage of the reflective thematic analysis process. Braun and Clarke (2022) highlight that effective thematic analysis is based on subjectivity. This is because Finlay (2002) and Gough (2017) emphasize that knowledge discovered as part of reflective analysis is positioned within a context where processes and practices of the researcher shape that knowledge. This was particularly important in the case of the present project because the qualitative data was complex and ambiguous given the emerging research concerning the varying definitions of leisure (Lehto and Eskelinen, 2020). Respondent's answers could appear in different themes dependent on their own interpretation, thus researcher's familiarisation with the

data and context, and an aspect of subjectivity based on this familiarisation, has to be disclaimed and valued within this research paradigm. Braun and Clarke (2022) therefore consider researcher subjectivity as the aligned process involved in thematic analysis. With this in mind, the subjectivity involved in thematic analysis has not been seen as problematic, but on the contrary as something valuable as argued by Bran and Clarke (2022) themselves, to better understand and interpret the data to address "fuzziness" through acknowledging this feature of this approach.

The qualitative data has been handled in line with the stage two data analysis process described in chapter 4.8.2.

5.2.1 Parent data

Table 22 presents results of the stage two data collection process that involved parents.

Table 22: Qualitative themes identified using thematic analysis based on stage two parent data

Parent Themes	**Wellbeing and holistic development**			**Perceptions of homework**		**Parental involvement**	
Sub Themes	**Homework negative impact on wellbeing & development**	**Homework negative impact on leisure**	**Value balance: school and home**	**Positive**	**Negative**	**Parental involvement is present**	**Parental involvement is absent**
Codes	Anxiety or stress	Homework set for the weekends and holidays: limits leisure, affects wellbeing due to volume of homework	Recognise need for balance: school and home	Time spent on homework is too little, wants more homework to be set	Time spent on homework is too high	Parents intervene to minimise time spent on homework	Involvement in absent in homework and/or leisure
Codes	Pressure	Leisure excessively low/non-existent, explicit reports of detriment to wellbeing	Acknowledge benefits of adequate leisure, explicit links to wellbeing	Time spent on homework just about right, supports the use of homework	Time spent on homework is too high (and frequency of it)	Parents expect homework to be set, checked, and as a result, reported homework is expected to be handed in at school	---
Codes	Worrying about homework because set in bulk	---	---	Time spent on homework low, supports homework: no negative effect on leisure	Homework tasks are too difficult	Parents get involved in organising leisure for adolescents to ensure adequate quality of leisure	---
Codes	---	---	---	Anxiety specifically reported absent, support homework	---	Included extra-curricular activities in defining leisure	---
Codes	---	---	---	---	---	Enforce homework under the impression that homework supplements academic success	---
Codes	---	---	---	---	---	Homework keeps parents included in school, so they enforce homework at home	
Codes	---	---	---	---	---	Enforce homework at home to ensure that adolescents do not fall behind peers in mainstream education, however, disagrees with homework practice due to negative impact on wellbeing	---

5.2.1.1 Wellbeing and holistic development

The first identified theme is wellbeing and holistic development (Table 22). The following extract from an interview represents the essence of this theme:

Interview with Parent 1

*"Well we're fine, well not fine, but we can deal with it, but *child's name* has a melt down once it all comes through" (Parent)*

"And how does this impact your daughter?" (Interviewer)

"She struggles with ADHD anyway, but her mental health is shot…we don't want to complaint because we want her to stay in mainstream education, so we just get on with it"(Parent)

5.2.1.2 Perceptions of homework

While wellbeing and holistic development represented a proportion of the parent data, perceptions of homework is the second theme within this group of participants (Table 22). This theme presented an even split in the frequency of participants (the number of participants) that presented either a positive or negative perception of homework (Table 23).

Table 23: Frequency of parent perceptions of homework

	Positive	Negative
School one	0	4
School two	5	0
School three	0	1

5.2.1.3 Parental involvement

The final theme which was identified from the parent data is parental involvement (Table 22). The following extracts from interviews with three parents represent the essence of this theme:

Interview with Parent 6

"We sort of calm her down, and we break it down, and distribute it throughout the term. She used to do homework at the weekends, we banned that now in our household." (Parent)

Interview with Parent 10

"All my children have chores, but that is during their free time. So they still get a break from school…life is a hard game that is not just going to be school." (Parent)

Interview with Parent 3

"The kids needs some sort of structure so that they have something to do, and homework provides that." (Parent)

5.2.2 Adolescent data

Table 24 presents results of the stage two data collection process which involved adolescents.

Table 24: Qualitative themes identified using thematic analysis based on stage two adolescent data

Adolescent Themes	**Wellbeing and holistic development**		**Perceptions of homework**		**Parental involvement**
Sub themes	**Homework negatively impacting wellbeing and development**	**Leisure positively impacting wellbeing and development**	**Mixture of positive and negative**	**Negative**	**Negative perspective**
Codes	Anxiety reported as present	Leisure offers downtime/enables to deal with academic pressure	Homework enjoyment depends on extent of adolescent interested in the homework task	High time spent on homework introduces pressure: adolescents do not like homework, but complete homework under the impression that homework supplements academic success	Dislike leisure with external interference because it results in low level of autonomy
Codes	Homework affects holistic development: adolescents can't interact with peers/have age-appropriate experiences	Homework limits things that can be done in leisure	---	Dislikes homework, but complete homework under the impression that it supplements academic success	Leisure should be all about me, for me, external interference should be limited
Codes	Feeling down due to academic pressure: specifically homework on wellbeing	---	---	Believes time spent on homework is excessive, but completes because it is expected back at school	Non-curricular engagement requires a wider choice and less external control to promote joy
Codes	---	---	---	Refuses to complete homework	---
Codes	---	---	---	Homework is not relevant to what covered at school: do not complete homework	---
Codes	---	---	---	Does not like the concept of homework because it involves working at home: does not complete homework	---
Codes	---	---	---	Feels that there is too little leisure, therefore does not like homework, but the homework tasks are completed because they are expected at school. Feeling of being overwhelmed.	---

5.2.2.1 Wellbeing and holistic development

As previously discussed, three themes were identified from the adolescent data. One of those themes includes wellbeing and holistic development (Table 24). The following extracts from interviews with three adolescents represent the essence of this theme:

Interview with Adolescent 6

"Lets now talk about the amount of free time that you get. How do you feel about that?" (Interviewer)

"Depressed, I stress about it a lot. I don't have any free time" (Adolescent)

Interview with Adolescent 10

"Do you ever feel anxious about homework?" (Interviewer)

"Yes, I stress a lot. A lot. But we have to just get on with it" (Adolescent)

Interview with Adolescent 5

"I mean I have anxiety, so I really struggle meeting new people. So I think not having time to socialise, that doesn't help me work with my anxieties. So I guess that impacts me." (Adolescent)

5.2.2 Perceptions of homework

While wellbeing and holistic development represented a proportion of the adolescent data, perceptions of homework is a second theme within this group of participants (Table 24). This theme presented predominantly a negative perception of homework, taking into account the number of participants coded to present the negative perspective (Table 25).

Table 25: Frequency of adolescent perceptions of homework

	Positive	Negative
School one	0	7
School two	1	0
School three	0	2

The following extracts from interviews with two adolescents represent the essence of this theme:

Interview with Adolescent 7

"My parents agree with me that if I have the time to do homework to do it, but overall, its just not needed. Its an extra. Its not checked, so I can do it if I want to." (Adolescent)

Interview with Adolescent 2

"Its not my favourite thing to do, but I have to do it." (Adolescent)

5.2.3 Parental involvement

The final theme which was identified based on the adolescent data is parental involvement (Table 24). The following extracts from interviews with two adolescents represent the essence of this theme:

Interview with Adolescent 1

"I should have time to myself. Im at school all day. I don't want to do more school work when I get home." (Adolescent)

Interview with Adolescent 8

"I think that everyone needs a little bit of self care…I will be at school for majority of my day, come home get changed. I wouldn't really have time to do much. I would go straight to work. I'll work until about like 9pm, 10pm, and then come home and then I have all my homework waiting for me." (Adolescent)

"How does this impact your leisure? How does this impact you?" (Interviewer)

"So this goes back to my self care that I mentioned. People have different needs and my need is to just actually take a break and taking care of myself because obviously I don't get break mentally or physically." (Adolescent)

5.2.3 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the quantitative and qualitative results which were collected in two stages. These results are discussed in the next chapter in light of the conceptual framework and the available literature about leisure and homework. Stage one discussion addresses the quantitative results outlined in this chapter in section 5.1, and stage two discussion addresses the qualitative results outlined in section 5.2. The qualitative results were used to help explain and understand the quantitative results, and are used in such manner in the following discussion chapter.

6.0 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to increase the level of understanding of the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure. Quantitative homework, leisure, and non-academic responsibilities data, as well as qualitative data concerning perceptions of homework and the effects that time spent on homework has on leisure has been collected to contribute to this understanding. The parent and adolescent perspectives align into three themes which were identified inductively from the qualitative data. These include:

- wellbeing and holistic development,
- perspectives of homework,
- parental involvement.

However, while these themes align across the groups of stakeholders, from sub-themes down to codes, there is a contrast in the perspectives between the groups of participants regarding the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure. The implications of these results are discussed in this chapter in light of the conceptual framework, whilst also considering previous literature concerning leisure and homework.

6.1 Time spent on homework

Results indicate a range in the reported time spent on homework. As reported by parents, adolescents and teachers, the median time spent on homework during term time varied in range between the lowest median of 2.75 hours in school one and the highest median of 6.37 hours per week in school three. This highlights that adolescents from school one were likely to spend less time on homework than adolescents in school three. Despite the variation in the range of time spent on homework, time spent on homework is still lower than reported in previous research. Galloway et al. (2013) found time spent on homework to be on average 3.11 hours on homework per night, equating to 15.55 hours per week, while Kennedy and Kouzma (2002) found that adolescents spent between 10 and 65 hours

per week. Both studies were conducted in the United States, thus the present study aimed to contribute to literature by identifying an up-to-date time spent on homework in England. Similarly, however, the two studies also reported a noticeable variation in the range of reported time spent on homework. Thus, the adolescents within the sample of the present study reported lower time spent on homework than previously reported. One reason for this finding could be the absence of a national policy regarding the imposition of homework in England, which means that there is no guidance about the amount of time that adolescents are expected to spend on homework. This is important because, as identified by the present study, adolescents in school one are spending less time on homework than in school three. This means that there is a lack of consistency in the use of homework across the three schools, which could be due to the aforementioned lack of a national homework policy.

Yet, in light of this, what was surprising, was that the median time spent on homework was similar in school one and school two, despite school one having a homework policy, whilst school two did not. Indeed, previous research found that not all schools have homework policies (Holland et al., 2021). However, based on the argument that school policies impact the practice of homework (Scott and Glaze (2017), it was hypothesised that the schools with homework policies would present higher time spent on homework than the schools without a homework policy. The present findings, however, suggest otherwise, thus aligning with claims made in previous research, that homework is a powerful tradition (Kralovec and Buell, 2000) and that adolescents' work involved in completing homework became societally accepted over time (Cooper et al., 2006). Such a theory sheds light on why in a school without a homework policy, the median time spent on homework remains similar to a school with a homework policy. One reason for this discrepancy could be the teacher perception of homework because teachers' perception in school two was predominantly positive, while in schools one and three there was a

mixture of positive and negative perceptions. This helped understand the higher-than-expected median homework time in school two without a homework policy, because the teachers held a positive perception of homework. These teachers would be more likely to set homework, despite the absence of the influence of a school homework policy.

To assess the expected time to be spent on homework by the school teachers versus actual time spent on homework as reported by the adolescents across the three schools, the expected time spent on homework reported by the teachers was compared to the time reported by the adolescents using an association test. Results indicate that, in general, based on the time reported by adolescents and school teachers, adolescents seem to spend the expected time spent on homework by their school teachers. This is because the Mann-Whitney U tests only revealed statistical variations in the reported time spent on homework during Christmas and Summer holidays in school two, and half term holidays, easter and summer holidays in school three. There were not any statistically significant variations reported during the reminder of the academic year in any of the three schools. The school teachers report the expected amount of time to be spent on homework to range between 3.33 hours and 10 hours per week during term time, while adolescents report spending between 2.83 hours and 6.37 hours per week completing homework across the three schools. However, it is important to highlight that this data is based on expected and reported actual time spent on homework as reported by teachers and adolescents based on their estimates. Thus, these results are limited in that these figures are estimates and not accurately recorded as experienced in the moment . Nevertheless, they can offer an insight into the time adolescents claim to spend on homework, and the time teachers expect adolescents to spend completing homework.

