PREPARED TO SUCCEED: A SYSTEMATIC GROUNDED THEORY EXAMINING THE
NATURE, DEVELOPMENT, AND PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF HOMESCHOOL TEACHER
SELF-EFFICACY IN WISCONSIN

by

Joshua David Andrew
Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University
2022
PREPARED TO SUCCEED: A SYSTEMATIC GROUNDED THEORY EXAMINING THE NATURE, DEVELOPMENT, AND PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF HOMESCHOOL TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN WISCONSIN

by Joshua David Andrew

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA
2022

APPROVED BY:

Gail Collins, EdD, Committee Chair
Sarah Pannone, EdD, Committee Member
Abstract
The purpose of this systematic grounded theory study was to define and explain the development of homeschool teacher self-efficacy and its significance for homeschooling parents in Wisconsin. Bandura’s self-efficacy theory served as the initial theoretical framework for this study, as it defined four general sources of self-efficacy development: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, social persuasion, and the regulation of physical and emotional states. Through surveys, open-ended interviews, focus groups, and artifacts received from 10 homeschooling parents, this study attempted to define how homeschooling parents perceive homeschool teacher self-efficacy, to what homeschooling parents attribute the development of homeschool teacher self-efficacy, and what homeschooling parents perceive are the benefits of homeschool teacher self-efficacy. As a result, a theory of homeschool teacher self-efficacy development and significance emerged from the research. This data-grounded theory postulates that homeschool teacher self-efficacy develops, operates, and benefits homeschooling parents through a four-stage agentic lifecycle model consisting of the initial stage, the transition stage, the stabilization and influence stage, and the outcomes stage.

Keywords: self-efficacy, homeschool, teaching, human agency, school choice
Dedication

This work is dedicated to homeschool educators, whose tenacity, creativity, dedication, and loving patience inspire and shape the world of tomorrow through the exceptional preparation of children for society. Thank you for your sacrifice and commitment. Also, to my parents: my father, who paved the way for so many homeschoolers and who inspired me to reach for my dreams; my mother, whose unfailing and unconditional love encouraged me in every endeavor and continues to be a pillar of support; and, my step-dad, who always guided and provided. I would not be who I am today without your investment and confidence. As well as, to my daughters. Girls, you are my inspiration and my hope. I hope my example helps shape you into the brave, intelligent, ambitious, and faithful Christian women I know you are destined to become. You are our miracles, and I love you all. Moreover, this work is dedicated to my beloved wife. Hilary, you have given so much to facilitate this work: You’ve been my sounding board, my editor, my encouragement, and my constant help. You are the best mother our girls could have and the only wife I desire. I thank God that I have a friend, an ally, an equal, and a loyal soulmate as wonderful as you. I love you now, always, and forever. Finally, I dedicate this work to the Lord: my life, my love, my salvation. To him, I offer the humble affirmation: soli Deo gloria!
Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the contributions and transparency of all those who participated in this study as co-researchers through sharing their lives, their voices, and their stories. This work is utterly dependent upon your contributions; thank you. May God bless you and the fruit of our mutual effort in this study. I also recognize the quintessential support of Arrowhead Homeschool Group, Chippewa Valley Homeschool Forum, Families for Christian Home Education, Homeschoolers of Western Wisconsin, the Homeschool Legal Defense Association, and the members of these groups and others who helped recruit participants for this study through spreading the word. Without your cooperation, this study would not have succeeded.

I would also like to acknowledge the faculty of Liberty University for their instruction, mentorship, and guidance during my tenure of study. Specifically, I gratefully acknowledge the guidance, patience, and encouragement of Dr. Gail Collins, my committee chair. I also acknowledge, the insight and contributions of Dr. Sarah Pannone, my methodologist, whose own scholarship in the field of homeschooling informed my research efforts. Thank you, both, for your mentorship and service.
Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... 3
Copyright Page ............................................................................................................... 4
Dedication ....................................................................................................................... 5
Acknowledgments .......................................................................................................... 6
List of Tables .................................................................................................................. 12
List of Figures ............................................................................................................... 14
List of Abbreviations .................................................................................................... 15

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .............................................................................. 16
  Overview ...................................................................................................................... 16
  Background ................................................................................................................. 17
    Historical Context ..................................................................................................... 18
    Social Context .......................................................................................................... 19
    Theoretical Context .................................................................................................. 23
  Problem Statement ..................................................................................................... 26
  Purpose Statement ...................................................................................................... 27
  Significance of the Study ............................................................................................. 28
  Research Questions .................................................................................................... 29
    Research Question One ............................................................................................ 30
    Research Question Two ........................................................................................... 30
    Research Question Three ......................................................................................... 30
  Definitions .................................................................................................................. 30
  Summary ..................................................................................................................... 32
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Literature</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Professional Teacher Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Self-Efficacy’s Impact on Educational Outcomes</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Outcomes as Indicators of Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Developmental Sources of Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER THREE: METHODS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting and Participants</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher Positionality</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive Framework</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical Assumptions</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s Role</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissions</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Plan</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection Plan ........................................................................................................ 80
  Individual Interviews ..................................................................................................... 81
  Surveys .......................................................................................................................... 90
  Document Analysis ......................................................................................................... 94
  Focus Groups .................................................................................................................. 96
  Data Synthesis ................................................................................................................ 99

Trustworthiness ................................................................................................................ 99
  Credibility ....................................................................................................................... 100
  Transferability ............................................................................................................... 101
  Dependability ................................................................................................................ 101
  Confirmability ................................................................................................................ 102
  Ethical Considerations ................................................................................................. 102

Summary .......................................................................................................................... 103

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS ............................................................................................ 104

Overview .......................................................................................................................... 104

Participants ..................................................................................................................... 104
  Amanda ............................................................................................................................ 106
  Barb .................................................................................................................................... 108
  Caroline .......................................................................................................................... 110
  Diane ............................................................................................................................... 111
  Eric ................................................................................................................................. 113
  Faith ............................................................................................................................... 114
  Gwen .............................................................................................................................. 116
Heidi ................................................................. 117
Irene .................................................................. 119
Jean .................................................................. 121

Results .................................................................. 122

Initial Stage ......................................................... 124

Transition Stage .................................................. 152

Stabilization and Influence Stage ................................ 158

Outcome Stage ..................................................... 215

Outlier Data and Findings ........................................ 228

Research Question Responses .................................. 232

Research Question One .......................................... 233

Research Question Two .......................................... 233

Research Question Three ......................................... 234

Summary .................................................................. 234

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION ........................................ 236

Overview .............................................................. 236

Discussion .............................................................. 236

Interpretation of Findings ......................................... 236

Implications for Policy and Practice .......................... 253

Theoretical and Empirical Implications ..................... 260

Limitations and Delimitations .................................. 262

Recommendations for Future Research .................... 264

Conclusion .............................................................. 266
References ................................................................................................................................. 267

Appendices ............................................................................................................................... 293

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter .......................................................................................... 293
Appendix B: Recruitment Letters .......................................................................................... 294
  Initial Letter ......................................................................................................................... 294
  Follow-Up Letter .................................................................................................................. 294
Appendix C: Screening Survey ............................................................................................... 296
Appendix D: Acceptance Status Letters .............................................................................. 298
  Inclusion Letter ..................................................................................................................... 298
  Exclusion Letter .................................................................................................................... 298
Appendix E: Consent Form ...................................................................................................... 300
Appendix F: Interview Questions ............................................................................................ 303
Appendix G: Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey ...................................................... 307
  Permission to use the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale .............................................................. 309
Appendix H: Perceived Success Survey .................................................................................. 311
Appendix I: Focus Group Questions ....................................................................................... 312
Appendix J: Research and Reflexivity Journal ...................................................................... 313
Appendix K: Audit Trail .......................................................................................................... 319
Appendix L: List of Axial Code Themes and Subthemes ....................................................... 325
Appendix M: Informal Peer Review Feedback ....................................................................... 328
List of Tables

Table 1. Participants .................................................................................................................. 105
Table 2. Types of Agentic Triggers.......................................................................................... 127
Table 3. Sources of Agentic Impulses ....................................................................................... 136
Table 4. Manifestations of Homeschooling Agency .................................................................. 140
Table 5. Informational Source Streams for Pre-Service HTSE Development ......................... 146
Table 6. Early In-Service HTSE Development ........................................................................ 155
Table 7. Sources of HTSE Development in the Stabilization and Influence Stage .................... 160
Table 8. Sources of Mastery Experiences ............................................................................... 162
Table 9. Types of Social Influences in HTSE Development ..................................................... 166
Table 10. Types of HTSE Multipliers ....................................................................................... 179
Table 11. Perceived Benefits of HTSE Development ............................................................... 183
Table 12. Manifestation of Agentic Control as a Benefit of HTSE ........................................... 186
Table 13. Categories of Homeschooling Threats ..................................................................... 201
Table 14. Types of Homeschooling Opposition ....................................................................... 203
Table 15. Potential Factors of Homeschooling Incompatibility ................................................. 208
Table 16. Types of HTSE Pseudo Benefits .............................................................................. 212
Table 17. Components of the Outcome Stage of the HTSE Lifecycle ...................................... 216
Table 18. Potential Domains of Perceived Success .................................................................. 217
Table 19. Homeschooled Students’ GPAs as Reported by Participants ..................................... 219
Table 20. Homeschooled Students’ Performance on Standardized Assessments .................... 223
Table 21. Potential Courses of Action for Veteran Homeschoolers ....................................... 224
Table 22. Reported Timelines of the Transition Stage ............................................................... 231
Table 23. Pre-Pandemic Enrollment Changes for Outagamie County School Districts .......... 244

