

# Homework Emotion Management Reported by High School Students

*Jianzhong Xu*

## Abstract

This article links student and family characteristics, along with perceived purposes for doing homework, to homework emotion management as reported by 205 high school students in grades 9-10. The results revealed that adolescents' management of their emotions was not related to grade level and amount of parental education. However, girls and students who received family help reported more frequently monitoring and controlling their emotions. In addition, intrinsic reasons and extrinsic reasons for doing homework accounted for an additional, significant percentage of the variance in homework emotion management, with higher levels of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons being positively associated with more frequent use of homework emotion management strategies.

Key Words: homework, emotion, high school students, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, family involvement, coping

“Every night, million of parents and kids shed blood, sweat and tears over the kitchen table.” —Sharon Begley, 1998

Homework is viewed as “a source of complaint and friction between home and school more often than other teaching activity” (Cooper, 2001, p. ix). Indeed, for many children, doing homework becomes an emotionally charged

event. This ranges from generally negative emotional states children experience while doing homework (Leone & Richards, 1989; Verma, Sharma, & Larson, 2002) to situations where they feel so frustrated with assignments, themselves, their parents, and/or their teachers that they stopped working entirely for the night (Begley, 1998; Corno & Xu, 2004; Ratnesar, 1999; Xu & Corno, 1998). As “repeated negative experiences can turn children off, or even prematurely burn them out” (Corno & Xu, 2004, p. 232), there is a need to pay attention to emotional coping during homework.

Several studies have examined the role of family homework help (Xu, 2004; Xu & Corno, 1998; 2003) and gender (Xu & Corno, in press) on middle school students’ efforts to control negative emotions while doing homework. Yet, no data were available from these studies about whether the use of homework emotion management strategies was influenced by student attitudes toward homework, especially at the high school level.

The present study has linked student and family characteristics, along with purposes for doing homework as perceived by high school students, to their efforts to monitor and control negative emotions during homework sessions. This line of research is important, as students’ personal investment in controlling negative emotions may be influenced by their perceived purposes for doing homework. Such an examination is particularly important at the high school level, for as students grow older their attitudes about homework play an increasingly important role in their homework behavior (Cooper, Lindsay, Nye, & Greathouse, 1998). Consequently, there is a critical need to examine how a combination of these influences may affect the use of homework emotion management strategies.

## **Related Research**

The present investigation was informed by three lines of related research: (a) research that examines students’ emotional states while doing homework, (b) research that examines the influences of student and family characteristics on student effort to cope with negative emotions, and (c) research that links student attitudes toward homework and their homework behavior.

### **Emotional States During Homework**

The first line of research finds that children, across a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, continue to experience negative emotional states while doing homework well into the middle school years. Xu and Corno (1998) conducted qualitative case studies of families doing third-grade homework to take a close look at the dynamics of homework. Participants were six third-grade children

from one public school in New York City, along with their parents who volunteered for the study. These families were from diverse cultural backgrounds, and 9 of the 12 parents held advanced degrees. Data were collected from three sources: (a) open-ended interviews with children and their parents; (b) videotapes of two homework sessions in each family; and (c) stimulated-recall interviews with the parents following each homework session.

The study revealed that all of the children, from time to time, became upset and frustrated over homework. For example, one mother found that there were times when they went to “the battlefield.” She explained:

It’s frustrating for her. She will pull her hair. She will get very angry at me. She will tell me things she should not say, like I’m not a very good mother; I don’t care about her; and I’m not comforting her. (Xu & Corno, 1998, p. 428)

Following the procedures of the Experience Sampling Method (ESM; Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987), Leone and Richards (1989) investigated students’ homework experiences. Participants included 401 students in grades 5-9 who were randomly selected from two communities—one urban and working class, the other suburban and middle to upper-middle class. They were asked to carry an electronic pager for one week. When signaled every two hours between 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 p.m., they rated their affective responses experienced, motivation, and attentiveness for the activity at that moment.

The data revealed that students’ moods while doing homework were generally negative, regardless of age, sex, and academic performance. Students also rated their levels of positive affect, motivation, and attention lower than they did for similar subjective experiences with other activities, such as eating meals, doing chores, and engaging in leisure time.