Bronfenbrenner's (1975) bioecological systems theory helps to unpack these quantitative findings. National policy, or the absence of it, is a macro-level influence on the use of homework across the three schools. This means that the absence of policy offering

guidance on the practice of homework means that schools are free to set their own homework policies (DfE, 2019), and thus students across different schools are likely to experience variable expectations on the time they are to spend completing homework. This led to findings such as of Holland et al. (2021), which highlight that an individual school homework policy impacts the use of homework, and that this can vary between schools. However, in an instance of the absence of a school homework policy, the present study identified that other variables are likely to influence homework behaviour. This includes the macro-level influence of the misconception of the association of homework with academic success identified by previous literature (Cooper et al., 2006), which likely leads to an expectation of homework to be in place. While previous literature has identified the presence of this misconception, the present study confirms this still to be the case given that there is an expectation regarding homework to be set despite the lack of school homework policy to guide the practice of homework, therefore time spent on homework is still as high in a school without a homework policy in comparison to a school with a homework policy.

Bandura's (1977) theory sheds light on the impact of these wider context influences in the immediate environment through the idea of influence on behaviour by taking into account reinforcement and punishment. School one has a homework policy in place which does not outline sanctions for failure to complete homework. School two does not have a homework policy at all. School three, however, does have a homework policy which guides teachers to issue detentions to adolescents for not completing the set homework. This is important because, based on the beliefs of the social learning theory, in school one without sanctions for not completing homework, adolescents are given the reinforcement not to complete homework because there is an absence of punishment for not completing homework. This is in contrast to school three, where there is punishment for not completing homework. This motivates adolescents to spend the expected time on

homework. It is possible that adolescents felt reinforced not to complete homework because it was not expected to be handed in within school one. This also helped understand the rationale for a statistically significant variation as reported by the adolescents and school teachers in the reported time spent on homework in school two without a homework policy in contrast to school three where detentions are given out for not completing homework.

However, the Mann-Whitney U test which compared the time spent on homework as reported by the parents and the school teachers revealed a statistically significant variation throughout the academic year in school one. This is relevant because this test did not reveal variations when teacher and adolescent variables were used to run the test in school one. One reason for this variation could be the parents' perception of homework, which within school one was predominantly negative. In contrast, in school two, where parents predominantly held a positive perception of homework (unlike the circumstances noted in school one), the Mann-Whiteny U test revealed statistically significant variations in the reported homework times only during Christmas and Easter holidays, in comparison to school one, where the variations were identified throughout the academic year. A further reason for this finding could be the extent to which the perception of homework leads to the parents not feeling engaged in homework, and therefore holding an inaccurate understanding of the time spent on homework. This is because according to the quantitative results, the school teachers, and adolescents reported consistent figures, while the parents did not. This finding contrasts with previous findings because Moe et al. (2018) found that the parents' positive or negative attitudes towards homework were positively associated with the adolescents' attitudes, while the results of the present study found that parents with a negative perception of homework did not influence the time sent on homework by the adolescents, because the adolescents reported a higher time spent on homework, regardless of the parents' negative perception of homework.

6.2 Time spent on leisure

The median time spent on leisure during term time as reported by parents and adolescents varied in range between 7.75 hours in school one (lowest median) and 25 hours per week in school two (highest median). Upon comparing the time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents and parents, it was found that in school one there was a significant variation only during term time, however in school two, the variations were again identified throughout the whole academic year, with the exception of the summer holidays. Based on these results, it is possible that adolescents have different ideas about what is leisure time and what is not, given the variations considered of large effect size identified in the present study. Previous research highlights variations in the definitions of leisure, and questions whether organised leisure should be considered leisure at all from the perspective of adolescents (Lehto and Eskelinen, 2020). While the findings of the present study cannot confirm this, the results seem to mirror the findings of Lehto and Eskelinen (2020) in that children in their study did not consider engagement in organised leisure as a meaningful leisure activity because it lowered autonomy, reflecting less joy and fun. So what parents believed to be leisure, the children did not. This is important because Nordbakke (2018) found that the organisation of leisure, thus in other words parental involvement in leisure, is increasing, while engagement in unsupervised and free play in decreasing. This is further evident in the qualitative findings which help understand the statistically significant variations in the time spent on leisure as reported by adolescents and parents. As reported in the results chapter, parents reported that the adolescents having a break from school responsibilities gives adolescents the required break and parents considered this leisure, yet the adolescents held a contrasting view on this:

Interview with Parent 10

"All my children have chores, but that is during their free time. So they still get a break from school. They do have a one hour chores set and so they do an hour where they have to keep their rooms clean. Make sure the clothes are all in the laundry basket. And if there's anything else they need to do in regards to keeping themselves tidy, so they have them shows but during the summer period and they go to football club, and they do that from 9am to 12 o'clock so they do a three hour sports day on Monday to Fridays." (Parent)

Interview with Adolescent 1

"I think I should have more free time. I like seeing my friends that don't go to school with me and I can't do that if I have homework and then also other stuff I need to do. There are things I need to do at home as well so I dont have a lot of free time." (Adolescent)

Given that the present study identified coded data reflecting adolescents disliking parental involvement in leisure, and there being statistically significant variations in the reported time spent on leisure between parents and adolescents (large effect size), these results seem to mirror the findings of Lehto and Eskelinen (2020). This is because while the parent ten considered time away from the everyday school responsibilities to be engagement in leisure, adolescent one in the same household did not, highlighting likelihood in variations in the definitions of leisure. It is an area worth exploring in future research because it is possible that this creates a misconception concerning the extent to which parents have an accurate understanding regarding the actual time adolescents spend on leisure.

6.3 Association between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure

Upon trying to establish whether a decrease in time spent on homework led to an increase in time spent on leisure, the person's correlation test only identified a positive association between the two variables during Christmas and the Easter holidays when reported by the adolescents, but not when reported by parents. However, given that the association was below r=0.5, it was considered weak. Additionally, association was identified only during term time when reported by the parents, again, this was below r=0.5. This was surprising based on the findings of previous research, which established that adolescents dropped leisure activities due to excessive time spent on homework (Conner et al., 2010), while Kennedy and Kouzma (2002) reported associations with depression due to lack of sleep as a result of increasing time spent on homework, alongside a wide range of other areas associated with health, wellbeing and holistic development. It was therefore hypothesized that when time spent on homework would decrease, time spent on leisure would increase due to the need for satisfaction of biological needs which leisure offers (Passmore, 2003) and the range of coping with pressures of education and lifestyle mechanisms (Iwasaki et al., 2001;Hutchinson et al., 2006; Coleman and Iso-Ahola, 1993; Wells and Evans, 2003), as well as the prevention of the detriment to health (Santini et al., 2020a; Santini et al., 2020b; Passmore, 2003; Passmore and French, 2000;Szabo et al., 1998).

However, the present study identified that adolescents have non-academic responsibilities, a third variable, which operates within the after-school disposable time which introduces the discussion on time spent on non-academic responsibilities in light of the time spent on homework and leisure. Additionally, the lack of correlation could be explained through results of emerging research of Lehto and Eskelinen (2020) who highlight various definitions of leisure. This is important because when time spent on homework deceases, if the disposable after-school time is filled with organised activities, adolescents may indeed not consider this time to be leisure, thus the reported leisure time did not increase.

Based on the lack of the correlation established by the present study, and the findings of previous literature, it is a valuable area for future research to better understand the reality of leisure from adolescent and parent perspectives, which the present study results indicate to likely to vary.

6.4 Time spent on non-academic responsibilities

The results indicate that adolescents have non-academic responsibilities and that, similarly to the time spent on leisure and homework, time spent on non-academic responsibilities varied in range between the three schools. The median time spent on non-academic responsibilities as reported by adolescents and parents varied in range between 2 hours per week in school two (lowest median) and 7.75 hours per week in school one (highest median).

Identification of this data was useful because it helped explain the unexpected lack of correlation between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure, because this third variable was substantial in light of the disposable after-school time: it was evident that adolescents engaged in non-academic responsibilities during their disposable after-school time. Employment can have both positive and negative effects on adolescents (Mortimer, 2010). Additionally, Staff et al. (2019) highlight that employment continues to be a risk factor for poor academic achievement and education drop out. While Warton (2001) argued that homework can deny access to leisure, and while there is the argument of negative associations of homework with insomnia, headaches, anxiety and depression (Gilbert, 1999; Kraloves and Buell, 2000), the present study highlights that it is not just homework that is limiting leisure. Other, non-academic responsibilities fulfil the disposable after-school time available for leisure. Mortimer (2010) highlight that non-academic responsibilities such as employment can have both positive and negative effects on adolescents providing that it is not excessive in intensity and duration, while Staff et al. (2020) raise alarms regarding employment being a risk factor for poor academic

achievement and dropout of education. However, it is a valuable area for future research to identify the rationale for non-academic responsibilities, in light of negative effects of homework on adolescents' leisure. This is because, as explored in the upcoming qualitative discussion, there are negative effects of time spent on homework on adolescents' wellbeing and holistic development resulting from limited time spent on leisure. Yet adolescents engage in additional non-academic responsibilities which they claim limits time available for leisure, leading to the below discussed effects. Considering the limitations of previous research, the present research design proceeds to a follow-up stage discussion that focuses on qualitative data to better understand the stage one quantitative results. This introduces the discussion of the stage two findings.

6.5 Wellbeing and holistic development

Both parents and adolescents in the sample believed that homework negatively impacted the wellbeing and holistic development of adolescents through a range of coded factors. However, despite this belief, the results indicate that when time spent on homework decreased, time spent on leisure did not increase. Additionally, despite these noted negative effects, homework was supported by both parents and adolescents in the sample and in most cases, was completed by the adolescents.

As previously defined, wellbeing can be assessed either from a subjective or objective perspective (Ross et al., 2020). Subjective wellbeing reflects a personal account of experiences and fulfilment including eudaemonic and hedonic wellbeing (Martin et al., 2017), while objective wellbeing reflects an account of material resources and social attributes (Western and Tomaszewski, 2016). Subjective wellbeing definition reflects the wellbeing referred to within this theme which were identified from the data.

6.5.1 Homework is enforced by parents, despite detriment to wellbeing

The initial codes which were identified from the data within this theme are (1) adolescent anxiety; (2) stress; and (3) pressure, all three of which according to both parents and adolescents, are imposed by homework. The data revealed that in instances when parents reported homework to be negatively associated with anxiety, stress, or pressure, in most cases, the parents still supported homework and enforced homework to be completed. In some cases, parents supported homework to a disturbing extent. For example:

Interview with Parent 1

"She struggles with ADHD anyway, but her mental health is shot…we don't want to complaint because we want her to stay in mainstream education, so we just get on with it" (Parent)

What was evident in the extract above was that parent one held the belief that homework must be completed at any cost to ensure that the adolescent remain in mainstream education due to the ADHD diagnosis, regardless of the negative effects of the homework tasks on the adolescent. However, there was an acknowledgment that homework led to an adolescent meltdown, in that the adolescent cried and struggled to control behaviour, yet the parent created a home environment where homework was supported and homework was encouraged to be completed. This highlights the influence of parental perception of homework in light of the effects that homework has on adolescents' leisure.

Analysis of the data codes of parents' perceptions of homework reveals that that parents believe that homework was required to ensure academic success. This aligns with the findings of Cooper et al. (2006) that parents, in general, hold the mis-concepted belief

that homework supplements academic success. Bempechat (2004) highlight that from an academic performance perspective, homework continues to be a contested practice in literature, while Wilkins (2021) and Fernandez-Alonso et al. (2017) highlight that the influence of homework on academic performance is influenced by a range of influences from the surrounding environment, yet parents continue to hold the homework misconception.

Bronfenbrenner's (1986) bioecological perspective aided analysis of this through identification the societal belief that homework supplements academic success (macro-level influence). Based on the results of the present study, this macro-level influence outweighed the observed negative effects on adolescents' wellbeing considering that parents reinforced the importance of homework being completed. While this macro-level influence is strong, looking further to the chrono-level hemisphere, the parents were functioning within a marketised education culture, where adolescent's academic success was an indicator of worth and competitiveness (Gewirtz and Ball, 2000). This is important because entry requirements to further education and employment are categorised based on academic success, thus this highlights the motivation for this behaviour, which helps to understand the behaviour within the immediate environment from the social learning theory perspective.