Table 24. Analyzed Participant HTSE Level and Reported Satisfaction, Endurance, and Outcomes ................................................................. 251
List of Figures

Figure 1. Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy Lifecycle Model ........................................ 123

Figure 2. Student Artwork Submitted as Evidence of Homeschooling Success.................. 220

Figure 3. Wisconsin Home-Based Private Educational Program Enrollment Trends by Grade Cohort ...................................................................................................................................... 245
List of Abbreviations

Coalition for Responsible Home Education (CRHE)

General Self-Efficacy (GSE)

Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA)

Homeschool Support Group (HSG)

Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy (HTSE)

Human Agency Theory (HAT)

National Household Education Survey Program (NHES)

Parental Self-Efficacy (PSE)

Research Question (RQ)

Self-Efficacy Theory (SET)

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Teacher Self-Efficacy (TSE)

Wisconsin Homeschooling Parents Association (WHPA)

Youth with a Mission (YWAM)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Fifty years ago, the United States Supreme Court’s decision in *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972) paved the way for the establishment of legalized homeschooling by ruling that an individual’s interest in the free exercise of religion outweighed the State’s compelling interest to mandate school attendance beyond the eighth grade. Now, homeschooling represents the fastest growing form of education in the United States, with an annual increase of 2%–8% in enrollment (Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Mazama, 2016; Ray, 2021). However, as new families transition into the homeschooling community, the demographic composition of the homeschooling population shifts. In the past few years, the number of parents with graduate degrees has decreased, and the number of parents without a high school diploma has doubled (Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Jolly & Matthews, 2018). Such changes open the door for criticism by vocal, high-profile opponents (Bartholet, 2019). Are parents who lack formal teacher preparation able to overcome challenges, remain committed, and achieve desired educational outcomes for their homeschooled children? In the face of opposition, can parents who choose to homeschool say they are prepared to succeed? One possible way to answer these questions is to consider the nature and development of teacher self-efficacy (TSE)—a construct tied to the satisfaction, endurance, and success of professional teachers (George et al., 2018; Mahler et al., 2018; Perera & John, 2020; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019)—within the homeschooling community. In this chapter, I define the foundation for this systematic grounded theory that examined the nature, development, and perceived benefits of homeschool teacher self-efficacy (HTSE) by outlining its background, revealing the underlying assumptions and paradigms that guided the study, and identifying the problem addressed by the research. Next, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and
research questions examined during the study are presented. I conclude this chapter with a definition of key terms and a brief summary.

**Background**

Extensive literature exists on the relationship between TSE and desired educational outcomes (George et al., 2018; see also Mahler et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2017; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Whether teaching in a classroom or at home, the development of TSE serves as an essential aspect of motivation and performance (Bandura, 1997; Morris et al., 2017; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Tilhou, 2020). TSE contributes to the level of effort teachers put forth, their perseverance through obstacles, and their ability to perform well in the classroom (Bandura, 1997; Morris et al., 2017; Zee & Koomen, 2016). It is important that educators develop TSE in the early stages of their career while levels are most malleable and not yet static (Bandura, 1997; Mahler et al., 2017; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019). For this reason, professional teacher preparation programs tend to focus on developing TSE in candidates (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018). However, based on emerging demographic trends, many parents who homeschool their children often lack this type of formal preparation experience (Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Jolly & Matthews, 2018). Given the important role TSE plays in successful instruction, there must be a similar efficacy construct and development process within the homeschooling community that explains homeschooling achievement (Ray, 2017). Unfortunately, few studies address this issue in the broader homeschooling population.

Although the literature does not directly address the development of HTSE, current research on the homeschooling community indicates its existence. For example, Firmin et al. (2019) described the influence of homeschooling parents’ self-efficacy on the closeness of the parent–child relationship and on perceived educational success. Each of the 15 families they
interviewed attributed their perceived success to their ability to tailor instruction to the needs of
their children. The willingness and ability to custom-modify instruction on a regular basis may
be attributable to sufficiently developed levels of HTSE. Moreover, other studies (Baidi, 2019;
Neuman & Guterman, 2016; Pannone, 2017a; Puga, 2019) have demonstrated the high level of
parent confidence and agentic behavior present in homeschooling families as potential indicators
of HTSE. To better understand how these factors support this study, it is important to examine
the historical, social, and theoretical contexts of the development of HTSE.

**Historical Context**

The antecedents of HTSE reside within the historical context of education in the United
States prior to the formation of public schools (Brewer & Lubienski, 2017). The underlying
intellectual framework of the Enlightenment posited that humanity could improve life on earth
through the use of their own reason (Gutek, 2011). Consequently, there was an underlying
assumption of self-efficacy, born partly out of necessity, that demanded colonial parents be able
to prepare their children to enter society with the prerequisite values and skills needed to succeed
in early America (Brewer & Lubienski, 2017; Gaither, 2017). However, as homeschooling gave
way to the development of public schooling and the rise of expert educators, those who persisted
in home education were judged as old-fashioned oddities; these parents were also viewed as
misguided threats to the new educational order (Murphy, 2014). This drove homeschooling
families into obscurity and pushed them to the brink of extinction.

Homeschooling did not resurface as a credible alternative to public education until the
1970s (Murphy, 2014). From opposite ends of the political and ideological spectrum, the leaders
of the modern homeschooling movement advocated for homeschooling as an expression of
parental rights. On the left, John Holt promoted “unschooling” as a means of countercultural

From the initial resurgence of homeschooling in the 1970s to 2019, the population of homeschooling families grew from approximately 13,000 to 2.5 million; for the 2020–2021 academic year, the estimated population of homeschooling families was between 3.5–4.5 million students (Ray, 2020, 2021). Following a systematic review of empirical research, Ray (2017) observed that 78% of peer-reviewed studies indicated that homeschool students perform better than students from institutional schools. Given the correlation between TSE and student outcomes, the historical context of homeschooling provides a strong argument for the presence of HTSE as a plausible explanation for homeschooling success. However, the overarching nature, development, and impact of HTSE remains unexplored in the research.

**Social Context**

The rapid growth of the homeschooling community resulted primarily from three social influences: ideological convictions, pedagogical principles, and concerns over the public-school environment (Baidi, 2019; Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Puga, 2019; Ray, 2021; Tan, 2020). Traditionally, ideologues have comprised the largest group of homeschoolers; these families often choose to homeschool for religious and moral reasons (Heuer & Donovan, 2017). They
commonly assert that the curriculum of the public-school system undermines the values of their children. On the other hand, pedagogues opine that public schools are unable to provide effective instruction. In recent years, however, growing concerns over factors such as racial equality and school safety contributed to the rise in the number of families choosing to homeschool; these families often homeschool as a temporary alternative while they search for a better school setting (Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Puga, 2019; Ray, 2021). As priorities shift, homeschooling families frequently represent a blend of these rationales for their motivation to leave the public-school system.

In 2020–2021, the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic forced the majority of the nation to experience some form of school-at-home and raised additional concerns over school safety (Carpenter & Dunn, 2021; Henderson, 2021). Consequently, a nationwide survey of 2,122 registered voters conducted in May of 2020, indicated that 40% of families surveyed were more likely to homeschool or choose virtual learning after the COVID-19 lockdowns were lifted (Schultz, 2020). An additional survey conducted at the same time by Education Next revealed increased support for online learning and homeschooling (Henderson, 2021). A study of 1,743 parents conducted in the summer of 2020 indicated that only a small percentage of parents planned to homeschool in the current school year; however, more than a third intended to continue virtual learning (Carpenter & Dunn, 2021). For the 2020–2021 school year, Ray (2021) projected that roughly 3.7 million students participated in home-based education programs. In Wisconsin, for example, the number of homeschooling students increased by 47.28% in 2020–2021 as a result of pandemic factors, which resulted in a decrease in both public and private school attendance of 2.93% and 1.53% respectively (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2022).
As the number of homeschooling families increases due to personal necessity, the demographic composition of the homeschooling community also changes. Data compiled from the National Household Education Survey Program (NHES), which is conducted every 4 years, show the normalization of homeschooling demographics (Coalition for Responsible Home Education [CRHE], 2017). For example, in 1999, 75% of homeschooling families completing the NHES were White, but by 2016, this number was 59%. Moreover, in 1999, only 1% of homeschooling parents had earned less than a high school diploma, but in 2016 this number was 15%. Likewise, in 1999, 24% of homeschooling parents had attended graduate or professional school, but this number decreased to 15% by 2016. Socioeconomically, there were more families below 200% of poverty homeschooling than attending any other form of education. Consequently, current parents who homeschool their children are less likely to possess a college degree, or higher, than in the past, and they are more likely to be poor or near-poor (CRHE, 2017; Hamlin, 2020).