In another study, Verma et al. (2002) employed the same ESM procedure to examine the subjective states of adolescents in India while doing classwork and homework. The participants included 100 eighth-grade students from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds in the northern part of the country. The data from this study revealed that compared with leisure activities (e.g., reading, talking, and watching TV) and maintenance activities (e.g., eating, personal care, and household chores), schoolwork (i.e., classwork, tutoring, and homework) elicited below-average emotional and motivation responses in these adolescents, reflected in their low affect state, low activation level, low experience of choice, and high experience of social anxiety. Further, the data revealed that homework stood out as the least favorable context for doing schoolwork in the sense that “the students felt significantly more unhappy, angry, irritable, weak, tired, stressed, and bored while doing homework as compared to classwork” (Verma et al., 2002, p. 505).

## Student and Family Characteristics

While the first line of research finds that doing homework becomes an emotionally draining event, the second line of research suggests that certain student and family characteristics may play a role in students' efforts to monitor and control their negative emotions. One study by McCaslin and Murdock (1991) implied that middle school children could learn from their parents how to monitor their emotions, even when their parents only had limited formal education. Researchers interviewed parents and children from one sixth-grade class in one Midwest city regarding homework interactions.

In one family, the father encouraged his son to control negative emotions that arose during homework (see also Corno, 2001; Kuhl, 2000). For example, when his son got a little upset with homework because it did not come right way, he would tell the boy to calm down, cool off, and relax, so that he could get back on track, focus his mind, and get to the bottom of the problem. As a result, it appeared that the boy had internalized some of his father's suggested coping strategies. He became aware of the potential consequences of frustrated coping (e.g., that refusing to ask for help could result in a poor or failing grade). Realizing the self-destructiveness of anger, the boy also began to learn to control his emotions, as illustrated in his statement, "I don't feel like doing the work. But I keep doing it" (McCaslin & Murdock, 1991, p. 229).

Recently, one survey study (Xu & Corno, 2003) linked grade level, parental level of education, and family homework help to students' efforts to control potentially interfering emotions. The participants were 121 students in grades 6-8 in an urban public middle school. The study found no reliable differences across grade levels on homework emotion management (e.g., calming myself down and telling myself to pay attention to what needs to be done). Among students who received family homework help, the helper's amount of education also appeared unrelated to homework emotion management. On the other hand, family involvement in homework was related to student effort to control negative emotions. Specifically, students who received family homework help, compared to those who did not, reported more frequently working to monitor their emotions.

Another study (Xu & Corno, in press) linked gender, family help, and grade level to homework emotion management while controlling for parental level of education. The participants were 238 students in grades 7-8 in one rural public middle school. The study found no significant differences across the two grade levels studied on homework emotion management. In addition, the use of homework emotion management strategies appeared unrelated to parental education level. On the other hand, gender and family homework help were

related to the use of homework emotion management strategies. Specifically, compared with those students who received no family help, students who received family help reported more frequently working to control potentially interfering emotions. In contrast to the boys, girls reported working more frequently to control potentially interfering emotions.

Quantitative and qualitative data from the second line of research imply that certain student and family characteristics (e.g., gender and family help) may influence students' use of homework emotion management strategies. However, no data were available from these studies about the possible influences of other variables on homework emotion management, such as student attitudes toward homework.

### **Student Attitudes Toward Homework**

The third line of research relevant to this present study suggests the possible influence of student attitudes, specifically their perceived purposes for doing homework, on homework emotion management. Cooper et al. (1998) examined relationships between student, parent, and teacher attitudes toward homework, as well as the relationships between these attitudes and the amount of assignments that were completed by students. The researchers posed five identical questions to the 424 upper graders (grades 6-8 and 10-12) in a sample from three school districts (one rural, one metropolitan, and one suburban), as well as to their parents and teachers. Two questions focused on affective reactions toward homework—whether it was liked or disliked and if it increased or decreased their interest in school. Three other questions focused on perceived purposes for doing homework—whether it helped students learn, develop study skills, and manage their time.

The results revealed that teacher attitudes were more positive than parent attitudes, which in turn were more positive than student attitudes. The results further revealed that the amount of homework students completed was positively related to their own attitudes. In addition, parent attitudes positively affected the amount of homework students completed, but indirectly, through influencing student attitudes toward homework.