Bandura's (1977) social learning perspective enabled analysis of the impact that the influence from the wider contexts had on behaviour in the immediate environment. The influence of the belief that homework supplements academic success led to altering personal characteristics, and thus parents created a supportive homework environment, promoting the completion of homework. Parents being the role models within the immediate environment provided motivation for adolescents to complete homework through influencing adolescents' personal characteristics regarding the perception of homework, leading to the homework being completed, despite the detriment to the

wellbeing of the adolescents. This was due to the motivation for academic success in light of the influence of the discussed marketisation of education.

6.5.2 Homework is completed by students, despite detriment to wellbeing

While parental influence was substantial in creating a supportive environment for homework and the extent to which this impacts adolescents' homework behaviour, results revealed that adolescents also held a mis-concepted belief regarding the relationship between homework and academic success. This again substantially impacted homework and leisure behaviours, despite the negative effects on wellbeing. Below are two adolescent interview extracts demonstrating homework behaviour despite negative effects on wellbeing:

Interview with Adolescent 6

"Do you support homework?" (Interviewee)

"If it is related to what we have been doing at school so I can revise and make sure I understand at home. I feel like sometimes its, it was just set for the policy and its just set for being set" (Adolescent)

"Lets now talk about the amount of free time that you get. How do you feel about that?" (Interviewer)

"Depressed, I stress about it a lot. I don't have any free time" (Adolescent)

This is also evident in the below extract interview with the following adolescent from school two:

Interview with Adolescent 10

"homework makes me feel more comfortable that I will get the results that I need" (Adolescent)

"And what makes you feel that?" (Interviewer)

"It obviously gives you a sense of self-development, and, you know, growing as in that subject and obviously, you know, spending time on the homework makes me revise what I need to revise, so I guess that's why" (Adolescent)

"And do you find homework meaningful? Do you feel that it is useful?" (Interviewer)

"Yes it helps me revise so I don't mind it"(Adolescent)

"Do you ever feel anxious about homework?" (Interviewer)

"Yes, I stress a lot. A lot. But we have to just get on with it " (Adolescent)

It is important to highlight that school two did not have a homework policy, because the adolescent mentioned that "we have to just get on with it", thus indicating some sort of motivation leading to the homework being completed. This motivation could stem from the fact that the student experienced reinforcement for this behaviour because the homework task was meaningful through the opportunity to revise (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore, school two's lack of homework policy also means that it was possible that the absence of the wider context macro-level influence led to homework being more meaningful (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), in this case as revision. This created the reinforcement for the homework to be completed in the immediate environment, rather than punishment stemming from a homework policy (Bandura, 1977). This aligns with previous research which claims that adolescents find engagement in homework

reinforcing because they go over resources in advance of exams (Mullenbruck et al., 1999). Additionally, this aligns with the advice given by the UK Education Endowment Foundation toolkit advising practice that quality is more important than quantity in homework. Hallam (2004) specifically did not make a recommendation on the time students should spend on homework in a substantial review of homework literature, and recommended practitioners to consider quality over quantity. This further highlights that more meaningful tasks are likely to be more rewarding from an achievement, reinforcement and motivation perspective when adolescents feel that the homework tasks are useful, despite the negative effects on their wellbeing. This also highlights the weight of the extent to which adolescents take their future lives seriously, wanting to perform well academically.

6.5.3 Low time spent on leisure led to the weakening of subjective wellbeing through limiting holistic development

Adolescents believed that time spent on leisure was low and that this limited the opportunity for holistic development. Adolescents who acknowledged mental health issues struggled even more as a result of low time spent on leisure, which they found limited their holistic development. This was because they did not have opportunities to develop holistically within the leisure context, for example:

Interview with Adolescent 5

"I mean I have anxiety, so I really struggle meeting new people. So I think not having time to socialise, that doesn't help me work with my anxieties. So I guess that impacts me." (Adolescent)

Adolescent five acknowledged anxieties, which led to a feeling of struggling to establish new relationships with peers. The adolescent claimed that having homework in place limited the disposable time for leisure. Both groups of stakeholders (1) adolescents and (2) parents in the sample reported that low time spent on leisure negatively impacted adolescents' holistic development as they were unable to develop new relationships. This aligns with previous research in that Hunter and Csikszenmihalyi (2003) found that leisure offers the opportunity for developing new relationships and developing social skills, while Larson (2000) adds that adolescents identify their strengths and work on their weaknesses. Adolescent five above did not have the time to socialise due to the absence of leisure, which as the adolescent claimed was due to homework. As a result, the adolescent was limited in the opportunity to work on the described weak social skills.

Solmi et al. (2021) highlight that the peak age of onset for mental health issues to develop is 14.5 years old, while Clarke and Lovewell (2021) found that adolescents who experience poor mental health are at a greater risk of adverse health outcomes throughout adulthood. Yet the evidence based on the data of the present study shows that both parents and adolescents highlight the negative effects of homework, as a result of the imposition of homework, but parents still enforced it and adolescents completed it. These findings contribute to the current literature by revealing a contemporary issue of the push for academic success in education in England, and the extent to which the beliefs about homework, and the relationship that it has with academic success, are part of this. Additionally, these findings contribute to the current literature through identifying that both parents and adolescent support homework to ensure academic success, despite the negative effects on holistic development.

While adolescents and parents claimed that the imposition of homework was having negative effects on adolescents' leisure through wellbeing and holistic development, analysis of the correlation between homework and leisure is pertinent in trying to

understand the extent to which this affects leisure. Based on the data, the previously discussed hypothesis that in instances when homework time decreased, leisure time would increase has been rejected. This means that while parents and adolescents claimed that the imposition of homework limited leisure, in instances when homework time decreased, leisure did not necessarily increase. A possible explanation for the time spent on leisure remaining low is engagement in non-academic responsibilities, in that seven out of the ten adolescents reported in their interviews that they either worked and/or cared for siblings during the disposable out of school time. Given this finding, this highlights an area for further research to establish the reasons for employment and care, and the extent to which this fills the disposable after-school time for adolescents which was beyond the scope of this project.

6.6 Perceptions of homework

The second theme which was identified from the parent, adolescent and teacher data was perceptions of homework. While teachers were not included in the stage two follow-up, stage one qualitative analysis revealed this theme in the teacher sample. However, while this theme aligned across the three groups of stakeholders, the sub-themes and codes varied substantially in that parents and teachers presented a mixture of positive and negative perceptions of homework individually. In contrast, adolescents presented predominantly a negative perception of homework. Influences on these perceptions and the effects that these have on adolescents' leisure are explored in this section. The study has made an original contribution through enhancing the currently limited understanding of stakeholder perceptions of homework in secondary level education (Pollard, 2023).

Cooper et al. (2006) highlighted that homework can be a source of friction, and it was evident in the present study sample that there was a contrast in attitudes, in that there was a mixture of positive and negative responses across the three groups of stakeholders. However, given that there was a predominantly negative perception of homework within

the adolescent sample, and a mixture of positive and negative perceptions representing the parent and teacher perspectives, this highlights that this conflict in perceptions is getting less sharp, in that it is possible that parents and teachers are starting to understand that homework can also be negatively associated with adolescents' leisure. This becomes especially clear when highlighting that teachers consider adolescent' leisure when setting homework, which is explored below.

6.6.1 Parent perceptions

Parents presented an even split in the number of stakeholders with either a positive or negative perception of homework. Even though more codes were identified from the data representing a positive perception, commonly cited reasons include (1) time spent on homework is just about right, thus supports homework, (2) homework is needed to ensure academic success, thus supports homework, (3) time spent on homework is too low, thus demands more homework. There was an even split in numbers (frequency), in that five parents supported the imposition of homework, while five other parents did not. Interestingly, the positive perception towards homework from the parents' perspective was only evident in school one, where there is an absence of a homework policy. In contrast, schools one and three, both of which have homework policies, did not reveal any parents with a positive perception of homework.

These findings were surprising given that previous research found that parents, in general, support homework (Cooper et al., 2006), and that parents view the quality of the school based on whether or not the school sets homework (Hattie, 2012). One reason for this finding could be the emerging awareness of the extent to which adolescents' time spent on homework is excessive, despite it being lower than reported in previous research, especially given that parents get involved to manage the effects of homework and leisure to ensure optimum effect on adolescents. This is explored later in this chapter. Additionally, previous research reported parents declaring that homework tasks are too

long or too difficult (Karlovac and Buell, 2000). There was an absence of these reports in the present study.

The conceptual framework helped understand these results. Parents explicitly discussed their desire for their children to do well at school, and explicitly for that reason, parents reported to be supportive of homework. The biological perspective helps understand this through analysis of influences from wider contexts because parents act based on the previously discussed chrono-level influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1986): influences of the culture of marketised education (Gewirtz and Ball, 2000). With this in mind, parents desired adolescents to perform academically, in order to live a successful life. It is evident that parents were trying to achieve this through supporting and enforcing homework, under the macro-level misconception (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) that homework supplements adolescent learning (Cooper, et al., 2006). The present findings explicitly indicate that this was the reason for parents holding the positive perception of homework, which shapes the personal characteristics of the parents to influence behaviour (Bandura, 1977). To understand the impact of these wider context influences on behaviour in the immediate environment, the social learning theory utilised these identified chrono and macro-level influences by exploring the impact that these have on parents' perception of homework. This is relevant because parents provided motivation in the immediate environment for homework to be completed. It influenced adolescents' behaviour because adolescents completed homework due to the reinforcement provided by the parents. This highlights a contribution to the understanding of the weight that a perception of homework can have on the effects of homework within the context of leisure. Homework is enforced due to the discussed rationale, and then has the corresponding effects on wellbeing and holistic developments due to less disposable time available for leisure.

6.6.2 Teacher perceptions

The sub-themes representing the parents' perceptions of homework were similar to the teachers': teachers showed quite close to an even split in the number of codes which were identified from the data, in that there was a mixture of positive and negative perceptions of homework. However, analysis of the number of teachers involved revealed that there was predominantly a positive perception of homework, in that a total of 31 teachers presented a positive perception, while 21 presented a negative one. School two continued to dominate the positive perception of homework within the teacher sample. Some of the commonly cited reasons for supporting homework include (1) associations of homework with academic benefits, (2) supports homework when it is used to supplement learning, alongside the teaching at school, (3) supports homework in small amounts, when adolescents still get to experience leisure, (4) supports homework when it is meaningful. Some of the negative perception codes included (1) too much homework is being set, but it has to be set to comply a with homework policy, (2) disagrees with homework in general, but has to set it due to the policy, (3) homework creates conflict between adolescents and teachers, (4) highlights that leisure time is better for children's health and wellbeing rather than doing homework and (5) disagrees with the practice of homework, because it is not sustainable and fails to fulfil its purpose.

It was also interesting to identify a mixture in both the nature of the perceptions as well as a split in the number of teachers with positive and negative perceptions of homework, in that research representing the voices of teachers with such an even split is limited. Previous literature is available on teacher perspectives regarding their lack of adequate training on how to construct meaningful homework assignments (Farkas et al., 1999). Additionally, these findings seem to mirror the results of previous quantitative research which found that teachers predominantly held a positive perception of homework because they felt that homework supplements academic learning (Shahzada et al., 2011). However,

the present study contributed to literature through demonstrating that teachers consider students' leisure when setting homework because in instances when homework was supported, this was dependent on the intensity and duration of time spent on homework, in that this was not excessive.

6.6.3 Adolescent perceptions

While parents and teachers presented almost an even split in the perceptions of homework in the context of the sub-themes and codes representing their perspectives, adolescents presented a predominantly negative perception of homework both in the number of codes and in the number of stakeholders presenting these perceptions. Some of the commonly cited reasons included: (1) time spent on homework introduces pressure, but homework is completed under the impression that it supplements academic success (2) dislikes the concept of homework, but completes it under the impression that it supplements academic success, (3) time spent on homework is excessive, but completes homework because it is expected to be handed in, (4) refuses to complete homework, (5) homework tasks are not relevant to what is covered at school, (6) does not like the concept of homework because it involves working at home, after being at school for the whole day, (7) feels that there is too little leisure. Only one adolescent presented a positive perception of homework in school two, and the reason for this was that homework enjoyment depends on the extent to which the homework task is interesting. Seven adolescents in school one, and two adolescents in school three, presented the negative perspective. Crucially, identification of the perception of homework can help improve the practice of homework through better implementation of homework (Moorhouse, 2021).