From a cultural perspective, homeschooling remains a contentious choice for parents despite the current growth (Dwyer & Peters, 2019). While the practice of homeschooling has legal status in all 50 states, only 49% of Americans view homeschooling as a favorable practice while 35% of Americans actively oppose homeschooling (Hamlin, 2020; Henderson, 2021; Renzulli et al., 2020). High-profile critics, such as Bartholet (2019), see the practice of homeschooling as a threat to children and society and propose banning homeschooling or requiring parents to provide a justification to do so. Likewise, Sarajlic (2019) opined that homeschooling suppresses the development of authentic identity in children, which necessitates that parents satisfy specific authenticity-based requirements for their homeschooling activities. Consequently, 70% of Americans support requiring parents to notify their school district with
their intention to homeschool, and 54% of Americans support the requirement for school district approval of parents’ exercise of their liberty to choose the best education for their children (Henderson, 2021). Answering the concerns of critics represents a more necessary task now that the public-school institutions displayed their vulnerability during the pandemic, moving home-based education from the fringe to the forefront of instructional praxis. The contemporary social challenges provide the homeschooling community with an opportunity to defend their rights and validate their abilities to successfully educate children.

Like TSE, theorizing HTSE as an explanation for homeschool success can serve as a response to criticism and lend validity to homeschooling praxis, especially given the precarious landscape of legal requirements. The laws governing homeschooling in each state vary, resulting in a hodgepodge of rules and regulations (Heuer & Donovan, 2017). In an effort to validate the efficacy of homeschool educators, 23 states and the District of Columbia require the academic testing of homeschooled students. To help parents reach their academic goals and meet proficiency requirements, the Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA, 2021a), recommended homeschool educators work cooperatively with tutors, friends, family, faith communities, homeschool support groups (HSGs), and the like; such groups tend to have a positive effect on the homeschool teaching experience (Tilhou, 2020). However, the HSLDA’s (2021a) recommendations are not always a feasible substitute for direct parent involvement. For example, in Wisconsin, homeschooling is statutorily limited to parents, or a designated person, teaching only the parents’ children, which prevents the counting of homeschooling cooperatives, extra classes, or virtual schools toward the required 875 instructional hours in state-identified subjects (Wisconsin Homeschooling Parents Association [WHPA], 2021b). While parents can hire a private tutor for difficult subjects outside the realm of their expertise, the cost of that tutor
may stretch beyond the means of the family, which is statistically likely to be poor or near-poor. Such parents cannot easily depend on the self-efficacy of others to satisfy their teaching obligations; they must, instead, rely upon their own HTSE by using available resources to academically advance their children through progressively challenging curriculum. Therefore, research into the development of HTSE and its effect on educational outcomes benefits homeschooling families by providing a uniformly applicable theory in support and defense of homeschooling efficacy and practice, regardless of varying state litmus tests or requirements.

**Theoretical Context**

This study of HTSE fits within the broad context of existing theoretical research into TSE. Built upon the foundation of Bandura’s (1977a, 1977b, 1982, 1989) theories of social cognitive processing, human agency, and self-efficacy, TSE research describes the level of teachers’ self-referent judgements of their ability to influence a range of adjustment outcomes at multiple levels of the classroom ecology, such as instructional strategies, classroom management, and child engagement (Kunemund et al., 2020; Zee & Koomen, 2016). To understand how TSE relates to the nature, development, and benefit of HTSE, it is necessary to have a knowledge and appreciation of the existing foundational theories that undergird the HTSE construct in this study.

The construct of TSE is built partly upon Bandura’s (1977b, 1997) social learning theory—later identified as social cognitive theory (SCT). Building upon the behaviorist learning theories of respondent and operant conditioning, Bandura (1977b, 1997) hypothesized that the acquisition and regulation of behaviors result from cognitive processes that are based on experiences—how they are perceived, how they are remembered, and how they are predicted to affect future actions (Price & Archbold, 1995; Riley et al., 2016). He further postulated that
personal factors, behaviors, and environmental determinants existed in relationship with a triadic reciprocity between them (Bandura, 1977b; Eun, 2019; Riley et al., 2016). Consequently, TSE can develop through interaction with personal and social experiences.

From its inception, SCT intrinsically flowed from an agentic perspective (Bandura, 2018). Many theorists have debated whether the causes of human behavior reside in the individual or in the environment, but the triadic codetermination of causation in SCT allows for a balanced response (Bandura, 2018). Thus, human agency theory (HAT) is inherently bound to SCT. Bandura (1982) opined that people consciously inform their behaviors based on their perceptions of social cognitive models; behavior is not simply an automatic cognitive process but an exercise of the will—at least in part. Therefore, personal agency represents a necessary tool to enable people to exercise influence over their own circumstances through three modes of agency—individual, proxy, and collective—as manifested through intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 1982, 2001, 2006b, 2018). The self-reflective nature of HAT relates directly to SCT, in which personal perceptions, informed by self-efficacy, direct the process of human agency (Bandura, 2018).

By nature, HAT provides for expressions of liberty and independence as a factor of determination—people’s innate desire to exert influence and control over important events in their lives (Bandura, 2006b; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Thus, homeschooling parents’ drive to reject public schooling through the ultimate expression of school choice may result from an agentic desire to exert control (Baidi, 2019; Dennison et al., 2020; Heuer & Donovan, 2017). Consequently, an understanding of HAT provided another necessary theoretical context for this study, which examined the agentic nature of homeschool parents as a potential indicator of HTSE.
In addition to SCT and HAT, self-efficacy theory (SET) represented the most important theoretical context for this study. As Bandura was exploring the treatment effects of multiple phobia interventions, he theorized that the common cognitive mechanism leading to the success of the various treatment modalities was the perceived sense of self-efficacy in the minds of patients (Bandura, 2019; Price & Archbold, 1995). Bandura (1977a) concluded that psychological procedures, in any form, served as a means of creating and strengthening patients’ expectations of personal efficacy, which informed their convictions that they could successfully execute the behavior required to produce desired outcomes. Consequently, Bandura articulated SET as a distinctive theory of human behavior that tremendously influenced his other theoretical works (Bandura, 1977a; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Both learning and doing within SCT and HAT depend upon the facilitation of individual self-efficacy. Accordingly, SET has become one of Bandura’s most influential contributions (Eun, 2019).

Copious studies have supported the accuracy of SET over the years (Bandura, 2006a; Bandura & Adams, 1977; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2016; Talsma et al., 2018; Usher & Weidner, 2018). Bandura (2012) stated that people’s self-efficacy beliefs vary across activity domains and situational conditions; this notion led to the application of SET across multiple fields, including education (Eun, 2019; Morris et al., 2017; Zee & Koomen, 2016). In the 1970s, the Rand Corporation compiled a report in which self-efficacy was applied to teaching in minority schools in Los Angeles, California (Armor et al., 1976). Ashton (1984) described the influence of self-efficacy on teachers’ sense of personal accomplishment, positive expectations for student achievement, and beliefs about instructional responsibility. However, Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) proposed the most widely embraced model of TSE in accordance with SET (George et al., 2018). Since this time, multiple studies (George et al., 2018; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Mahler
et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2017; Perera & John, 2020; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Zee & Koomen, 2016) have explored the relationship between self-efficacy and teaching using the construct of TSE.

Although professional teachers receive training aligned to Bandura’s (1977a) SET, parents choosing to homeschool often lack this direct, formal preparation for teaching (Dijkstra et al., 2016). Nevertheless, existing research (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Pannone, 2017a; Tilhou, 2020) implies the presence of a well-developed TSE within the homeschooling community. This systematic grounded theory study served to qualitatively explore the experiences of parents who homeschool their children to develop and support a theory governing the nature of HTSE, how it develops, and what it accomplishes within the homeschool community.

**Problem Statement**

The problem is that no theory exists to explain how parents develop HTSE and whether or not this process represents a perceived satisfactory equivalent to professional teacher preparation in the homeschooling context. Despite the consistent growth of homeschooling as an alternative to public schools, little research addresses the presence or development of HTSE. Existing literature, such as the studies by Firmin et al. (2019), Guterman and Neuman (2017), Neuman and Guterman (2016), Pannone (2017a), and Tilhou (2020), only tangentially approaches the topic by alluding to manifestations of HTSE. For example, they explored aspects of teacher confidence, instructional choices, and educational outcomes without directly theorizing the connection between these manifestations and their sources.