In another study, Xu (2005) examined relationships between homework purposes perceived by students and their use of homework management strategies. The participants were 920 students in grades 5-12 in three rural middle and high schools. Through an exploratory factor analysis, eight homework purpose statements were reduced to two factor structures. Based on the grouping of the items, Factor 1 was labeled as Intrinsic Reasons for Doing Homework and Factor 2 was labeled as Extrinsic Reasons for Doing Homework, because these two factors distinguished students based on whether they did homework

for its inherent value or to seek approval from significant others. As a result, the eight homework purposes were reduced to two scales. The data revealed that Pearson correlations between each factor and homework emotion management strategies were both statistically significant, with a medium-size correlation coefficient between Intrinsic Reasons and homework emotion management strategies and a small-size correlation coefficient between Extrinsic Reasons and homework emotion management strategies.

Whereas the first line of research implies there is a need for emotional coping while doing homework, the second line of research provides evidence that certain student and family characteristics (e.g., gender and family homework help) may influence students' use of homework emotion management strategies. However, no data were available from the second line of research about whether homework emotional coping was further influenced by other important variables, such as homework purposes as perceived by students. Indeed, the third line of research suggests that there is a critical need to examine a combination of these influences on homework emotion management, and, consequently, what implications might be drawn from such an examination.

## Method

### Participants

The participants in this study were 205 students in one rural public high school in a southern state. The school enrolled 1,869 students in grades 9-12, 24.4% of whom were eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Attention was given to selecting a sample of students to be representative of the school's student population. English classes were selected for survey administration since they were required for all students. The assistant principal was asked to randomly select five English classes both in grade 9 and grade 10.

Of the 205 respondents in the sample, 56.2% were male (114) and 43.4% were female (89); two students did not identify their gender when asked. The sample included 105 ninth graders and 100 tenth graders. It consisted of 89.5% Caucasians, 3.5% multiracial students, 3.5% Asian Americans, 1.5% African Americans, 1.5% Latinos, and .5% Native Americans.

### Survey Instrument

The survey was first shared with an assistant principal in early January 2002, and approval to conduct it was secured. The survey was then administered by teachers in their classes between mid-February and early March 2002.

In the survey, which took about 30 minutes to administer, the students indicated their gender and grade level. They also answered questions about

whether they had received homework assistance from parents or other family members during the school year.

The survey incorporated two items on parental education. It asked, “What is your father’s highest education?” and “What is your mother’s highest education?” Possible responses for both items were *finished elementary school* (scored 6 years), *some secondary schooling* (scored 9 years), *high school graduate* (scored 12 years), *some college* (scored 14 years), *bachelor’s degree* (scored 16 years), *some graduate courses* (scored 17 years), and *graduate degree* (scored 19 years).

Students were also asked about their reasons for doing homework (see Table 1). Based on whether they did homework to seek approval from others or for its inherent value, homework purposes were divided into two categories: extrinsic reasons (a three-item scale, e.g., “doing homework brings you family approval”) and intrinsic reasons (a five-item scale, e.g., “doing homework helps you learn study skills”). Some of these statements were derived from case studies of families doing third-grade homework (Xu, 1994; Xu & Corno, 1998) and from open-ended interviews with middle school students, parents, and teachers (Xu & Yuan, 2003). Others were drawn from related literature on perceived reasons for doing homework assignments (Cooper, 1989; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Warton, 2001). Possible responses to statements in both scales were *strongly disagree* (scored 1), *disagree* (scored 2), *agree* (scored 3), and *strongly agree* (scored 4). Alpha reliability coefficients for extrinsic reasons and intrinsic reasons for the present study were .81 and .86, respectively.

Table 1. Measurement of Variables

Variable Name and Survey Items	Number of Items	Alpha
Extrinsic reasons <sup>a</sup>	3	.81
Doing homework brings you family approval		
Doing homework brings you teacher approval		
Doing homework brings you peer approval		
Intrinsic reasons <sup>a</sup>	5	.86
Doing homework helps develop a sense of responsibility		
Doing homework helps you learn to work independently		
Doing homework helps you learn study skills		
Doing homework helps develop good discipline		
Doing homework reinforces school learning		
Monitoring and controlling homework emotion <sup>b</sup>	6	.72
Telling myself to pay attention to what needs to be done		
Taking a break		
Calming myself down		
Asking my family for help		
Asking my friends for help		
Cheering myself up and telling myself that I can do it		

<sup>a</sup> Responses were 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree.