These findings regarding adolescent perceptions align with previous research in light of homework taking away the opportunity for leisure engagement (Coutts, 2004). The present study seems to also mirror the findings of the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study (2020) which found that education in England places significant

pressure on adolescents, and this is evident in the present findings because adolescents presented evidence for feeling excessive pressure to an extent that it affects their wellbeing. Additionally, adolescents also presented evidence that there is a misconception regarding the association of homework with academic success because adolescents complete homework only because they hope this will aid their learning or because it is expected to be handed back in at school. This highlights the perception of homework within this group of stakeholders.

6.6.1 The extent to which school homework policies influence the perception of homework

What this data representing the parent, teacher and adolescent perceptions of homework has in common, is that the positive perception of homework dominates school two across the three participant groups. This contrasts with the remaining two schools. Schools with a homework policy did not present any parents or adolescents with positive perceptions of homework. In fact, in the case of both parents and adolescents, perceptions were predominantly negative in schools with homework policies, in comparison to a school without a homework policy. The perceptions were negative because adolescents reported that homework limited the opportunity for engagement in leisure activities, while parents reported that the amount of time required to spend on homework was too high or that the homework task difficulty was too high. One reason for this could be the presence, or indeed absence, of a school homework policy given that school two does not have a homework policy, in contrast to the two remaining schools. This was important because, as identified by the present study, this likely standardised the practice of homework through homework being set in bulk per term, and therefore this likely takes away meaningfulness of the homework tasks. Platonova et al. (2022) found that adolescents' perception of homework can change when the homework tasks are too difficult, while Medwell and Wray (2019) highlights that homework is most effective when used as an

extension to what has been studied in class. Additionally, Ozyildririm (2022) adds that medium level difficulty tasks are most effective, highlighting the need for tasks to be tailored. Therefore, it is possible that a homework policy affected the perception of homework by the homework tasks not being meaningful in instances when a homework policy outlined a standardised amount and type of homework, this could have impacted the perception of homework through the extent to which homework was either more or less meaningful.

Additionally, instances when adolescents refused to complete homework were only evident in school one. The homework policy is relevant in trying to understand this behaviour because, while the homework policy in school one states that adolescents must spend a set amount of time on homework per week, the school has not declared consequences if adolescents do not complete homework. This contrasts with school three which has declared sanctions. From a social learning perspective, this is the punishment for not completing homework to influence behaviour (Bandura, 1977). Digging deeper to understand the influence of this on adolescents' leisure, while it was previously discussed that parents support homework from the perspective of supplementing adolescent learning, the parent sample revealed that some parents also held a negative perception of homework. What was interesting in this finding was that in instances when parents held this negative perception of homework in school one, adolescents refused to complete the set homework tasks:

Interview with Adolescent 7

"My parents agree with me that if I have the time to do homework to do it, but overall, its just not needed. Its an extra. Its not checked, so I can do it if I want to." (Adolescent)

A possible explanation for this is the lack of punishment stemming from the homework policy in school one. Meanwhile, in school three where the homework policy outlines sanctions for not completing homework, both parents and adolescents held negative perceptions towards homework, but nevertheless, adolescents completed homework. This highlights the influence of punishment on homework behaviour with regard to the influence of a policy (Bandura, 1977). This was important in trying to understand adolescent behaviour because the data in school three did not reveal results indicating that adolescents refused to complete homework, despite a negative perception, for example:

Interview with Adolescent 2

"Its not my favourite thing to do, but I have to do it." (Adolescent)

The social learning perspective helps understand this behaviour through the extent to which the discussed punishment outlined in the school homework policy influences behaviour (Bandura, 1977). This is because in some cases, as evident in schools three, policy seemed to enforced the completion of homework, despite the discussed perceptions of homework as well as the detriment to wellbeing and holistic development. Positive perceptions of homework, partly resulting from the chrono-level influences regarding marketised education (Gewirtz and Ball, 2000), but also partly from macro-level influences regarding the societal assumption that homework promotes academic success (Cooper et al., 2006), seemed to have influenced adolescent behaviour in that this shaped the personal characteristics that influenced behaviour (Bandura, 1977). As evident in the sample of the present study, parents reinforced homework, therefore adolescents completed the set homework based on this motivation. This highlights the extent to which these factors were reciprocal and influenced homework behaviour (Bandura, 1977).

6.6.2 The extent to which task type influences adolescent and teacher homework perception

While policy can be a possible explanation for the varied perceptions of homework, the homework task type and the extent to which adolescents and teachers understand this to be meaningful is also significant. This is because this influences adolescent motivation considering the rationale for completing homework despite the observed negative effects on wellbeing and holistic development. The "task type" and "meaningfulness" codes were present in the adolescent and teacher samples, but were absent in the parent sample. While adolescents have had a predominantly negative perception of homework which stemmed from schools one and three, there was an aspect of a positive perception demonstrated in school one, despite it being minimal. Crucially, the extent to which adolescents enjoyed completing homework depended on whether the adolescents were interested in the task, which is demonstrated in the following two example interview extracts:

Interview with Adolescent 10

"I feel like when you're interested in something you you're more like, more willing to put the time into it and you know, learn more about it and, you know, develop your own knowledge in that subject... I think that homework makes me feel more comfortable that I will get the results that I need." (Adolescent)

Interview with Adolescent 8

"Yeah, if the teachers are being proficient about the use of homework so if it was to prepare for the exams, that would be fine and I would do it because that would be my revision. Because I would see the end goal being the benefit." (Adolescent)

This highlights that if adolescents find the task meaningful, then they support it and are more willing to complete homework. However, evidence for this was minimal, in that only one adolescent reported this. Yet looking at the extent to which this influences behaviour, this finding is interesting because adolescents are likely to view the effects of homework from the short-term and immediate effects perspective, thus through viewing homework as limiting leisure. However, in instances when adolescents understand the long-term implications of homework, they are more likely to support this. This is important from the perspective of understanding behaviour because there is a predominantly negative adolescent perception of homework, and one reason for this could be that adolescents do not understand the long-term benefits of homework.

The social learning theory helps understand this behaviour from the perspective of reinforcement. This is because adolescent ten realised the value in homework, thus this showed that when the adolescent was interested in the content, the adolescent, as a result, was willing to put the time into the set task. Through the development of knowledge as a result of completing homework, the adolescent was likely to feel rewarded, and as a result reported to have found this behaviour reinforcing. This influenced adolescent's behaviour because the individual continued completing the homework tasks. This was further evident in adolescent eight's data: the adolescent found the homework behaviour reinforcing because it meant acquiring new knowledge in preparation for exams, and ultimately progress towards the end goal. Again, the bioecological perspective is important, by understanding the weight of the chrono-level influence, we can see that the importance of marketisation in education leads to adolescents wanting to be successful academically (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This affected the personal characteristics of the individual, which in turn influenced behaviour as evidenced above (Bandura, 1977).

Additionally, teachers reported that homework limited leisure and can have an effect on adolescents' wellbeing and development, so as a result some teachers disagreed with homework. This was surprising, given that teachers were not expected to make a valuable contribution to this area as they operate strictly within the school environment. Yet the results indicate that teachers were aware that homework negatively affects leisure through there being less time available to spend on leisure, and therefore, as reported by the teachers, there being a lower probability for the adolescents to experience the positive associations of leisure with health and wellbeing. In spite of this, they still set homework. The data in the sample provides evidence that homework is set to comply with school homework policies.

6.7 Parental involvement

The third theme which was identified from the parent and adolescent data is parental involvement. The data revealed that parents get involved in adolescents' immediate environment which is evident through some of the following codes that were identified from the parent data: (1) minimise time spent on homework when this is high, (2) organise leisure to ensure adequate quality of leisure, (3) include organised extra-curricular activities in the definition of leisure, (4) enforce homework under the impression that this supplements academic success and (5) enforce homework to ensure that adolescents do not fall behind in mainstream education. While code one helps minimise the previously discussed extent of impact through excessive homework on adolescents' leisure, the adolescent codes indicate that the parental involvement created tension within the immediate environment. This was evident through some of the following codes which were identified from the adolescent data: (1) dislike leisure with external interference because it results in low level of autonomy, (2) leisure should be all about me, for me, external interference should be limited, (3) non-curricular engagement requires a wider

choice and less external control to promote joy. Effects of this are explored in the following section.

6.7.1 Rationale and effects of involvement

Parents were getting involved to manage the impact of excessive homework on adolescents. For example, parent six referred to involvement through managing homework that is set in bulk for the whole term:

Interview with Parent 6

"We sort of calm her down, and we break it down, and distribute it throughout the term. She used to do homework at the weekends, we banned that now in our household." (Parent)

While this was identified from data provided by only one parent, the depth of this finding was substantial because the parent intervened to manage an extreme impact of homework on adolescents' leisure. This was to an extent of having to ban homework at the weekends to safeguard the wellbeing of the adolescent, as reported by the parent. The parent explained that they got involved so that the adolescent can experience leisure otherwise it is possible that leisure would be absent in the available after-school disposable time of that adolescent. This particular parental involvement was positive because of the finding that parents are ensuring that adolescents are experiencing leisure, thus parental involvement can be explained from a nurturing perspective. The involvement was nurturing because the parent was ensuring access to leisure, which increases the likelihood of the adolescent experiencing the positive leisure associations. However, the extent to which parents needed to get involved to manage the impact of homework on

leisure is worth exploring in future research with a larger representative sample size, to identify the point at which the imposition of homework is starting to have negative effects on adolescents' leisure. This would establish the marginal effects of homework, in that there is an absence of research confirming the point at which homework starts having negative effects on adolescents. In turn, this would enable an understanding of the point at which parents have to get involved to avoid a detrimental effect on wellbeing of adolescents, but also contribute to an understanding of the holistic effects of homework.

On the other hand, parent three reported getting involved to provide structure to the after-school disposable time, and believed that homework helps provide the arena for this structure. This was particularly evident in the following interview extract:

Interview with Parent 3

"The kids needs some sort of structure so that they have something to do, and homework provides that." (Parent)

Parent three has declared that homework provides structure in the disposable after-school time. One reason for this could be, as found by Sharif et al. (2021) having entire days disposable for leisure may leave individuals similarly unhappy to not having leisure at all because having too much leisure introduces boredom, thus introduction of structure by parent three can be understood from that perspective. However, Hood-Gary (2020, p.8) highlighted that "Given the low moral stakes of most things that people do when they're bored, who are we to judge how others avoid boredom? And yet, I think most of us can see in our boredom avoidance tendencies ways of acting and spending time that fall short of what we might consider to be our better self". While this quote does not have empirical

research back up, the philosophy of leisure, and the extent to which boredom is part of it, was relevant in that parent three was trying to provide structure for leisure to the best of their knowledge to increase the probability of the optimum effects of leisure. This perspective helped understand parent behaviour in that the parent felt that the actions were in the best interest of the child. The key recurring element in this discussion is the element of balance: an adequate balance between leisure and work is required, which previous research has reported to be limited in secondary school education (Galloway et al., 2013). The present study identified similar results: lack of balance leads to negative effects on wellbeing and holistic development as discussed throughout this chapter.

Indeed, lack of structure is not always negative. Hood-Gary (2022) highlights that if not from the lack of structure and boredom, Einstein would perhaps not have discovered physics, and instead would have pursued other, less noble, boredom-evading pursuits. The significance of this statement in this context is that adolescents, like adults, require a degree of autonomy in their leisure in order to experience joy, as well as other associations with health and wellbeing (Lester, 2013). While it is evident that based on the data collected by the present study, parents get involved to ensure the best effects of leisure through structure, adolescents did not like this involvement. This is particularly evident in the following interview extract:

Interview with Adolescent 1

"I should have time to myself. Im at school all day. I don't want to do more school work when I get home." (Adolescent)

As discussed, while parents have the best intentions with their involvement, the effects of this are not always as intended. Adolescent one did not feel that he has time for himself. The involvement could be explained through the conclusions of the current body of research, and the extent to which after-school disposable time is becoming more structured, and organised (Bartkus et al., 2012), due to the benefits of engagement in organised activities with physical health (Froberk et al., 2020), academic success (Covay and Carbonoro, 2010) and reduced rates of early education dropout (Mahoney, 2000).