Given the scarcity of literature addressing this topic, little is known of how parents develop a level of HTSE that allows them to enjoy teaching, endure hardships, and achieve acceptable educational outcomes. Pannone (2017a) conducted a study of 10 new homeschooling
parents in which participants emphasized their satisfaction with homeschooling and their perceived ease in homeschooling. These findings contradict existing research conducted among professional educators, who reported increased stress and fluctuating TSE during initial teaching experiences (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Senler, 2016). This disparity may result from homeschooling parents encountering more consistent exposure to enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, social persuasion, and the regulation of physical and emotional states through participation in homeschooling support networks (Tan, 2020; Tilhou, 2020). For example, Tilhou (2020) observed that homeschoolers often participate in home educator associations that provide in-service training through information exchange, resulting in increased content knowledge and improved pedagogical praxis. These findings supported the need for a unifying theory that explains homeschooling efficacy.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this systematic grounded theory study was to define and explain the development of HTSE and its significance for homeschooling parents in Wisconsin. During the initial stage in the research, HTSE was defined as the self-perceived belief of homeschool teachers in their abilities to effectively execute the tasks, responsibilities, and skills necessary to achieve educational goals and overcome challenges. Bandura’s (1977a) theory of self-efficacy served as the initial theoretical framework for this study, as it contained four general sources of traditional self-efficacy development: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through the observation of social models, social persuasion, and the regulation of physical and emotional states.
Significance of the Study

Gall et al. (2007) opined that theoretical research that serves to provide explanation for an educational phenomenon also offers a description, a prediction of consequences, and insight for intervention to change the consequences. By studying the homeschool community, I offered a possible explanation that describes the nature of HTSE, predicts its development and outcomes, and provides information for future HTSE interventions. Through this study, I developed a working theory of HTSE that meaningfully contributes to the theoretical, empirical, and practical domains of homeschooling.

This study contributes to the theoretical context of TSE by providing a theoretical explanation for the development and perceived benefits of HTSE, where previously one did not exist. Primarily, I expanded upon the work of Bandura’s (1977a) SCT, HAT, and SET to provide a broader application of his work to the field of homeschooling. This included examining Bandura’s four sources of self-efficacy as applied to the development of HTSE. Additionally, I contributed to the theoretical understanding of the relationship between HTSE and the agentic nature of school choice (Baidi, 2019; Bandura, 1982, 1989, 2001; Dennison et al., 2020; Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Jolly & Matthews, 2018; Puga, 2019). Furthermore, this study allowed me to expand upon the theoretical rationale for the confidence, persistence, and relational leadership styles of homeschool educators (Bandura, 1977a; Guterman & Neuman, 2017; Neuman & Guterman, 2016; Pannone, 2017a; Tan, 2020; Thomas, 2016a; Tilhou, 2020).

In addition to broadening existing theoretical knowledge, this study fills an important gap in the empirical data related to the homeschooling community. While some researchers have tangentially addressed HTSE, such as Firmin et al. (2019), Pannone, (2017a), and Tilhou (2020), none have fully explored the nature, development, and perceived benefits of HTSE as a
theoretical construct. Consequently, through this study, I advanced the existing literature through the contribution of empirical data; this study fits within the empirical context of studies contributing to the understanding of the homeschooling community, a sorely underrepresented group within the educational realm (Windish & Wachob, 2017). Furthermore, I have contributed additional data regarding homeschool academic outcomes by researching perceived academic success resulting from HTSE (Firmin et al., 2019; Ray, 2021).

By comparing Bandura’s (1977a, 1977b, 1982, 1989) theories to the homeschooling context, I also provided several practical contributions to the educational community. Homeschooling parents can use the theory of HTSE to ensure or advance their preparedness for home-based education. It is my hope that the theory I developed through this study serves as a useful resource to ensure the efficacy of homeschooling families by drawing attention to the development and significance of HTSE and to help homeschool associations support this development through HTSE-focused programs. Moreover, the HTSE theory can provide homeschooling advocacy groups a data-supported means to defend home-education, to inform academic institutions as to the validity of the homeschool choice, and to direct policymakers on how to develop appropriate legislation to effectively support the homeschooling community. Through facilitating these outcomes, this study provides a defense of homeschooling as an independent parental right and a legitimate alternative to public schooling against critics who would seek to highly regulate or ban this practice (Bartholet, 2019; Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Sarajlic, 2019).

**Research Questions**

In this grounded theory study, I attempted to answer three research questions. While several researchers, including Armor et al. (1976), George et al. (2018), Ma and Cavanagh
(2018), and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), have applied Bandura’s (1977a) SET to professional education, few have examined the perception of this construct within the homeschooling community; the first question sought to provide information to fill this gap. Subsequently, I aimed to explore how homeschooling parents describe the development of HTSE through the use of the second research question. While I allowed the data to guide my study, I initially looked for development similar to the four sources of Bandura’s (1977a) SET as an initial theoretical framework. Lastly, I investigated how homeschooling parents perceived HTSE as a benefit to educational outcomes. Studies indicated that TSE leads to desirable academic outcomes, and the limited information available from the homeschooling community indicated HTSE may contribute to equivalent success (Firmin et al., 2019; Hamlin, 2020; Mahler et al., 2018; Pannone, 2017a; Perera & John, 2020; Ray, 2017; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019).

Research Question One

*How do homeschooling parents perceive HTSE?*

Research Question Two

*To what do homeschooling parents attribute the development of their HTSE?*

Research Question Three

*What do homeschooling parents perceive are the benefits of developing HTSE?*

**Definitions**

The following terms are used throughout; this section provides clear definitions for the purpose of this study:

1. *Enactive Mastery Experiences* – A personal event through which someone encounters resistance, overcomes obstacles through perseverant effort, learns through managing

2. *Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy* – A theory of this study, in which parent self-efficacy and TSE combine to inform the self-perceived confidence of homeschool educators to carry out the tasks necessary to achieve desired academic, social, and personal outcomes from the homeschooling experience (Firmin et al., 2019).


4. *Physical and Emotional States* – The process of increasing self-efficacy by reducing anxiety and depression, building physical strength and stamina, and reframing the interpretation of physical and emotional responses to threatening contexts (Bandura, 1977a, 1997, 2012).

5. *Self-Efficacy* – The self-assessed conviction of the ability to successfully execute the behavior required to produce a desired outcome as informed by personal accomplishment, observation of social models, social persuasion, and physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1977a, 1982, 1995, 1997, 2012).

6. *Social Cognitive Theory* – A learning theory based on a triadic relationship between personal, behavioral, and environmental determinants, which theorizes that the acquisition and regulation of behavior is the response to how experiences—personal and vicarious—are perceived, how they are remembered, and how they impact future actions (Bandura, 1977a).
7. **Social Persuasion** – The process through which a respected, valued mentor or peer provides feedback that convinces someone to reappraise their abilities, increase their resolve to succeed, and increase their self-efficacy views in the face of difficulties (Bandura, 1977a, 2012).

8. **Teacher Self-Efficacy** – The self-efficacy beliefs teachers hold concerning their capabilities to carry out professional tasks to achieve desired academic outcomes (Morris et al., 2017).

9. **Vicarious Experiences Through Social Modeling** – The process through which an observer experiences raised aspirations and improved self-efficacy beliefs through observing similar people succeed through perseverant effort in such a way that the observer can envision their own success (Bandura, 1977a, 1997, 2012).

**Summary**

Homeschooling is one of the fastest growing forms of education in the United States, with a current estimated enrollment of nearly 4 million students (Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Ray, 2022). With increasing enrollment, however, comes changing demographics, which call into question the educational backgrounds of some homeschool educators, raise concerns, and embolden critics (Bartholet, 2019; Dwyer & Peters, 2019; Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Jolly & Matthews, 2018; Renzulli et al., 2020; Sarajlic, 2019). Despite these concerns, homeschoolers have historically demonstrated successful academic and social outcomes (Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Ray, 2017). Although limited, existing research indicates homeschool success may be linked to TSE—a construct demonstrated to support teacher satisfaction, motivation, longevity, and success (Firmin et al., 2019; George et al., 2018; Mahler et al., 2018; Pannone, 2017a; Perera & John, 2020; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019; Tilhou, 2020). The problem is that no theory exists to
explain how parents develop HTSE and if parents perceive that this construct provides equivalent benefits and outcomes as TSE does for professional teachers. The purpose of this systematic grounded theory study was to define and explain the development and significance of HTSE among homeschooling parents in Wisconsin.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In this chapter, I present the foundational context for this systematic grounded theory study that examined the nature, development, and perceived benefits of homeschool teacher self-efficacy (HTSE) among homeschooling parents in Wisconsin. Bandura’s (1977a, 1977b, 1982, 1989) seminal research in the development of social cognitive processes, human agency, and self-efficacy provided the initial framework for this study; consequently, I begin this chapter with a description of this theoretical framework as synthesized from existing literature. Next, I provide a review of the literature related to the general nature, development, and benefits of TSE as it exists in the professional teaching context. I then present a review of the literature that examines these elements of teacher self-efficacy (TSE) as they appear in the homeschooling context as potential indicators of the existence of HTSE as a separate construct. Finally, I summarize the results of the literature review to identify the gap in existing research and articulate the need for this study in HTSE.

Theoretical Framework

There are three primary theories that provided the initial paradigm for this exploration of HTSE: social cognitive theory (SCT), human agency theory (HAT), and self-efficacy theory (SET). Each of these theories stems from the work of Bandura (1977a, 1977b, 1982, 1989) and is closely related to the others. However, it is the combination of these theories into the construct of TSE, as a domain of SET, that serves as the principal theoretical framework for this study.