<sup>b</sup> Responses were 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, and 5 = Routinely.

Of major interest in the present study were homework emotion management strategies that students may use to prevent or control negative affect or redirect emotional response (Xu & Corno, 2003). The scale consisted of six items (e.g., “cheering myself up and telling myself that I can do it”), informed by previous case study observations of families doing homework together (Corno, 2000; Xu, 1994; Xu & Corno, 1998) and by other literature on favorable conditions for doing homework at the elementary and secondary school level (Chandler, Argyris, Barnes, Goodman, & Snow, 1986; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Leone & Richards, 1989; McCaslin & Murdock, 1991; Xu & Yuan, 2003). Possible responses for each item were *never* (scored 1), *rarely* (scored 2), *sometimes* (scored 3), *often* (scored 4), and *routinely* (scored 5). Alpha reliability coefficient for the scale in a previous survey of urban middle school students was .72 (Xu & Corno, 2003). For the present study, the corresponding coefficient was .72, as well (see Table 1).

### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were presented first. Following that, zero-order correlations were computed among the independent variables and homework emotion management. Finally, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed in which homework emotion management served as the dependent variable. Homework emotion management was scaled mean scores based on six items, with possible scores ranging from 1 to 5. The following entry format was used: student and family characteristics, including grade level, gender, father’s education, mother’s education, and family homework help (step 1); and homework purposes, including intrinsic reasons and extrinsic reasons for doing homework (step 2).

#### *Student and Family Characteristics (Step 1)*

Gender was coded at two levels: 0 (male) and 1 (female). Grade level was recoded at two levels: 0 (ninth graders) and 1 (tenth graders). Both father’s education and mother’s education ranged from *finished elementary school* (scored 6 years) to *graduate degree* (scored 19 years). Meanwhile, family homework help was coded at two levels: 0 (students who did not receive homework help) and 1 (students who received homework help).

#### *Homework Purposes (Step 2)*

Extrinsic reasons were scaled scores based on three items, with possible scores ranging from 1 to 4. Similarly, intrinsic reasons were scaled scores based on five items, with possible scores ranging from 1 to 4 (see Table 1).

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

The mean educational levels for the father and the mother were 14.39 years ( $SD = 3.81$ ) and 14.49 years ( $SD = 3.68$ ), respectively. Sixty-two percent of the students reported that they had received family assistance with homework.

The mean score for extrinsic reasons was 2.04 ( $SD = .79$ ), indicating that students tended to *disagree* (scored 2) on the three items relating to doing homework to seek approval from their significant others. Meanwhile, the mean score for intrinsic reasons was 2.87 ( $SD = .70$ ), indicating that students tended to *agree* (scored 3) on the five items relating to doing homework for its inherent value.

Finally, the mean score for the dependent variable, homework emotion management, was 2.98 ( $SD = .74$ ), indicating that students made efforts to monitor and control their emotions *sometimes* (scored 3). Overall, student responses to these variables indicated that there remained sufficient variance to warrant correlational analyses of these data.

### Zero-Order Correlations Among Study Variables

Table 2 presents zero-order correlations among the various independent variables and homework emotion management. Homework emotion management correlated significantly with gender ( $r = .27, p < .001$ ), family homework help ( $r = .29, p < .001$ ), extrinsic reasons ( $r = .23, p < .01$ ), and intrinsic reasons ( $r = .41, p < .001$ ). The only pair of independent variables with a correlation greater than  $r = .30$  were father's education and mother's education ( $r = .48, p < .001$ ).

### Hierarchical Regression Analysis

The hierarchical regression procedure was used to explain variances of homework emotion management. With the use of a  $p < .001$  criterion for Mahalanobis distance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), no outliers among the cases were found. A review of the tolerance statistics indicated that all independent variables were tolerated in the model.

In the hierarchical regression analysis, five student and family characteristics—grade, gender, father's education, mother's education, and family homework help—were introduced as a block and entered at the first step. Together, these variables explained 18% of the variance in monitoring and controlling emotion,  $F(5,179) = 7.99, \Delta R^2 = .18, p < .001$  (see Table 3).