Adolescents were not specifically asked about their feelings concerning parental involvement in their disposable after school time, yet the data revealed that there is a negative perception of this involvement which creates tension in the micro-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). With this in mind, the positive associations with leisure which adolescents claim they need to cope with pressures of school and work, are at risk of weakening due to the involvement, despite the opportunities for these to be utilised. Previous research confirms this, in that there is a degree of autonomy needed for the positive associations with leisure (Sirard et al., 2006). This is a valuable area for future research in an attempt to understand the effects on leisure from the parent and adolescent perspective, by exploring what leisure is all about from those two key perspectives.

6.7.2 Tension in the immediate environment created by involvement

While parents justify their involvement by minimising the negative effects of excessive time spent on homework or leisure, it is evident from the sample in the present study that some parents get involved to ensure an adequate balance between homework and leisure because there is an absence of this balance. This can be explained through an absence of a national homework policy, a macro-level influence, which therefore does not guide practice to provide consistent homework use across the schools. The impact that this was having on adolescents' leisure was through parents feeling the need to get involved, and as a result, this introduced tension because adolescents did not like this involvement.

While it was clear that parents get involved in the after-school disposable time with the best intentions to ensure positive effects of both homework and leisure, it is also clear that this involvement creates tension within the immediate environment, through adolescents reporting that they do not have any free time at all. For example:

Interview with Adolescent 8

"I think that everyone needs a little bit of self care…I will be at school for majority of my day, come home get changed. I wouldn't really have time to do much. I would go straight to work. I'll work until about like 9pm, 10pm, and then come home and then I have all my homework waiting for me." (Adolescent)

"And I can see that you declared that you do not have any leisure time during term time. Do you not have any leisure time during weekends?" (Interviewer)

"No, I work at the weekends 9am-5pm. Then after that I have swimming lessons." (Adolescent)

"How does this impact your leisure? How does this impact you?" (Interviewer)

"So this goes back to my self care that I mentioned. People have different needs and my need is to just actually take a break and taking care of myself because obviously I don't get break mentally or physically." (Adolescent)

"Why do you think you need this break? What is causing this?" (Interviewer)

"Life with school and work can get mentally exhausting and I feel burned out from constant pressure…I need work" (Adolescent)

It was evident that adolescent eight had influences which affected the out-of-school disposable time, because of the mention of work being mentally exhausting and that the adolescent felt burned out from constant pressure. Unfortunately, it has not been investigated why the adolescent engages in employment, but this is a valuable area for future research in that the rationale for adolescent eight engaging in employment could help understand the effects that are in place. The adolescent referred to feeling burned out by pressures imposed by school and work, however, the adolescent also referred to having to go to swimming lessons because parents say this is good, yet instead, the adolescent declared the need for self-care. The current body of literature about leisure helps understand this need, in that leisure is associated with better mental health (Santini et al., 2020, a). Coatsworth et al. (2006) however add that self-defining and expressive leisure engagement is more likely to be associated with wellbeing. This is reflected in the reports made by adolescent eight above, in that the adolescent needs a break, and because potential leisure during swimming is not self-expressive, it is not what that adolescent wants to do, thus does not offer recreational benefits, and creates conflict in the micro-system due to the previously discussed influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Moreover, upon comparing the time spent on homework as reported by the adolescents with the time reported by the parents, in some cases, the parents have reported statistically significant variations in time spent on homework to the adolescents. For example, adolescent eight has reported not having any leisure, while the parent of that adolescent reported moderate leisure. Moreover, that parent adds:

Interview with Parent 10

"All my children have chores, but that is during their free time. So they still get a break from school…life is a hard game that is not just going to be school." (Parent)

While the parent was not aware that the adolescent did not have any free time from the adolescents' perspective, the parent was getting involved by ensuring extra-curricular engagement such as swimming but also chores to teach valuable life lessons. However, the parent mentioned that the adolescent still experienced a break from school, yet the adolescent has not declared any free time. While the quantitative data is based on participant estimations which are limiting, what this mirrors is the findings of previously discussed research of Lehto and Eskelinene (2020) in that leisure definitions varied between parents and adolescents, and in this case, this leads to parental involvement which is when the adolescent does not experience leisure due to the lack of freedom and autonomy.

Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological perspective helps understand this involvement in that the parent declared that life can be challenging. The influence of macro-system is apparent here, highlighting the values and customs within the British culture and the culture of education, as the parent feels the need that, in order to prepare the child for a successful life, there is the need for chores and extra-curricular activities. However, the adolescent does not accept this viewpoint as a developing individual surrounded by those influences, thus this creates tension.

6.8 Chapter summary

It is evident that the time spent on homework, leisure and non-academic responsibilities varied. This highlights inconsistencies in the use of homework and the extent to which adolescents experience leisure, and the associated effects with both of these concepts. This can be explained through the absence of a national homework policy; thus, schools can have their own practice of homework, which explains the varied time spent on homework and leisure. What was surprising, was that the study has not found a correlation between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure, in that a decrease in the amount of time spent on homework did not lead to an increase in the amount of time spent

on leisure. A possible explanation for this could be that when homework time decreases, leisure time does not increase when reported by adolescents if this time is filled with structured activities. As found by the present study and Lehto and Eskelinen (2020), adolescents do not necessarily identify organised leisure time as leisure in contrast to the parents. Additionally, the lack of correlation could be explained through other, non-academic responsibilities, which are in place on which adolescents spend their disposable after school time. This is a valuable area for future research to establish the rationale for the non-academic responsibilities. Whilst adolescents reported partaking in employment and extra-curricular activities, they also reported negative effects of these on their wellbeing and holistic development. A possible explanation for this could be the rising cost of living. Families from lower socio-economic background could be within households struggling to finance day to day operations of the household, thus adolescents make a contribution to this. However, identification of this was beyond the scope of the present project.

The study identified that excessive time spent on homework can have negative effects on the wellbeing and holistic development of adolescents. This was expected based on the conclusions of current literature. Therefore, the findings of the present study strengthen the current body of literature by corroborating existing research. Moreover, the study contributes to the research field by highlighting that it would also be a valuable area for future research to establish the marginal effects of homework on leisure, which was beyond the scope of the present study and this continues to be a gap in the current body of literature. Crucially, the study has also made an original contribution by identifying that teachers consider students' leisure when setting homework, because in instances when homework was supported, this was dependent on the intensity and duration of time spent on homework, in that this was not excessive. Additionally, despite the discussed negative effects on leisure, parents reported getting involved by supporting and enforcing

homework under the impression that this will supplement academic success: this was surprising because parents were observing the negative effects of homework yet were still enforcing it to be completed. Indeed, in the case of the sample recruited for the present study, it was evident that this enforcement comes at the cost of the wellbeing and holistic development of adolescents. However, this was because both parents and adolescents aspire to academic success to live a successful life, despite reporting significant, and in some cases extreme, negative effects on the wellbeing and holistic development discussed in this chapter.

Some parents have been getting involved to manage the negative effects of excessive time spent on homework, which has been seen as positive on the one hand by adolescents, however, on the other hand, the study has identified a negative adolescent perspective on this involvement in leisure, as it limited the level of autonomy in leisure, leading to adolescents not considering the free time as leisure. This mirrors the findings of recent leisure research, in that these two key perspectives differ significantly, and can mean that an activity is seen as leisure or not, depending on the extent of autonomy.

6.9 Limitations

6.9.1 Methods limitations

The study was limited to identifying time spent on homework, leisure and non-academic responsibilities as reported by the stakeholders based on their estimates, rather than through regular record keeping ensuring a more accurate time spent on homework and leisure. Other studies used measures such as homework diaries to ensure a more accurate estimate of time spent on homework (Kennedy and Kouzma, 2002), however the present study did not primarily focus on the quantitative data, thus the impact of this limitation was minimal considering the aim of just trying to get an insight into this quantitative data. Emphasis was placed on the follow-up phase.

In addition, this project was limited to analysis of words expressed by participants in the questionnaires and follow-up interviews. Observation of behaviour during the follow-up interviews has not been taken into account. Therefore the project was limited to interpreting the views and opinions of the three groups of stakeholders within that limited capacity.

6.9.2 Collection of data limitations

The study did not consider socio-economic backgrounds of households which took part in the project, which is a further limitation. Cooper et al. (2006) identified that socio-economic background characteristics can influence an attitude towards homework. While this consideration could have been intrusive to the stakeholders, and the stakeholders may have been less inclined to take part, this consideration could led to a better understanding of other influences on the effects of homework on leisure through identification of the additional influence on behaviour. It is a valuable area for consideration for future research in an attempt to understand the extent to which homework affects leisure through this additional level of influence.

In addition, the project did not collect demographics of the sample. The interpretation of leisure from different demographic perspectives is a potential further influence on creating the reality of leisure, and understanding the extent to which homework affects adolescents' leisure, thus consideration of this is recommended for future research to enhance the understanding of the extent to which homework affects leisure.

6.9.3 Selection of participant limitations

The project was limited to working with schools that agreed to take part in the project from within the Nottingham Trent University Institute of Education partnership with local schools. In addition, recruitment of adolescents was limited to recruitment through the school gatekeepers as an initial safeguarding barrier, and then through parents (a

further safeguarding barrier), therefore the size of the sample of adolescents who have taken part in the project is somewhat limited due to the safeguarding barriers, essential from an ethical perspective.

6.9.4 Covid-19 pandemic limitations

The covid-19 pandemic has imposed a limitation of access to schools, and as such data had to be collected remotely, using online tools. This limited the project because while remote questionnaires offered a convenient and relatively straightforward route to the distribution of a high volume of questionnaires, the researcher was not able to visit the schools in order to collect the data. This was a limitation because a researcher standing in a classroom inviting adolescents to take part would be more likely to result in a higher participation rate, than sending out an email to parents with an invitation to take part.

In addition, the covid-19 pandemic limited the scope of the project because recruitment took longer than anticipated. Recruitment took eight months, therefore within a fixed term project, there was less time available for the following stages, post data collection.

7.0 Conclusions

This chapter outlines the conclusions of this project and the original contribution that it has made to the current body of literature. This chapter also makes recommendations for future research based on the answers to the following six research questions:

1. How much homework is being set?
2. How much time are adolescents spending on homework?
3. Do adolescents have non-academic responsibilities and if so, how much time are they spending on them?
4. How much leisure time are adolescents getting?
5. What attitudes do adolescents, parents and teachers have towards homework?
6. What effects of homework are being observed on the adolescents' leisure time?

Homework and leisure activities can be valuable to adolescents through aspects ranging from health and wellbeing to holistic and academic development. While the reviewed literature about leisure demonstrates the benefits associated with leisure, the literature about homework is dominated, in general, by the focus of exploring the association of time spent on homework with academic development, while other, non-academic effects associated with time spent on homework are less substantially researched. Taking into account benefits associated with engagement in leisure, the rationale for this present project was to make an original contribution by attempting to understand how, as well as to what extent, homework affects secondary school adolescents' leisure.

Cooper et al. (2006) highlights that time spent on homework, albeit with contradictions in reviewed research studies, in general, has the potential to improve academic outcomes in secondary school education. However, this is more likely to be the case if the homework tasks are meaningful and if the time spent on homework is moderate within the context of the overall disposable after-school time (Cooper et al., 2006; Hallam, 2004) .

While these associations are more likely to be present in those circumstances, associations of leisure with health, wellbeing, and holistic development are also more likely to be present when leisure engagement is autonomous and self-centred, through the previously discussed concept of joy, and the impact that this has on leisure effects (Freire et al., 2007; Delle-Fave and Massimini, 2000). Otherwise, the aforementioned benefits are less likely to be experienced because of the absence of joy. This highlights some conditions for the possible associations.

The present study identified that parents get involved in the organisation of leisure, rationalising this through attempting to maximise the discussed benefits associated with leisure. The findings of the present study mirror the conclusions of the current leisure literature that the reduced level of autonomy in leisure, also reduce the associations of leisure with health, wellbeing and holistic development. Additionally, time spent on homework from the adolescents' and parents' perspective was extreme in intensity and duration, and lacked meaningfulness, while leading to negative effects on leisure through a detriment to wellbeing and holistic development of adolescents.

From the findings and discussion, this project has enabled the creation of a toolkit checklist, which outlines recommended characteristics of positive leisure and positive homework. This is to inform best supportive leisure and homework practices, and could help lead the direction of homework and leisure balance for secondary school pupils to contribute towards a model of best practice. Table 26 below indicates the checklist.