In the broader domain of SET, Bandura (1977a, 1982, 1995, 1997, 2012) theorized that self-efficacy beliefs develop through engaging in enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, listening to social persuasion, and appropriately appraising
and regulating physical and emotional states. These four streams of information inform people’s beliefs in their own capabilities (Bandura, 2012). As people engage in enactive mastery experiences, they experience personal and social change through cognitive, motivational, affective, and decisional processes (Bandura, 1977a, 1982, 1995, 1997, 2012). Through effective exposure to enactive mastery experiences, people encounter resistance, overcome obstacles through perseverant effort, learn through managing failures, and develop positive views of their own abilities (Bandura, 1977a, 1982, 1997, 2012).

Although personal participation provides the most influential source of self-efficacy, Bandura (1977a, 1997, 2012) explained that self-efficacy can also result socially from the influence of others. For example, through observing the successes of similarly skilled performers, an observer could vicariously improve self-efficacy beliefs; witnessing the results of the performer’s perseverant effort could raise the aspirations and beliefs of the observer. Bandura (1977a) described this as “vicarious experience” (p. 197). Another social facilitator of self-efficacy comes from social persuasion, through which people are socially convinced to reassess their self-efficacy beliefs in the face of difficulties, resulting in an increased appraisal of their abilities and an increased resolve to succeed (Bandura, 1977a, 2012).

The interaction of self-referent beliefs from enactive mastery experiences and social persuasion and feedback further inform the development of self-efficacy beliefs through the regulation of physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1977a, 1997, 2012). Through internal and external means, people can improve their self-efficacy by reducing anxiety or depression, building physical strength and stamina, and correcting the misreading of physical and emotional responses to intimidating contexts. Thus, in keeping with SCT, self-efficacy develops through an
ongoing cognitive process through which people use various reciprocal sources of information to assess and appraise their level of self-efficacy (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

Several studies have examined the four sources of self-efficacy within the domain of teaching specifically. Perhaps most notably, Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) provided the most widely-accepted construct of the connection between SET and TSE (George et al., 2018). Tschannen-Moran et al. proposed a model that combined the theoretical sources of self-efficacy and the requirements of teaching-specific contexts. Following their seminal work, several other researchers, such as George et al. (2018), Ma and Cavanagh (2018), Mahler et al. (2018), Miller et al. (2017), Perera and John (2020), Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), and Zee and Koo (2016), have also explored how SET impacts the development and benefits of TSE.

Although homeschooling parents may lack the TSE development programs commonplace to professional educators, they theoretically develop and rely upon TSE within their instructional activities the same way that public-school teachers do (Firmin et al., 2019; Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Jolly & Matthews, 2018). However, given the stark contrast in formal preparation between professional teachers and many homeschooling parents as well as the stronger agentic nature of the homeschooling community, I propose that HTSE exists as a similar, but unique, construct that is separate from TSE. However, given the enigmatic and vastly heterogeneous nature of homeschooling, a non-structured grounded theory that begins without an existing theoretical framework would be unrealistic. Therefore, SET, HAT, and TSE combined to provide the initial theoretical framework as the starting point for this exploration of HTSE.

Based on the above framework, I conducted this study on the premise that, similar to TSE, HTSE follows Bandura’s (1977a) four sources of self-efficacy. Consequently, the semi-structured interview questions and surveys used throughout the study asked self-efficacy
questions similar to those of Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). The questions sought to elicit information demonstrating that parents develop HTSE through enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, social persuasion, and the regulation of physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1977a). Moreover, SET and the TSE construct provided a starting point for the analysis of data as the theoretical HTSE construct emerged. Based on emerging trends in the data, the paradigm shifted slightly, but the ultimate findings were reported and discussed in similarity or contrast to TSE as a subset of SET.

Related Literature

Over the past several decades, researchers have conducted a multitude of studies examining the measurement, sources, and implications of self-efficacy within teachers (Aloe et al., 2014; Morris et al., 2017). Although many studies cover the topic of TSE, there exists a gap in the literature pertaining to HTSE. The absence of research is particularly alarming considering the persistent increase in the number of homeschooling families (Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Ray, 2021). By synthesizing the existing literature on the development and benefits of TSE in the professional context and by discussing the few articles that allude to HTSE, the need for this study becomes abundantly clear.

Development of Professional Teacher Self-Efficacy

Regardless of whether educators are teaching in a traditional classroom or at home with their own children, the development of self-efficacy beliefs in the domain of teaching serves as an essential factor for motivation and performance (Bandura, 1997; see also, Aloe et al., 2014; Morris et al., 2017; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020; Tilhou, 2020). In the professional context, research shows that TSE plays a significant role in determining the effort
teachers put forth, their perseverance through obstacles, and their ability to function successfully in the classroom (Bandura, 1997; see also, Morris et al., 2017; Zee & Koomen, 2016). However, it is important to develop TSE early in a teacher’s career because data indicate that TSE levels may plateau and become static over time (Bandura, 1997; Mahler et al., 2017; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019).

One significant challenge to TSE development in the early stages of professional teaching comes from the fact that this period often generates increased anxiety and stress, which can negatively impact the development of TSE (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Senler, 2016). Stress and anxiety impact TSE development because psychological and physical states can influence the appraisal of otherwise successful experiences, and TSE development depends on how particular events are perceived and cognitively processed by individuals (Bandura, 1997; Morris et al., 2017; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). The deleterious impact of early-career anxiety develops as a result of conflicts between an idealistic expectation of teaching formed before and during teacher education and the subsequent complex reality of initial teaching (George et al., 2018). Consequently, pre-service professional teacher preparation programs and early in-service development programs often give careful attention to providing TSE-developing experiences that try to compensate for these factors (Dijkstra et al., 2016; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Paulick et al., 2016; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019; Senler, 2016). Understanding how these well-studied programs inform TSE development in professional educators provides insight into how homeschooling parents develop HTSE through similar experiences within the context of the homeschooling community.

Regardless of the setting, Bandura (1977a, 1997, 2012) theorized that self-efficacy resulted from four primary sources. First, he observed that people achieve a sense of
accomplishment when they successfully engage in enactive mastery experiences. When people successfully perform a task as modeled, self-instructed, or recalled from experience, the success raises their future expectations of mastery. However, people do not rely only upon their own success. Thus, Bandura also postulated that people gained successful vicarious experience through social modeling. By observing similar people successfully complete a task with clear outcomes, the observer generates expectations that they, too, will be successful through persistent efforts. Similarly, through social persuasion, people are verbally encouraged to improve their self-efficacy appraisals based upon the social influence of others. Although Bandura believed this source to be weaker than the others, he acknowledged that people can be persuaded to reappraise their own abilities, especially when utilizing corrective feedback. Bandura predicted the fourth source of self-efficacy development came through the regulation of physical and emotional states. He felt that stressful and taxing situations elicited emotional arousal that might inform personal competency. Moreover, these emotional states can lead to physical responses, such as elevated heart rate, stomach discomfort, sweating and shortness of breath. Learning to regulate and lessen the arousal states or reappraising their meaning—such as indication of excitement instead of fear—can produce a motivational inducement to successful action.

**Pre-Service Developmental Sources for Professional Teachers**

The formal development of professional TSE begins during teacher preparation training programs and, when sufficiently developed, indicates the level of pre-service teacher preparedness to carry out the necessary actions needed to become a successful teacher and achieve future goals (Bandura, 1997; Feng et al., 2019; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018). Numerous studies have examined the role of teacher preparation courses and the development of TSE in
pre-service teachers across multiple domains (Iaochite & Costa Filho, 2020; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Paulick et al., 2016; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019; Senler, 2016; Sumarno, 2019; Theelen et al., 2019; Voet & De Wever, 2017). These studies support Bandura’s (1977a, 1997, 2012) conceptualization of the four primary sources of self-efficacy development. In other words, the literature shows that pre-service teachers develop TSE through enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, social persuasion, and the regulation of physical and emotional states.

**Enactive Mastery Experiences.** Bandura (1977a, 1997) postulated that enactive mastery experiences provided the most effective means of generating TSE. Through these experiences of personal achievement, effective performance induces cognitive change by raising mastery expectations (Bandura, 1977a). However, failure can lower mastery expectations, especially if the event occurs early in the course of training. Consequently, teacher preparation programs carefully facilitate TSE development in pre-service educators by providing students scaffolded opportunities to gain accomplishment through increasing content knowledge and growing pedagogical praxis (Schunk, 2012; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). These opportunities force students to demonstrate their competence to achieve their goals and increase their confidence and self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997; Morris et al., 2017).

In the context of a professional teacher preparation program, mastery of content knowledge represents one type of mastery experience (Bandura, 1997; Bautista & Boone, 2015; Morris et al., 2017; Phan & Locke, 2015). As pre-service teachers master knowledge in content areas appraised as important to effective teaching, they demonstrate an increase in TSE (Morris et al., 2017; Paulick et al., 2016; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019). For example, Paulick et al. (2016) examined 631 pre-service teachers in Germany and discovered that their self-concept—self-
efficacy—score corresponded to scores in their professional knowledge domains. However, Sciuchetti and Yssel (2019) indicated that, despite knowledge as a mastery experience, students in a four-semester professional development sequence reported an ongoing demand for practical experiences in the classroom. This comports to the findings of Yurekli et al. (2020) who observed that a mathematics methods course improved the content knowledge and TSE of pre-service teachers in the domain of lesson preparation but did not equally prepare students to perform teaching tasks due to the lack of practical experience in the classroom. The implication of these data indicates that content-knowledge mastery impacts TSE development more effectively when combined with meaningful engagement in pedagogical praxis.