Table 2. Zero-Order Correlations for Study Variables (N = 185)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Grade	---							
2. Gender	.13*	---						
3. Father's education	-.13*	-.15*	---					
4. Mother's education	-.02	.00	.48***	---				
5. Family homework help	-.12	-.01	.14*	.14*	---			
6. Extrinsic reasons	-.13*	-.19**	.07	.00	.16*	---		
7. Intrinsic reasons	.01	.16*	.19**	-.01	.08	.26***	---	
8. Monitoring emotion	-.06	.27***	-.04	-.09	.29***	.23**	.41***	---

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 3. Hierarchical Regressions Predicting Homework Emotion Management (N = 185)

Independent Variables	Beta	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$	Total $R^2$	Total $R^2_{adj}$
Step 1					
Student and family characteristics					
1. Grade	-.06				
2. Gender	.25***				
3. Father's education	-.08				
4. Mother's education	-.08				
5. Family homework help	.26***				
		.18	7.99 (5,179)***	.18***	.16
Step 2					
Homework purposes					
6. Extrinsic reasons	.15*				
7. Intrinsic reasons	.33***				
		.14	18.80 (2,177)***	.33***	.30

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

At the second step of the analysis, homework purposes—extrinsic reasons and intrinsic reasons—were entered. These variables accounted for 14% of the variance in monitoring and controlling emotion, above and beyond the previous group of variables (i.e., student and family characteristics),  $F(7,177) = 12.22$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .14$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts the use of homework management strategies,  $R^2 = .33$ ,  $R^2_{adj} = .30$ ,  $F(7,177) = 12.22$ ,  $p < .001$ . This model accounts for 33% of the variance in monitoring and controlling emotion. A summary of regression coefficients is presented in Table 3. Overall among these variables, the unique contributions of gender, family homework help, extrinsic reasons, and intrinsic reasons were significant. The variable corresponding to intrinsic reasons was the best predictor of the use of homework emotion management strategies ( $\beta = .33$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This variable was followed by family homework help ( $\beta = .26$ ,  $p < .001$ ), gender ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and extrinsic reasons ( $\beta = .15$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

## Discussion

The present study has linked student and family characteristics and homework purposes to homework emotion management. Results revealed that homework emotion management was not related to grade level, father's education, or mother's education.

On the other hand, gender and family homework help were associated with homework emotion management. Girls, compared with boys, reported more

frequently using homework emotion management strategies. Students who received family help, compared to those who did not, reported more frequently monitoring and controlling their emotions while doing homework.

The results further revealed the intrinsic reasons and extrinsic reasons for doing homework accounted for an additional, significant percentage of the variance in homework emotion management, with higher levels of intrinsic reasons and extrinsic reasons being positively associated with more frequent use of homework emotion management strategies. Specifically, intrinsic motivation was the best predictor of the use of homework emotion management strategies for high school students in the present study.

The findings relating to student and family characteristics were congruent with the findings from previous studies (Xu & Corno, 2003; *in press*), which showed that gender and family homework help were associated with the use of homework emotion management strategies, whereas grade level and parental level of education were not. That several samples from the present and previous studies vary along a number of dimensions (e.g., cultural background, grade level, and geographical location, including urban vs. rural) further suggests that these findings might be generalized across different settings.

The present study went one step further, by linking homework purposes to homework emotion management, after controlling student and family characteristics. In line with previous findings (Xu, 2005) that zero-order correlations between homework purposes (i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic) and homework emotion management strategies were both statistically significant, the present study provides further empirical support for the importance of homework purposes as identified by students in predicting homework emotion management, by showing its unique contribution above and beyond a range of variables (i.e., student and family characteristics). Of particular interest in the present study is the powerful role exerted by intrinsic motivation in explaining the variance in homework emotion management, as intrinsic reasons for doing homework was the best predictor of the use of homework emotion management strategies.

### **Practical Implications**

The present study has important practical implications for families and school personnel. First, in line with the findings from previous homework surveys with urban middle school students (Xu & Corno, 2003) and rural middle school students (Xu & Corno, *in press*), the present study suggests that families across a range of socioeconomic backgrounds can continue to play an important role in promoting desirable homework emotion management strategies at the high school level. Together, these findings provide empirical support to the recommendation that families need to watch for signs of frustration during the homework process (Cooper, 2001; Lehr & Osborn, 2002).

An examination of the items that make up this scale of homework emotion management further suggests that parents would make useful partners for adolescents by making themselves available and by monitoring an adolescent's emotional states while doing homework. They can also help an adolescent control unwanted emotions by recommending and modeling certain coping and calming strategies (e.g., take a short break, give an adolescent affirmation that he can do the work), and by channeling the teen's attention to what needs to be done rather than worrying about repeated mistakes or perceived difficulties.