Table 26: Positive leisure and positive homework toolkit checklist

Positive leisure	Positive homework
There should be access to a balance between leisure and homework activities for all secondary school pupils	
A leisure pursuit should offer the experience of autonomy	Homework task type should reflect the academic developmental needs of adolescents, and adolescents should understand the value of the homework tasks
A leisure pursuit should lead to the experience of joy	Homework should not be standardised, for example: be et in bulk, for per term
A leisure pursuit should enable adolescents to cope with everyday pressure, from adolescents' subjective perspective	Homework task intensity and volume should not leave adolescents worrying
A leisure pursuit should enable the adolescent to relax	Parents should not have to intervene to manage the negative effects of excessive time spent on homework. Homework should be respected and enforced when set
Parents should not have to intervene to manage the negative effects of excessive time spent on leisure	Homework should not deny access to leisure
	The homework intensity or volume should be reviewed and managed in light of wider, out of school influences, to ensure that adolescents are not overwhelmed, and as a result refuse to complete homework

7.1 Time spent on homework, leisure and non-academic responsibilities, and the effects this has on adolescents' leisure

Previous research found that the reported time spent on homework varied between adolescents, and the present study found similar results. School teachers set homework with the expectation for adolescents to spend between 3.33 hours and 10 hours per week on homework, while adolescents report to spend between 2.75 hours and 6.37 hours on homework per week. Additionally, adolescents report to spend between 7.75 hours and 25 hours per week on leisure and between 2 hours and 7.75 hours per week on non-academic responsibilities. While the current body of research about leisure and homework highlights benefits associated with both time spent on homework and leisure, there continues to be a need for consistency in the imposition of homework, because some adolescents experience extreme time spent on homework and an absence of leisure engagement, while others experience less time spent on homework, and excessive time spent on leisure, which introduces consequent effects respectively on adolescents as discussed throughout this thesis. Overall, Pearson's correlation tests did not reveal substantial associations between a decrease in time spent on homework and an increase in time spent on leisure, which opens up recommendations for future research to focus on the significance of time spent on non-academic responsibilities, and the rationale for engagement in those responsibilities, as it appears to be a further variable contributing to the effects on leisure established by this project.

Additionally to this, it is recommended for future research to continue exploring the variations of definitions of leisure between stakeholders, and how these definitions are constructure within the given social context, and interpreted by the individual stakeholder, creating a reality of leisure within which homework induces its effects. This is because the lack of correlation between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure could be a consequence of the extent to which parental influence is involved in the leisure, and thus adolescents did not consider this time as leisure. It is also recommended for future

research to investigate, at a larger scale, whether homework limits leisure, or whether there are other influences on engagement in activities which are not leisure nor non-academic responsibilities, limiting leisure participation in adolescents' after-school disposable time, and the rationale for those activities. The present study found that there is a need for consistency in the use of homework. It is recommended for future homework research to work towards informing practice to enable an adequate balance between school and home across all schools, through establishing the marginal effects of homework and not just on academic outcomes, but holistically on adolescents, to be able to inform local school policy regarding the optimum use of homework. The present study found that despite there not being a statistically significant association between time spent on homework and time spent on leisure, homework does to an extent impact adolescents' opportunity to engage in leisure activities. This strengthens the current literature in England through identifying the up-to-date knowledge regarding the lack of consistency in the time spent on homework because some adolescents spent an excessive time on homework, while others had no homework at all. Some of those adolescents that have reported an extreme time spent on homework, have reported an absence of leisure, and reported that homework specifically was a barrier to leisure participation. This demonstrated effects on adolescents through a detriment to their wellbeing and holistic development through the absence of access to leisure, and the positive associations that it this has with wellbeing, health and holistic development. Adolescents felt the need to engage in leisure to cope and deal with pressure of everyday life and education, but reported homework and non-academic responsibilities to be limiting this opportunity.

While there is a need for greater consistence in the use of homework, there is also a need for less parental involvement in adolescents' leisure according to the adolescents. This is due to the extent to which adolescents reported that parental involvement impacted the level of autonomy in their after-school disposable time. The association established by

previous research of limited autonomy during leisure engagement, and the implications that this has on adolescents, indeed confirms this finding to be valid, which the present study confirms as reported by adolescents. The study also found that when parental involvement in the organisation of leisure was present, there was a statistically significant variation in the time spent on leisure as reported by parents and adolescents. This contributes to the emerging research regarding the varying definitions of leisure, and while the present study cannot confirm this, it seems to mirror the results of this emerging research, and is a valuable area for future research due to the extent to which this shapes the reality of leisure, and provides contexts for the effects on adolescents. The present project thus strengthens this area of research, to inform further, larger scale studies to explore this reality of leisure, and the extent to which it dictates the effects on adolescents.

7.2 Perceptions of and attitudes towards homework and the effects these have on leisure

Perceptions of homework varied between stakeholders. Parents' and teachers' perceptions of homework were split in numbers (frequency) between positive and negative perspectives. Parents have reported the impression that increased time spent on homework is associated with a higher probability of academic success, while teachers reported consideration of leisure while setting homework. The results also indicated that parents wanted their children to do well at school academically, and thus held this perception of homework and created a supportive environment for it at home. Previous research has established the societal misconception of increased time spent on homework supplementing academic success. The present study confirms this misconception was present within the parent and adolescent communities in the sample in Nottinghamshire, England.

This chrono-level influence of education culture is heavy, in that the marketisation of education introduced pressures for adolescents to perform academically to live a successful life, to an extent where wellbeing and opportunity for holistic development are

the cost, and parents create a welcoming environment for homework to aid that academic progression. This is because the observed negative effects of homework on wellbeing and holistic development are deemed necessary and are accepted, to push for, what research confirms to be possible but not definite, positive associations of homework with academic success. The present study found this extent to be surprising at times, due to the influence of this societal belief on homework behaviour. However, some parents also presented a negative perception of homework and reinforced adolescent behaviour to not complete the set homework tasks which was surprising, highlighting that awareness regarding the discussed misconception is potentially raising, and that not all parents support the practice of homework. This highlights a further original contribution of the present project.

The teachers' perspective quite similarly varied in range from supporting homework to supplement adolescent learning based on what was covered in class, to disagreeing with homework and setting it to comply with a school policy. This was surprising, given that research indicates that teachers, in general, support homework, but as previously reported raise issues regarding the lack of training on the effective imposition of homework. Teachers in the sample of the present study presented knowledge of the implications of homework on leisure, which was surprising. While there is a mixture of positive and negative perspectives of homework, this project made an original contribution by identifying that the contrast, or as referred to by previous research conflict, between adolescent negative perspectives and parent and teacher positive perspectives is getting less sharp, because there is almost an even split (frequency) in the teacher's positive and negative perceptions of homework. Parents and teachers are becoming more aware of the other non-academic effects of homework, however, local school policy in place is likely leading to homework being set and completed.

Teachers' perspectives of homework were also influenced by an absence of a homework policy, given that the positive perspective of homework was drastically higher in a school

without a homework policy, and homework was supported by teachers because the tasks were used to supplement the learning that occurred during lessons, and thus were meaningful. This highlights, in line with the current body of research, that the nature of the homework tasks are likely to impact whether adolescents find the homework task meaningful, but the present study makes an original contribution through this result because of the finding that adolescents refused to complete homework due to the lack of meaningfulness, and parents, in some cases, have reinforced this behaviour. This highlights that a homework policy has the potential to influence a perspective of homework through the quality of the homework tasks becoming more standardised. This is important because these perspectives influence homework and leisure behaviours, and lead to the corresponding effects on adolescents' leisure.

Adolescents predominantly held a negative perspective of homework because of the reported effects on their leisure, and in some cases due to leisure being absent. However, Pearson's correlation tests did not reveal an association between a decrease in time on homework and an increase in time spent on leisure. A possible explanation for this is that there is evidence in the sample which indicate that adolescents have non-academic responsibilities, however, it is a valuable area for future research to establish the rationale for those non-academic responsibilities. Additionally, it is possible that when time spent on homework decreases, there is parental involvement in the time spent on leisure, thus adolescents do not consider this time to be leisure, and therefore did not report this time as leisure engagement. This finding is important because adolescents in the present study found that they reported a negative perspective towards homework, alongside pressure imposed by the education system, while at the same time demonstrating awareness that leisure offers an arena for recovery and coping with these pressures. However, some adolescents reported not having the opportunity to experience this arena for recovery and

coping. The study has not found that this is necessarily due to homework, highlighting the rationale for the recommendation of this as a valuable area for future research.

7.2.1 The influence of policy on perceptions of homework

The inconsistent presence of school homework policies in the three schools seem to have correlated with the perceptions of homework. Evidence in the present study indicates that the presence of a school homework policy correlated to a complete absence of a positive homework perspective within the parent and adolescent groups, and a reduced number of positive perspectives within the teacher group. This led to homework not always being completed. On the other hand, the absence of a school homework policy correlated with a positive homework perspective across these groups of participants. The data also revealed that, in that context, homework was more likely to be completed because time spent on homework as reported by adolescents and teachers did not present any statistically significant variations in the school without a homework policy, while in the schools with homework policies, statistically significant variations were distinguished. This was despite policy outlined sanctions for not completing homework.

7.2.2 Influence of task meaningfulness on perceptions of homework

While understanding the rationale for the absence of an association between homework and leisure needs further research, the present study confirms that when adolescents find the homework tasks meaningful, they are more likely to hold a positive perspective of homework and want to complete it. However, the adolescents predominantly held a negative perspective of homework, which indicates that it is possible that they do not understand the rationale for setting homework and do not find the time spent on homework meaningful. However, adolescents continued to complete homework because they wanted to do well at school, as a result of the belief that this will enable a successful life. This again highlights the societal misconception within the adolescent community regarding homework. However, emerging research demonstrates that successful life does not necessarily depends on academic success, but also on robust wellbeing and holistic

development, which based on the findings of the present study, as reported by both parents and adolescents, is being jeopardized for the academic success.

While these various perspectives were present, the study identified that for some adolescent, excessive stress was present due to (1) high time spent on homework, and (2) pressure imposed by the education system as reported by both adolescents and parents. However, the data did not reveal a statistically significant association between decreased time spent on homework and an increase in the time spent on leisure. The study has however identified cases when adolescents reported a complete absence of leisure, yet those adolescents continued to complete homework due to the opportunity to revise or due to macro-level homework policy influence. Those adolescents also continued to engage in non-academic responsibilities. Parental micro-level influence is important in this context because some of the parents created a welcoming environment for homework, while others enabled homework not to be completed if the school homework policy enabled them to do so.

With this in mind, while it was beyond the scope of this project to identify the point at which homework starts to have a negative effect on adolescents' leisure, it is a valuable area for future research to explore the marginal effects of homework. However, not just from an academic outcomes perspective, but from a holistic perspective, overall, on adolescents. This could aid the progress to informing national policy. While homework literature presents extensive research on attempting to prove whether homework supplements academic success, it lacks an attempt to understand these effects. There is a need to understand the effects of homework, and the present study has made an original contribution to this understanding through exploring the reality of leisure, and understanding how homework operates within that reality, however, there is a greater need for larger-scale projects of such nature. In the instance of the present project, an understanding has been strengthened on the extent to which homework impacts leisure

and a contribution to the understanding of the reality within which leisure operates. This understanding has enabled the identification of the following three themes: (1) wellbeing and holistic development, (2) perspectives of and attitudes towards homework, and (3) parental involvement demonstrating relevant variables within an attempt to understand the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure.