For pre-service teachers, early opportunities to engage in practical teaching experiences produce the most dramatic effect on TSE development (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Morris et al., 2017). During the early stages of teacher training, pre-service educators can develop TSE through engaging in activities that effectively simulate the teaching experience (Bautista & Boone, 2015; Sumarno, 2019; Theelen et al., 2019). For example, pre-service teachers can practice teaching a lesson to their fellow students, or they can utilize a virtual classroom simulator; if the conditions are sufficiently realistic, they can effectively increase TSE (Bautista & Boone, 2015; Sumarno, 2019; Theelen et al., 2019). In a study of the use of mixed-reality simulations in introductory, intermediate, and advanced pre-service teacher methods courses, Gundel et al. (2019) observed that the use of augmented reality or “augmented virtuality” (p. 248) simulations effectively improved pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs. This study advanced the findings of Bautista and Boone (2015), who observed increased TSE levels among 62 pre-service early childhood teachers using a highly personalized virtual teacher methods lab. The unique educational contexts of such simulations provide pre-service teachers with
foundational experiences in all four domains of self-efficacy development (Gundel & Piro, 2021).

As pre-service teachers improve their skills, they move on to actual student-teaching assignments and practicums as a means of further developing TSE. The literature shows a positive correlation between increased teaching practice and the development of TSE, which improves attitudes, effort, and the likelihood of new teachers remaining in the profession (Iaochite & Costa Filho, 2020; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Senler, 2016). In a study of 75 graduating pre-service teachers from the University of Otago, New Zealand, the participants reported significantly more robust TSE beliefs following their capstone practicum experience as the result of synthesizing their overall educational experience (Berg & Smith, 2018). Insook et al. (2017) further demonstrated the use of the student teaching experience to boost TSE and increase technology use in the classroom; they highlighted the importance of the student teaching practicum as a means of effectively integrating content knowledge and educational methods in context-specific practice. This literature supports the theoretical assumption that enactive mastery experiences represent an essential element of pre-service teacher development of TSE. Likewise, this study of the homeschooling community revealed the presence of personal accomplishments in teaching as one source of HTSE development.

**Vicarious Experiences Through Social Models.** In addition to personal accomplishments, the observation of well-appraised social models can also lead to vicarious experiences that contribute to the development of TSE (Bandura, 1977a, 1997). Although less impacting than TSE modification resulting from enactive mastery experiences, the nature of SET and SCT explains the influence of environmental determinants on the cognitive processes of the observer through social comparison (Bandura, 1977a, 1997, 2012). Efficacious models with
clearly successful outcomes serve to foster TSE development in pre-service educators who vicariously envision their own success in the performance of the similarly-skilled models (Bandura, 1977a, 1997; Morris et al., 2017; Senler, 2016). Consequently, pre-service teacher preparation programs often design courses that offer vicarious experiences through social models as one approach to increasing TSE levels in candidates (El-Abd & Chaaban, 2020; Willis et al., 2016).

While positive social models have the potential to vicariously raise TSE levels in pre-service educators, the models must be well-appraised by the observer. Like any cognitive process in SET and SCT, the modification of TSE levels depends upon how the event is perceived and processed by the observer; how a pre-service educator interprets the conditions of the demonstration provides more important information than the act of observation itself (Baltaoğlu, 2015; Bandura, 1977a, 1997; Mahler et al., 2017; Morris et al., 2017). If pre-service teachers do not appraise the quality of the model to be sufficiently proficient, or relatively similar to themselves, the observed experience may negatively impact TSE levels (Baltaoğlu, 2015; Mahler et al., 2017; Morris et al., 2017). However, if the model demonstrates sufficient TSE levels and the observer appraises the event positively, vicarious experiences can positively impact TSE development (Baltaoğlu, 2015). If the findings of the literature can be transferred to a broader SET context, then one should also expect to find a link between vicarious experiences and the development of HTSE, as observed in this study.

Social Persuasion. Bandura (1977a, 1997, 2012) also predicted that social persuasion, which often comes in the form of constructive feedback from a trusted source, could serve to foster the development of TSE, but to a lesser extent than both enactive mastery experiences and vicarious experiences through social models. Within the literature, there exists a strong
correlation between feedback received from mentors, peers, or students and increased levels of TSE (Morris et al., 2017; Phan & Locke, 2015). However, its benefit can quickly become a detriment; not all sources of social persuasion provide encouraging feedback or feedback that is meaningful to the recipient (Kang, 2021). A mixture of positive and negative feedback from coaches, mentors, teachers, and students can raise or lower TSE contradictorily, making it difficult to maintain a healthy sense of efficacy (Hoi et al., 2017; Klassen & Durksen, 2014; Morris et al., 2017).

Despite the potential instability, social persuasion represents a particularly widespread and useful means of fostering TSE development in pre-service educators (George et al., 2018; Morris et al., 2017; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). This is because teachers who may otherwise lack enactive mastery experiences due to limited teaching opportunities can rely on social persuasion to raise or lower TSE independent from individual performances (Bandura, 2012). However, as in all the sources discussed, the benefit of social persuasion depends on who delivers the message, how it is delivered, and how it is perceived (Hyun et al., 2017; Yada et al., 2019). This presents a challenge for TSE development in pre-service educators; recent data indicate that contemporary pre-service teachers may devalue the competency of their educators or question their compatibility with mentors, which results in reduced TSE levels (Clark & Byrnes, 2015; West & West, 2016). Nevertheless, the literature supports the use of social persuasion in pre-service teacher training programs as another means of fostering TSE development in professional educators, which provided a further area of study for potential HTSE development.

**Regulation of Physical and Emotional States.** Social persuasion remains prevalent in pre-service educator training programs as a source of TSE development because of its additional
propensity to address the regulation of physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1997; Senler, 2016). Pre-service teachers often face anxiety at the start of teaching practicums; this can interfere with the development of healthy TSE in situations that would otherwise provide constructive mastery experiences (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019; Senler, 2016). Stressful situations tend to elicit emotional arousal that may cause people to question their competency and avoid similar situations in the future (Bandura, 1977a). Consequently, pre-service teachers need instruction on how to positively reframe emotional and physical cues and interpret them as conducive to TSE development; increased heart rates, for example, can be attributed to excitement instead of anxiety (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Morris et al., 2017).

While verbal persuasion aimed at regulating physical and emotional states can effectively facilitate TSE growth in pre-service teachers, the longevity of its impact depends upon the authenticity of the message (Bandura, 1977a, 1997). Messages designed to convince people to overcome emotional arousal based upon false pretenses or deceptive feedback result in short-lived adjustments to TSE; the feedback must be within realistic bounds to generate a more meaningful cognitive reappraisal of the state (Bandura, 1977a, 1982, 1997). For pre-service teachers to regulate physical and emotional states, messages must be situated within the reality of their genuine knowledge, skills, and experiences that can be used realistically to motivate performance (Bandura, 1997; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Morris et al., 2017; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019). Thus, the literature shows the significance of regulating states in professional educators for the development of TSE and suggests the need to consider this source in potential HTSE development.
In-Service Developmental Sources for Professional Teachers

As pre-service teachers transition to professional teaching careers, the window for further, substantial development of TSE begins to close and self-efficacy levels begin to rigidify (Bandura, 1997; Mahler et al., 2017; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019). Although Chao et al. (2017) observed increased TSE within in-service training participants with greater than 5 years of teaching, this stands as an exception to the existing literature, and their unique findings may have resulted from the limitations of their study, which included few participants and the use of convenience sampling. Thus, the data indicate the need for early intervention.

The need for quality in-service teacher development programs for early-career educators intensifies with the realization that many of these educators—enthusiastic and passionate at the end of their preparation programs—face a steep decline in TSE upon entering their first teaching position, with up to 25% of first-year teachers opting to leave the profession (Feng et al., 2019; Gray & Taie, 2015; Hall et al., 2017). Consequently, ongoing development of TSE must occur early in the professional context. Moreover, the literature indicates that such programs require interventions that are custom tailored to individual contexts; broad professional development programs are statistically less effective than large-scale teacher training programs (George et al., 2018; Perera et al., 2019). Despite requiring more customized approaches, in-service development of TSE must still provide information within the four primary sources of self-efficacy to alter TSE beliefs through overlapping, mutually-benefiting effects (Bandura, 1977a, 1997; Yada et al., 2019).