Consistent with the findings that girls more frequently worked to manage homework emotions in grades 7-8 (Xu & Corno, *in press*), the present study further suggests that the gender difference in homework management may continue at the high school level. Thus, there is a need for families to continue to pay more close attention to boys' homework during the high school years to help them use coping mechanisms for managing stress or other negative affect while doing homework. Such special attention is important, as (a) families of secondary school students seem to be more involved in girls' homework than that of boys (Cooper, Lindsay, & Nye, 2000), as (b) parental attitudes toward homework play a significant role in shaping student attitudes toward homework (Cooper et al., 1998), and as (c) family homework help matters in promoting homework emotion management strategies (Xu & Corno, 2003; *in press*).

Consequently, high schools may benefit from encouraging families to become more involved in adolescent's management of their emotions while doing homework. Such an encouragement is important from two different perspectives. First, from the student perspective, the high school assigns more homework than middle and elementary school. Meanwhile, students' attitudes toward homework become more negative than during the middle school and elementary school years (Cooper et al., 1998; Bryan & Nelson, 1994; Xu, 2004). Second, from the family perspective, parents of secondary school students—compared to parents of elementary students—often felt less capable of helping their children with the academic content of homework (Balli, Demo, & Wedman, 1998). Yet, the results from the present study, along with previous studies (Xu & Corno, 2003; *in press*), suggest that families from different socioeconomic backgrounds may still make a difference, in the sense that the kind of direction they give to adolescents matters even if parents do not have a higher education.

Finally, high schools might benefit from encouraging high school students to play an important role in managing their own homework emotions. Previous studies suggest that adolescents are aware of the influence of study conditions on homework completion (Benson, 1988; Xu & Corno, 2003) and that their

own views and attitudes about homework influence their homework behavior (Bryan & Nelson, 1994; Bryan, Nelson, & Mathur, 1995; Cooper et al., 1998; Leung, 1993; Warton, 2001). The present study moves one step further, suggesting that students' intrinsic reasons for doing homework, in particular, matter even more than the other variables (e.g., gender and family homework help) in their homework emotion management. Thus, there is a critical need to better engage high school students in the homework process, specifically relating to inherent values for doing homework. This much-needed engagement is in line with similar calls from a number of researchers, including Leone and Richards (1989) who seek "education approaches that foster greater intrinsic enjoyment of learning as children get older" (p. 547) and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) who argues that schools need to find ways to challenge students and to engage them for intrinsically motivated learning.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The findings from the present study are based on self-reported homework management strategies. In addition, they are limited in generality, since the students from this sample attended one rural public high school, and only about 10% of them came from non-Caucasian backgrounds. Nevertheless, the amount of time students spent on homework in this study (4.89 hours/week) was similar to that of a nationally representative sample of students in the 2003 Brown Center Report on American Education (Loveless, 2003), which found that "the typical student, even in high school, does not spend more than an hour per day on homework" (p. 17). In addition, the average ACT composite score for the high school was 20.9 in 2002, quite close to the 2002 national average of 20.8 (ACT, 2002).

As the present study is the first to link student and family characteristics with purposes for doing homework (as perceived by high school students) to their efforts to control negative emotions while doing homework, further research is needed to validate the homework survey instrument used here with populations of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, over a greater grade span (e.g., from grades 5 to 12), and in different settings (e.g., urban vs. rural). In addition, qualitative case studies of a purposeful sample of students and their families are needed to examine in-depth how and under what conditions the variables studied here (e.g., gender, family homework help, and purposes for doing homework as perceived by students) may play a role in homework emotion management. Particularly, there is a vested interest for students, their families, and teachers alike to look into factors that can enhance students' efforts to control their negative emotions while doing homework, as the data from the present study revealed that the variable corresponding to the intrinsic

reasons for doing homework was the best predictor of the use of homework emotion management strategies.

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Jianzhong Xu is an associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Mississippi State University. His research interests include homework, school-family partnerships, cultural diversity, and qualitative research. Correspondence concerning this article can be addressed to Jianzhong Xu, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Box 9705, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS, 39762, or by e-mail: jx18@colled.msstate.edu.