8.0 References

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9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix One, Homework and academic achievement

Author and year	Publication status	Sample	Participants	Measure of effect	Year group	Subject matter	Correlation between homework time and attainment
Antonek, 1996	Unpublished	89	Students	Other test	3-5	Foreign language	+.26
Bents-Hill, 1988	Unpublished	1865	Parents	Class grades	3, 6	Language arts	-.01
						Maths	-.04
						Reading	-.04
						Multiple subjects	-.03
						Language arts	-.06
				Standardised testing		Maths	-.08
						Reading	-.09
						Multiple subjects	-.09
Bowen and Bowen, 1998	Published	538	Students	Class grades and relative standing	Middle and high school	Multiple subjects	+.20
Broxie, 1987	Unpublished	55	Students	Class grades	4-6	Multiple subjects	+.65
Bruce, 1996	Published	21835	Students	Standardised testing	8	Multiple subjects	+.20

Cool and Keith, 1991	Published	28051	Students	Standardised testing	12	Multiple subjects	+.30
Cooper et al., 1998	Published	285	Students	Class graded	2, 4	Multiple subjects	-.19
				Standardised testing			-.04
			Parents	Class grades			-.13
				Standardised testing			-.06
		424	Students	Class grades	6-12		+.17
				Standardised testing			.00
			Parents	Class grades			+.24
				Standardised testing			+.14
Deslandes, 1999	Published	637	Students	Class grades	High School	Language arts	+.18
Drazen, 1992	Unpublished	19000	Students	Standardised testing	12	Reading	+.17
						Maths	+.20
						Multiple subjects	+.20
					10	Reading	+.25
		58000			High school	Maths	+.29
						Multiple subjects	+.30
					12	Reading	+.23
						Maths	+.28
						Multiple subjects	+.27
		25000			8	Reading	+.17
Epstein, 1998	Unpublished	1021	Parents	NR	1, 3, 5	Maths	-.05

						Reading	-.11
Fehrman, Keith and Reimers, 1987	Published	28051	Students	Class grades	12	Multiple subjects	+.32
				Standardised testing			+.25
Hendrix, Sederberg and Miller, 1990	Published	1521	Students	Class grades	12	Multiple subjects	+.35
						Nonverbal ability	+.16
				NR		Verbal ability	+.17
Hightower, 1991	Unpublished	9002	Students	Standardised testing	12	Multiple subjects	+.29
Keith and Benson, 1992	Published	8910	Students	Class grades	10, 12	Multiple subjects	+.30
				Standardised testing			+.22
Keith and Cool, 1992	Published	21427	Students	Standardised testing	10, 12	Multiple subjects	+.30
Keith, Diamond-Hallam and Fine, 2004	Published	6773	Students	Standardised testing	12	Multiple subjects	+.22
Lam, 1996	Unpublished	3657	Students	Standardised testing	12	Multiple subjects	+.04
Mau and Lynn, 2000	Published	20612	Students	Standardised testing	10, 12	Maths	+.29
						Reading	+.24
						Science	+.23
Olson, 1988	Unpublished	191	Students	Standardised testing	3-6	Maths	+.11
						Reading	+.10
Peng and Wright, 1994	Published	24599	Students	Standardised testing	8	Multiple subjects	+.17

Pezdek, Berry and Renno, 2002	Published	380	Parents	Another test	4-6	Maths	+.15
Roberts, 2000	Unpublished	7178	Students	Standardised testing	8	Science	+.26
Rozevink, 1995	Unpublished	363	Students	Standardised testing	9, 12	Multiple subjects	-.23
Schewior, 1992	Unpublished	4930	Students	Standardised testing	12	Maths	+.20
Singh, Granville and Dika, 2002	Published	3227	Students	Class grades	8	Maths	+.11
						Science	+.10
				Standardised testing		Maths	+.30
Smit, 1990	Published	1584	Students	Standardised testing	7, 9	Multiple subjects	-.08
Thomas, 2001	Unpublished	450	Students	Standardised testing	8	Maths	+.22
Tonglet, 2000	Unpublished	189	Students	Class grades	5, 8	Maths	+.47
Vazsonyi and Pickering, 2003	Published	764	Students	Class grades	High School	Multiple subjects	-.03
Walker, 2002	Unpublished	86	Students	Standardised testing	4, 5	Maths	+.17
						Reading	+.25
Wynn, 1996	Unpublished	170	Parents	Class grades	3	Multiple subjects	+.00
				Standardised testing			-.17
Wynstra, 1995	Unpublished	68	Parents	Standardised testing	1-5	Language arts	-.25
NOTE: NR = no response							

NOTE: explain what I mean by published or unpublished

9.1 Appendix Two, Information sheet for headteachers

An investigation into the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure

I am a doctoral student at the Nottingham Trent University who is currently researching the effects of homework on the students' free time. This research is important due to the limitations of the existing research, which only focuses on the effects of homework on academic outcomes. My research and corresponding PhD will investigate the effects of homework on young people's leisure time.

Your participation would involve providing permission for me to undertake the following:

1. Recruit parents, students and teachers for my project from your school
2. Request consenting parents, students and teachers to complete a short stage one questionnaire (under 20 questions)
3. After I have analysed the questionnaire data, I will request no more than 20 students and their parents to participate in a 45-minute follow-up stage two interview

Please note that we will agree on a data collection procedure which will reflect your school policies and the covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

The results of this research will be presented via journal articles and finally as my PhD thesis. In accordance with the British Educational Research Association 2018 guidelines the data will be presented anonymously in all of these publications. An overview of the results of this research will be made available to you or any of the participants if required. In addition, and in line with the Nottingham Trent University Research Data Management Policy, the resulting anonymised data will be stored within the Nottingham Trent University data archive which will be available to future ethically approved research projects.

If you agree to participate in this research, you will have the right to withdraw from the project up to 30th March 2022 without providing a reason. Should you wish to withdraw, please email the Director of Studies at gaye.tyler-merrick@ntu.ac.uk who will ensure that your data will be 100% removed from this project. There is no penalty for withdrawing. Please note that following the 30th March 2022 cut-off date all data will be anonymised and therefore it will no longer be possible to withdraw. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the research team. Contact details for the research team can be found at the back of this sheet.

If you are happy for the members of your school to participate, please complete the following consent form: <insert link>

Thank you for your time and for your interest in my PhD research project.

Contact details for the research team
Principal investigator, Aleksander (Alex) Blaszko.
Email address: n0556145@my.ntu.ac.uk

Director of Studies, Dr Gaye Tyler-Merrick.
Contact telephone number: 01158483201.
Email address: gaye.tyler-merrick@ntu.ac.uk

9.3 Appendix Three, Gatekeeper consent questions

Q1 - I confirm that I have been given, read, and understood written information about the project and that I have been given the opportunity to ask questions

Q2 - I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I can withdraw from the project until 30th October 2022, without giving any reasons

Q3 - I understand that data collected in this project will be annonymised and used in ways described in the participant information sheet and that the anonymised data will be stored within the Nottingham Trent University data archive

Q4 - I freely and voluntarily agree for the members of my school community to participate in this research project

Q5 - Your full name

Q7 - The name of your school

9.4 Appendix Four, Information sheet for parents

An investigation into the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure

I am a doctoral student at the Nottingham Trent University who is currently researching the effects of homework on the students' free time. This research is important due to the limitations of the existing research, which only focuses on the effects of homework on academic outcomes. My research and corresponding PhD will investigate the effects of homework on young people's free time.

I invite you and your children to participate in my project which will involve:

1. Completing a short on-line questionnaire by parents and children (no more than 20 questions)
2. Should you express an interest, you may also be invited to a less than 45-minute follow-up interview, which will be conducted remotely via, for example, Microsoft Teams

The results of this research will be presented via journal articles and finally as my PhD thesis. In accordance with the British Educational Research Association 2018 guidelines the data will be presented anonymously in all of these publications. An overview of the results of this research will be made available to you if required. In addition, and in line with the Nottingham Trent University Research Data Management Policy, the resulting anonymised data will be stored within the Nottingham Trent University data archive which will be available to future ethically approved research projects.

If you agree to participate in this research, you will have the right to withdraw from the project up to 31st August 2022 without providing a reason. Should you wish to withdraw, please email aleksander.blaszko@ntu.ac.uk and all your data will be 100% removed from this project. There is no penalty for withdrawing. Please note that following the 31st August 2022 cut-off date all data will be anonymised and therefore it will no longer be possible to withdraw. By enabling your child to complete the questionnaire, you are providing your informed consent for participation in this project. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the research team. Contact details for the research team can be found at the back of this sheet.

If you would like to be part of this research, please complete the following parent or carer questionnaire: <insert link>

If you are happy for your child to be part of this research, please enable them access to the following student questionnaire: <insert link>

Thank you for your time and for your interest in my PhD research project.

Contact details for the research team
Principal investigator, Aleksander (Aleks) Blaszko
Email address: n0556145@my.ntu.ac.uk

Director of Studies, Dr Gaye Tyler-Merrick
Contact telephone number: 01158483201
Email address: gaye.tyler-merrick@ntu.ac.uk

Research supervisor, Dr Chris Rolph
Contact number: 01158488961
Email address: chris.rolph@ntu.ac.uk

9.5 Appendix Five , Information sheet for teachers

An investigation into the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure

I am a doctoral student at the Nottingham Trent University who is currently researching the effects of homework on the students' free time. This research is important due to the limitations of the existing research, which only focuses on the effects of homework on academic outcomes. My research and corresponding PhD will investigate the effects of homework on young people's free time.

I invite you to participate in my project which will involve completing a short 11 question on-line questionnaire.

The results of this research will be presented via journal articles and finally as my PhD thesis. In accordance with the British Educational Research Association 2018 guidelines the data will be presented anonymously in all of these publications. An overview of the results of this research will be made available to you if required. In addition, and in line with the Nottingham Trent University Research Data Management Policy, the resulting anonymised data will be stored within the Nottingham Trent University data archive which will be available to future ethically approved research projects.

If you agree to participate in this research, you will have the right to withdraw from the project up to 31st May 2022 without providing a reason. Should you wish to withdraw, please email aleksander.blaszko@ntu.ac.uk and all your data will be 100% removed from this project. There is no penalty for withdrawing. Please note that following the 31st May 2022 cut-off date all data will be anonymised and therefore it will no longer be possible to withdraw. By enabling your child to complete the questionnaire, you are providing your informed consent for participation in this project. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the research team. Contact details for the research team can be found at the back of this sheet.

If you would like to be part of this research, please complete the following questionnaire: <insert link>

Thank you for your time and for your interest in my PhD research project.
Aleksander Blaszko
Principal investigator

Contact details for the research team
Principal investigator, Aleksander (Aleks) Blaszko.
Email address: n0556145@my.ntu.ac.uk

Director of Studies, Dr Gaye Tyler-Merrick.
Contact telephone number: 01158483201.
Email address: gaye.tyler-merrick@ntu.ac.uk

Research supervisor, Dr Chris Rolph
Contact number: 01158488961
Email address: chris.rolph@ntu.ac.uk

9.6 Appendix Six, Parent electronic questionnaire items

1. Consent statement: Please note that by continuing with this survey, you provide informed consent to participate in research which explores the effects of homework on students' leisure.
2. Participant confirmation: Please confirm that you are a parent or carer.
    a. YES or NO
3. Personal information: We need some personal information from you so that we can identify your data at a later stage, should you wish to withdraw from the project. Please enter the following:
    a. Your full name
    b. Your email address
    c. Full names of your children who attend a secondary school
    d. School(s) of attendance
4. Follow-up consent page: We would like to contact you to participate in a follow-up interview which will be conducted electronically and will last less than 45 minutes. The interview aims to further explore the effects of the homework on students' leisure time.
    a. Consider me for a follow-up interview. YES or NO
    b. Consider my child for a follow-up interview. YES or NO
5. Please select the year group for your child that is attending secondary school
    a. Year 7
    b. Year 8
    c. Year 9
    d. Year 10
    e. Year 11
6. Please indicate the amount of time spend on homework per week during: term time, half term holidays, Christmas holidays, Easter holidays and Summer holidays.
    a. Scale to indicate the given time
7. Please indicate the amount of time spend on non-academic responsibilities per week during term time, half term holidays, Christmas holidays, Easter holidays and Summer holidays.
    a. Scale to indicate the given time
8. Please indicate the amount of time spend on leisure during term time, half term holidays, Christmas holidays, Easter holidays and Summer holidays.
    a. Scale to indicate the given time
9. With regard to your children that attend secondary school, do you think that homework in general serves a useful purpose? Please indicate using the scale of 1 to 4 where 1 equals "No purpose" and 4 equals "Useful"
    a. 4 item Likert type scale
10. With regard to your children that attend secondary school, do you think that homework in general serves a useful purpose? Please explain your answer
    a. Free text box
11. With regard to your children that attend secondary school, do you agree with the amount of homework that they are receiving? Please indicate using the scale of 1 to 4 where 1 equals "Disagree" and 4 equals "Agree"
    a. 4 item Likert type scale
12. With regard to your children that attend secondary school, do you agree with the amount of homework that they are receiving? Please explain your answer
    a. Free text box
13. With regard to your children that attend secondary school, do you agree with the focus of homework on student learning? Please indicate using the scale of 1 to 4 where 1 equals "Disagree" and 4 equals "Agree"
    a. 4 item Likert type scale

14. With regard to your children that attend secondary school, do you agree with the amount of homework that they are receiving? Please explain your answer.
    a. Free text box
15. With regard to your children that attend secondary school, do you think that homework has an effect on their free time? Please indicate using the scale of 1 to 4 where 1 equals “No effect” and 4 equals “Great effect”
    a. 4 item Likert type scale
16. With regard to your children that attend secondary school, do you think that homework has an effect on their free time? Please explain your answer
    a. Free text box
17. Thank you statement: We thank you for your time spent completing this survey. Your response has been recorded.