Enactive Mastery Experiences. As in the pre-service context, consistent exposure to enactive mastery experiences that develop content knowledge and professional praxis proves to be a substantial source for increased TSE during the early stages of a teaching career (Feng et al.,
positive self-appraisal serves as the mediator of the cognitive processes that impact TSE development; teachers working part time, for example, show less TSE development than their full-time peers, which may indicate that these teachers appraise their enactive mastery experiences as less significant than full-time service (Nuri et al., 2017; Perera et al., 2019). Ultimately, mere teaching experience does not, in and of itself, convince teachers of their capabilities, nor does it alone raise TSE levels (Morris et al., 2017). Instead, in-service teachers benefit from practicing reflexivity during professional development interventions and ongoing teaching experiences (Lotter et al., 2018; Maclellan, 2016).

Several studies within the corpus of literature demonstrated success in enhancing early-career teachers’ level of TSE through continuing education, well-crafted in-service development programs, or a combination of both—settings that provide ongoing mastery experiences (Chao et al., 2017; Latouche & Gascoigne, 2019; Lotter et al., 2018). Pfitzner-Eden (2016) observed an improvement in TSE for in-service teachers pursuing master’s degrees as a means of increasing content knowledge, which is an element of enactive mastery experiences. Likewise, Latouche and Gascoigne (2019) conducted an in-service intervention for 274 teachers, which resulted in increases in both content knowledge and TSE. These results are similar to those of Chao et al. (2017), who observed an increase in TSE among teachers in Hong Kong who participated in a week-long training program. Consequently, as Lotter et al. (2018) opined, these programs increase knowledge, allow for reflection, and provide additional teaching practice that serves to boost in-service levels of TSE in keeping with Bandura’s four sources of self-efficacy.

**Vicarious Experiences Through Social Models.** In addition to the enactive mastery experiences of ongoing schooling and in-service training programs, social modeling programs
also provide vicarious experiences for TSE growth within early-career teachers (Bandura, 1997; George et al., 2018; Perera et al., 2019). For example, collaborative teaching assignments provide initial educators an opportunity to observe the success of other teachers, which can encourage improved self-appraisal and increase TSE (George et al., 2018; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Perera et al., 2019). In a critical review of emerging studies, Morris et al. (2017) reported that early-career educators who observed experienced teachers, either in person or through videos, reported increased levels of TSE that were foundational to their professional development. Additionally, Feng et al. (2019) observed that first-year teachers with discipline-specific mentors also demonstrated improved TSE levels.

While vicarious experiences attributed to the observation of a mentor or co-teacher have the potential to raise TSE, the nature of SET proves, once again, that this process remains dependent upon the appraisal of the model by the observer (Bandura, 1997). In their study, Feng et al. (2019) determined that the benefit of mentorship on first-year teachers’ TSE depended upon receiving a mentor from the same academic discipline. Hobson and Maxwell (2020) supported the importance of mentors from the same discipline in another survey of 392 teachers from throughout England; they found that mentees were more likely to describe mentors as beneficial when they shared the same subject specialty. Moreover, Morris et al. (2017) opined that how an observer attended to and interpreted the model of their mentor represented a more important aspect of improved TSE than the effectiveness of the mentor’s model itself. Bandura (1997) explained that the success of vicarious experiences through social models depends on the perceived similarity of the mentor to the observer. TSE levels can decrease if early-career educators perceive their mentors as too dissimilar in style or experience. They can also drop if these educators view the pairing as disciplinary or corrective because the mentor was assigned
later than the initial stage of teaching (Morris et al., 2017; Perera et al., 2019). However, if the professional development program focuses on the early-career teacher’s needs, mentoring and coaching can make a positive difference in the development of TSE (Gümüş & Bellibaş, 2021).

Social Persuasion. The benefits of mentorship for early-career teachers goes beyond that of vicarious experiences through social models; in-service teachers participating in a developmental mentorship program may also experience increased TSE due to positive social persuasion (Bandura, 1977a, 1997). Often, respected mentors provide meaningful, authentic feedback to early-career teachers that benefit their self-appraisal of their performance in the classroom, thus boosting TSE (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Perera et al., 2019). While studying university English teachers in Vietnam, Phan and Locke (2015) concluded that social persuasion in the form of sincere feedback had a more powerful impact on TSE development than mastery experiences. Hoi et al. (2017) also identified social persuasion—feedback from principals, colleagues, students, or parents—as the strongest predictor of TSE development while studying 250 Chinese teachers. While these findings are somewhat exceptional considering Bandura’s (1977a) prediction of social persuasion’s limited influence, the data indicate the significant role social persuasion can play in the ongoing development of TSE for in-service teachers and demands further study.

Not only do mentoring and peer relationship programs provide social persuasion through feedback, but they also provide social persuasion through the benefit of professional communities. la Velle (2020) opined that TSE improves as the result of participation in professional communities through which teachers learn together, exchange ideas, and debate best practices. Similar to the biblical paradigm of how “iron sharpens iron” (English Standard Bible, 2001, Proverbs 27:17), the supportive dialogue of educational peer-networks provides a sense of
belonging and encouragement that dispels the negative vacuum of professional isolation in ways similar to that of mentoring programs (Gordon, 2020; la Velle, 2020).

**Regulation of Physical and Emotional States.** The benefits of in-service development programs continue to impact early-career educators when it comes to the regulation of physical and emotional states. Educators experience a wide range of emotions in relation to teaching that can positively and negatively impact the cognitive processes that inform TSE development (Burić et al., 2017; Frenzel et al., 2016; McCarthy et al., 2016). In the United Kingdom, for example, 72% of educators described themselves as stressed (Savill-Smith, 2019). In a survey of 67 early-career educators, Gordon (2020) found that 49% of the respondents described the transition from pre-service to in-service teaching as rather- or very-overwhelming. This highlights the importance of reappraising these emotional states; if left unadjusted, these views will negatively impact TSE (Bandura, 1997).

Early-career educators must rely on cognitive appraisals to determine which classroom events are perceived as stressful, but these appraisals are often faulty (Bandura, 2012; McCarthy et al., 2016). Bandura (2012) indicated that efficacy beliefs are strengthened by correcting the misreading of physical and emotional states, reducing anxiety and depression, and improving physical strength and stamina. In this regard, in-service development programs can help provide stress reduction techniques for educators and provide a collegial support network that encourages the reappraisal of arousal states, thus improving TSE (Gordon, 2020; McCarthy et al., 2016). For example, in a review of 19 studies consisting of 1,981 participants, Lomas et al. (2017) observed that implementing mindfulness-based interventions often resulted in positive impacts upon reported levels of burnout, depression, stress, and overall wellbeing. Additionally, the use of emotion-regulating strategies buffered physiological stress indicators (Katz et al., 2018). These
studies indicate the positive outcomes associated with the regulation of physical and emotional states in support of increased TSE (Bandura, 1977a).

As with pre-service TSE development, in-service development of TSE based upon the successful reappraisal or regulation of physical and emotional states depends upon authenticity (Bandura, 1977a, 1997). Mentors and colleagues need to provide in-service educators with feedback that capitalizes upon their actual skills, knowledge, and experiences (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Morris et al., 2017; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019). Moreover, these messages must elicit authentic performance from the recipient; teachers cannot be encouraged to force a false perception until it becomes their reality. Lee (2017) examined the relationship between emotional labor—the effort to manage unpleasant emotions—and teacher burnout and turnover rates among 613 high-school physical education teachers from 47 states in the United States. Lee discovered that teachers who attempted to feign a positive emotional state, without authentic regulation of their emotional state, were more likely to experience facets of teacher burnout than those who were genuine in their emotions. Thus, as Bandura (1977a, 1982, 1997) postulated, genuine growth of TSE results from authentic regulation of physical and emotional states that is grounded in realistic cognitive reappraisal, not deceptive feedback or performance.

**Teacher Self-Efficacy’s Impact on Educational Outcomes**

As supported by the review of existing literature, Bandura’s (1977a) postulated four sources combine to shape the development of TSE within professional educators (Bandura, 1997; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016). The TSE resulting from the aggregate influence of enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, social persuasion, and the regulation of physical and emotional states informs how well a teacher performs in the classroom, endures difficulties, and remains satisfied and committed to the profession (Bandura, 1997; Morris et al.,
The relationship between well-developed TSE and desired educational outcomes manifests itself in the domains of motivation and enthusiasm (George et al., 2018; Kunter, 2013; Mahler et al., 2018; Schunk & Usher, 2019), competence and quality (George et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2017; Perera & John, 2020), and longevity (Bandura, 1997; George et al., 2018; Perera & John, 2020).

**Improved Motivation and Enthusiasm**

TSE represents one of the key motivational factors that influences professional behavior within educators (George et al., 2018). As a result of well-developed TSE, efficacious educators are more likely to demonstrate greater motivation and enthusiasm for classroom engagement and willingness to implement new instructional methods (Granziera & Perera, 2019; Schunk & Usher, 2019; Zee & Koomen, 2016). These findings support Bandura’s (1997) theory on the important role of self-efficacy in motivation.