9.7 Appendix Seven, Adolescent electronic questionnaire items

1. Consent statement: Please note that by continuing with this survey, you provide informed consent to participate in research which explores the effects of homework on students' leisure.
2. Participant confirmation: Please confirm that you are a secondary school student.
    a. YES or NO
3. Personal information: We need some personal information from you so that we can identify your data at a later stage, should you wish to withdraw from the project. Please enter the following:
    a. Your full name
    b. Year group
    c. School of attendance
4. Please select your gender
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Non-binary/third gender
    d. Prefer not to say
5. Please indicate the amount of time you spend on homework per week during: term time, half term holidays, Christmas holidays, Easter holidays and Summer holidays.
    a. Scale to indicate the given time
6. Please indicate the amount of time you spend on non-academic responsibilities per week during term time, half term holidays, Christmas holidays, Easter holidays and Summer holidays.
    a. Scale to indicate the given time
7. Please indicate the amount of time you spend on leisure during term time, half term holidays, Christmas holidays, Easter holidays and Summer holidays.
    a. Scale to indicate the given time
8. Do you enjoy doing homework? Please indicate using the scale of 1 to 4 where 1 equals "Dislike" and 4 equals "Enjoy"
    a. 4 item Likert type scale
9. Do you enjoy doing homework? Please explain your answer.
    a. Free text box
10. Do you agree with the amount of homework that you are receiving? Please indicate using the scale of 1 to 4 where 1 equals "Disagree" and 4 equals "Agree.
    a. 4 item Likert type scale
11. Do you agree with the amount of homework that you are receiving? Please explain your answer.
    a. Free text box
12. Do you agree with the focus of homework on your learning? Please indicate using the scale of 1 to 4 where 1 equals "Disagree" and 4 equals "Agree
    a. 4 item Likert type scale
13. Do you agree with the focus of homework on your learning? Please explain your answer.
    a. Free text box
14. Do you think that the homework you are receiving has an effect on your free time? Please indicate on the scale of 1 to 4 where 1 equals "No effect" and 4 equals "Great effect"
    a. 4 item Likert type scale
15. Do you think that the homework you are receiving has an effect on your free time? Please explain your answer
    a. Free text box
16. If you had more free time, what would you use the additional free time for? Please explain in a few words.
    a. Free text box

17. Thank you statement: We thank you for your time spent completing this survey. Your response has been recorded.

9.8 Appendix Eight, Teacher electronic questionnaire items

1. Consent statement: Please note that by continuing with this survey, you provide informed consent to participate in research which explores the effects of homework on students' leisure.
2. Participant confirmation: Please confirm that you are a secondary school student.
    a. YES or NO
3. For the subjects that you teach, on average, please indicate in the Table below the number of minutes a student is expected to spend completing homework per week during term time, half term holidays, Christmas holidays, Easter holidays and Summer holidays?
    a. Table with subjects and year groups
4. For the subjects that you team, do you think that homework serves a useful purpose? Please indicate using the scale of 1 to 4 where 1 equals "No purpose" and 4 equals "Extremely useful".
    a. 4 item Likert type scale
5. For the subjects that you team, do you think that homework serves a useful purpose? Please explain your answer.
    a. Free text box
6. For the subjects that you teach, do you agree with the amount of homework that students are receiving? Please indicate using the 1 to 4 scale where 1 quals "Disagree" and 4 equals "Agree".
    a. 4 item Likert type scale
7. For the subjects that you teach, do you agree with the amount of homework that students are receiving? Please explain your answer.
    a. Free text box
8. For the subjects that you teach, do you agree with the focus of homework on student learning? Please indicate using the scale of 1 to 4 where 1 equals "Disagree" and 4 equals "Agree".
    a. 4 item Likert type scale
9. For the subjects that you teach, do you agree with the focus of homework on student learning? Please explain your answer
    a. Free text box
10. Do you think that homework has an effect on students' free time?
    a. Yes or No
11. Do you think that homework has an effect on students' free time? Please explain your answer.
    a. Free text box
12. What are your personal views on homework and students' free time?
13. Thank you statement: We thank you for your time spent completing this survey. Your response has been recorded.

9.9 Appendix Nine, Parent interview agenda and questions

1. Preparation tasks
    - Test the voice recording device: make sure it is working and recording to an adequate standard
    - Print consent forms
    - Go through the participant consent form with the opportunity for questions
    - Ask the participants to sign the consent forms/collect
    - Check that participants are happy with the session being audio recorded and switch on the audio recording device/if note check to ensure permission is provided for notes to be taken. Ask if anyone would like a copy of the transcript to ensure accuracy.

2. Introduction to the session

Thank you for agreeing to talk about the effects of homework on your child's free time.

The session is planned to last 45 minutes, throughout which I will ask prompt questions to encourage your discussion and dialogue. Please be honest with your responses. I am not looking for any specific answers.

I would like to remind you that the session is confidential, which means that the school staff or the students will not find out what you have said during this session. If you find any questions that you do not wish to answer, just tell me and I will move onto the next question.

Are there any questions?

3. Discussion
    - Principle investigator to introduce himself. Outline his background.
    - Project background:
        - *I am investigating homework and the effects this may or may not have on students' free time because current research focusing on homework looks at the impact of homework on academic outcomes, whereas my study investigates the effects of homework on young people's leisure time.*
    - Ask the participants to introduce themselves. Ask how they would like to be addressed – i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms or by their Christian name., their family background. If so, where?
    - *Tell me about what you think about homework in general?*
        - *Probe*
            - *Do you support the practice of homework?*
            - *Do you not support the practice of homework?*
            - *Why?*
    - *Tell me about the amount of time that your child spends on homework?*
        - *Probe*
            - *Does this this interfere with family time?*
            - *How?*
    - *Tell me about the free time that your child has?*
        - *Probe*
            - *What does your child like to do?*
            - *Do they have lots of friends?*
            - *What does the group of friends do?*
    - *Tell me more about how you feel about the effects that homework has on your child's free time activities that you listed in the questionnaire.*
        - *Probe*

        - *I will draw from their answers to probe further*

- *Tell me more about your child's attitude towards homework.*
    - *Probe*
        - *Do you help with their homework?*
        - *Does your child enjoy or dislike doing their homework?*
        - *Why?*

- *What effects of homework do you observe on your child's free time?*
    - *Probe*
        - *Are there any positive effects?*
        - *Are there any negative effects?*
        - *How does that effect your child's free time engagement?*
        - *Does your child feel anxious about homework?*

Paraphrase back to ensure accuracy

6. Closure and thank you

Summarise the discussion and thank the participants for taking their time to attend.

9.10 Appendix Ten, Student interview agenda and questions

1. Preparation tasks
   - Test the voice recording device: make sure it is working and recording to an adequate standard
   - Obtain the identity of the attendees and ensure that they have parental consent to participate
   - Ask the participants to sign the consent forms/collect
   - Check that participants are happy with the session being audio recorded and switch on the audio recording device/if note check to ensure permission is provided for notes to be taken. Ask if anyone would like a copy of the transcript to ensure accuracy.

2. Introduction to the session

Thank you for agreeing to talk about the effects of homework on your free time.

The session is planned to last 45 minutes, throughout which I will ask prompt questions to encourage discussion and dialogue. Please be honest about how you feel. I am not looking for any specific answers.

I would like to remind you that the session is completely confidential, which means that your teachers or parents will not find out what you in particular have said during this session. They will just be provided with a summary If you find any questions that you do not wish to answer, you of course have the right not to answer those.

Does anyone have any questions?

3. Discussion
   - Principle investigator to introduce himself. Outline his background.
   - Project background:
     - *I am investigating homework and the effects this may or may not have on your free time because current research focusing on homework looks at the impact of homework on academic outcomes, whereas my study investigates the effects of homework on young people's leisure time.*

   - Ask the participants to introduce themselves. Ask for their first name, background and hobbies. What do they like to do in their free time?

   - *Tell me how you feel about homework?*
     - *Probe*
       - *Is there anything that you particularly enjoy about homework?*
       - *Is there anything that you particularly dislike about homework?*
       - *Why is that?*

   - *Tell me how you feel about the amount of time that you spend on homework?*
     - *Probe*
       - *Do you think that you spend too much on homework?*
       - *Why is this?*
       - *Or do you spend just about the right amount or too little time?*
       - *Why is this?*

   - *Tell me how you feel about the amount of free time that you have?*

- *Probe*
  - *Do you think that you get too little free time?*
  - *Why do you think this?*
  - *Ordo you have the right amount of time for free time/ leisure?*
  - *Why do you think this?*

- *Do you spend this amount of time on homework by choice or because it is set?*
  - *Probe*
    - *Do you enjoy doing homework so is this why you spend this amount of time on it?*
    - *why*
    - *Or do you spend this amount of time because it is set for you to do?*
    - *why*
    - *Is this homework time encouraged by your teachers?*
    - *How do they encourage you?*
    - *Is this homework time encouraged by your parents?*
    - *How do they encourage you?*

- *How do you think homework effects your free time?*
  - *Probe*
    - *Do you think that you have enough free time for yourself?*
    - *Why?*
    - *Do you think that homework limits your free time?*
    - *Why?*
    - *Does homework make you feel anxious?*
    - *Why?*

- *In your questionnaire, you mentioned that there are things that you would like to do, but don't in your free time. Can you tell me more about that?*
  - *Probe*
    - *Is homework the reason for this?*

- *Do you have any solutions for more balance between homework and your free time; what are these?*

4. Paraphrase back to ensure accuracy

5. Closure and thank you

Summarise the discussion and thank the participants for taking their time to attend.

9.11 Appendix 11, Interview invite

Exploring the effects of homework on adolescents' leisure

Thank you for completing the stage one questionnaire which focused on exploring the effects of homework on your child's free time. As one of many parents who agreed to take part in the follow-up interview, we would like to invite you to book a remote parent session. Please note, this is a session for just the parents. If you consented for your child to take part, invites for this will be sent in the final stage of collecting data. The session will be hosted on either Microsoft Teams or Zoom depending on your preference.

Details of the bespoke session

This light-hearted session will firstly invite you as a parent, and then your child separately, to talk about the effects that homework time has on the children's free time. The session will last no longer than 1 hour discussion permitting. If you do not wish for your child to participate, then please specify this at the beginning of the session. We will ask you and/or your child to talk about the general feelings regarding:

- Homework and the amount of time spent on it
- Free time and the amount of it available
- The effects of homework time on students' free time (how does it make children feel, and what effects does it have on your children)
- Free time pursuits that are desired, but not undertaken and why this may be

Please click on the following link to book your session: <insert link>

Aleksander Blaszko
Doctoral School Student
Nottingham Trent University, Doctoral School
E: aleksander.blaszko@ntu.ac.uk

9.12 Appendix 12, Interview booking confirmation

Hello,

Many thanks for agreeing to take part in the follow-up interview to explore the effects of homework on students' free time.

This is an email to confirm your interview on **<insert date> at <insert time> via <insert software>.** You will receive a reminder regarding the interview and how to take part.

Best wishes,

Aleksander Blaszko
Doctoral School Student
Nottingham Trent University, Doctoral School
E: aleksander.blaszko@ntu.ac.uk

9.13 Appendix 13, Interview reminder

Hello,

Many thanks for agreeing to take part in the follow-up interview to explore the effects of homework on students' free time.

This is an email to remind you of the interview on <insert date> **at <insert time> via <insert software>.** Below are the <insert software> invite instructions:
<insert invite>

Aleksander Blaszko
Doctoral School Student
Nottingham Trent Univeristy, Doctoral School
E: aleksander.blaszko@ntu.ac.uk