The improved motivation and enthusiasm displayed by teachers also leads to increased student engagement, which positively effects educational outcomes (Kunter, 2013; Mahler et al., 2018; Zee & Koomen, 2016). As a result of increased engagement, student self-motivation and achievement improves (Mahler et al., 2018; Zee & Koomen, 2016). For example, Lazarides et al. (2018) observed that students’ perceptions of classroom goals changed when their teacher’s enthusiasm increased, which in turn improved the level of student motivation. Moreover, students’ perceptions of their teachers’ motivation have a significant impact on the development of their own intrinsic motivation and their subsequent academic performance (You et al., 2016).

**Improved Competence and Quality**

In addition to increased motivation and enthusiasm, TSE levels inform teacher competence and perceptions of quality (George et al., 2018). This may be due to the relationship
between increased TSE and improved classroom management skills (Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Miller et al. (2017) conducted a study of 51 teachers and 427 students, which revealed that students showed greater respect to their teachers in relationship to their perception of increased instructional competence that correlated to the teachers’ reported TSE levels. In a similar study, the increased perception of teacher quality associated with TSE levels resulted in improved academic accomplishment for students (Perera & John, 2020).

The benefit of increased motivation and enthusiasm goes beyond just classroom management, however; improved TSE also provides an interpersonal benefit that results in greater teacher empathy and an ability to persevere with students through behavioral interruptions (Goroshit & Hen, 2016; Zee et al., 2017). A study of 543 teachers in Israel revealed that TSE is a strong predictor of emotional regulation and empathy, which improves student–teacher relations (Goroshit & Hen, 2016). As teachers manifest greater levels of TSE, students perceive improved student–teacher relationships (Goroshit & Hen, 2016; Summers et al., 2017). For this reason, modifying TSE may also hold the key to ameliorating the ramifications of teacher–student race relationships in diverse populations (Geerlings et al., 2018; Kunemund et al., 2020). Improved student–teacher relationships resulting from the factors of TSE development produce improved educational outcomes by improving student engagement and achievement through the regulation of the motivational and cognitive aspects of their learning (Hajovsky et al., 2019; Zee & de Bree, 2017; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Beyond management and relational benefits of TSE in the classroom, efficacious teachers also display greater quality and competence through improved pedagogical praxis. Throughout the literature, TSE levels are moderately to strongly associated with improved teacher evaluations and student achievement resulting from more effective teacher performance (Klassen
& Tze, 2014). For example, teachers with high TSE are more likely to be perceived by students as creating mastery-oriented learning environments (Lazarides et al., 2018). Furthermore, teachers with elevated TSE levels tend to demonstrate greater technological proficiency and integration in the classroom (Hatlevik, 2017; Kwon et al., 2019). Altogether, teachers with high TSE levels are more likely to display innovative classroom behavior and better teaching strategies in general (Klaeijsen et al., 2018; Lotter et al., 2018). This innovation, combined with growing pedagogical knowledge and TSE, causes teachers to demonstrate greater competence in the classroom, which results in improved quality of education (Lauermann & König, 2016). Thus, when combined with the relational benefits of TSE, the competency and quality benefits of TSE lead to more desirable educational outcomes.

**Improved Longevity**

Another way that TSE impacts educational outcomes manifests itself through the stability provided by improved teacher longevity and reduced teacher attrition (Aloe et al., 2014; George et al., 2018; Perera & John, 2020). As stated earlier, stress and teachers’ contexts can influence their career intentions to remain in the profession (Feng et al., 2019; Gray & Taie, 2015; Hall et al., 2017). However, as TSE improves motivation and classroom management, teachers experience less frustration in the classroom and reduced chances of burnout (Aloe et al., 2014). However, there is some evidence in the literature that the correlation between TSE and burnout exists in the opposite direction (Kim & Burić, 2020). In other words, while burnout may indicate low TSE, the ability of high TSE to predict attrition is less clear and may be dependent on other contributing factors such as salary and workplace dynamics (Granziera & Perera, 2019; Kim & Burić, 2020). More research is needed to clarify this relationship.
Despite the directional uncertainty in the relationship between TSE and burnout, TSE does contribute to teacher longevity based upon teacher satisfaction, which ultimately produces better educational stability and academic outcomes (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Newberry & Allsop, 2017). Generally, a high TSE level results in less emotional exhaustion and less depersonalization of students, which are predictive factors of greater teacher accomplishment over time (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Not surprisingly, teachers with elevated TSE levels reported greater job satisfaction and improved persistence against challenges, resulting in better classroom stability for students, which contributes to the overall success of schools (George et al., 2018; Perera & John, 2020).

**Educational Outcomes as Indicators of Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy**

The literature discussed above clearly indicates a correlation between TSE and educational outcomes in the professional context. This supports Bandura’s (1977a, 1997, 2012) SET as a working theoretical framework for understanding how teachers develop self-efficacy beliefs within the instructional domain and how this impacts educational objectives. Given the significance of TSE to professional education, there theoretically exists a similar self-efficacy construct that plays an equally significant role in the work of homeschool education. Presently, the extant literature exploring the homeschooling community does not address the formation of TSE or a homeschool-specific equivalent. However, if the general framework of TSE also represents the underlying paradigm for homeschooling families, then homeschool educational outcomes may help support the existence of HTSE in the same way professional outcomes correlate to TSE. Undoubtedly, homeschooling parents have enjoyed successful academic and social outcomes over many decades (Ray, 2017). Thus, the potential of an HTSE construct to
explain the educational outcomes of homeschooling merited further study—specifically of a grounded theory nature.

While there exists very little literature to shed light on the nature, development, and benefits of self-efficacy beliefs within the homeschooling community, the literature that does exist supports the reality of HTSE as indicated by its benefits. For example, Pannone (2017a) reported that new homeschool educators displayed high levels of confidence and comfort in teaching their children, potentially indicating that HTSE provides improved motivation and enthusiasm similar to TSE for professional teachers. Moreover, studies conducted by Baidi (2019), Dill and Elliot (2019), Guterman and Neuman (2017), Tan (2020), and Thomas (2016a) suggested a correlation between HTSE and educational outcomes in the domains of motivation, quality, and perseverance.

**Improved Motivation**

When observed through the lens of an agentic perspective, homeschooling parents are more likely to demonstrate improved motivation in their teaching (Bandura, 1982, 1989, 2000, 2006b). For many homeschooling families, the decision to choose a home-based form of schooling originates in response to religious convictions, political ideologies, or pedagogical dissatisfaction with the public-school system (Baidi, 2019; Dill & Elliot, 2019; Thomas, 2016a). For homeschoolers, this shift from the publicly-sanctioned school system to home-based alternatives requires well-developed human agency, which results from well-developed self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982, 2006b). Thus, the agentic manifestation of educational liberty may serve as an informed response to HTSE development—since free will serves as a predictor of cognition and behavior (Dill & Elliot, 2019; Feldman, 2017; Thomas, 2016a).
In the professional context, teachers with high TSE better engage students, resulting in improved self-motivation and academic success (Lazarides et al., 2018; Mahler et al., 2018; You et al., 2016). Likewise, in the homeschooling community, highly experienced, efficacious, and committed parents create educational contexts for the development of autonomous student motivation and high mastery goal orientation (Bell et al., 2016). Additionally, as professional teachers with high TSE were more likely to engage in new instructional models, so homeschooling parents are also more inclined to try new methods of effective instruction, such as modifying the structure, routine, and content of schooling to motivate their children (Bell et al., 2016; Granziera & Perera, 2019; Jolly & Matthews, 2018; Thomas, 2016b). The presence of improved motivation thus suggests the existence of a refined level of HTSE.

**Improved Quality**

Just as the literature supported the relationship between TSE and competence and quality, it also supports the presence of improved competence and quality in the homeschooling community. As stated earlier, Pannone (2017a) observed that new homeschooling parents reported high levels of confidence and satisfaction in teaching their children; this sharply contrasts with the reported stress of new public-school teachers as indicated in the literature above. Perhaps this difference in confidence—an aspect of self-efficacy—explains why homeschoolers academically outperformed public-school students in 78% of systematically reviewed empirical research (Ray, 2017). The existence of HTSE may explain the perceived success enjoyed by homeschooling families as a result of customized education and improved instructional quality (Firmin et al., 2019).

In addition to academic success, homeschool educators provide educational contexts that improve quality across multiple outcome domains. The ability of homeschooling parents to tailor
their instruction to the individual needs and interests of their children results in a balance of structure and flexibility that provides more social and civic opportunities than traditional education (Guterman & Neuman, 2017; Tan, 2020; Thomas, 2016a). As a result, homeschooled students are more likely to display increased social and civic involvement than public-schooled peers (Dill & Elliot, 2019; Firmin et al., 2019; Hamlin, 2020). Furthermore, Pannone (2017b) discovered that the quality of homeschooling may foster greater entrepreneurial characteristics and activity within graduates. Consequently, the more dynamic methodological sensitivity of homeschooling parents leads to greater overall achievement, which may also indicate a developed sense of HTSE (Guterman & Neuman, 2017; Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Ray, 2017).

**Improved Perseverance**

As Bandura (1977a) postulated, more efficacious people are able to overcome challenges more successfully. Teachers who have well-developed TSE are more likely to persevere through the obstacles of a career in education; similarly, the presence of HTSE should manifest through improved homeschooling perseverance (George et al., 2018; Perera & John, 2020; Tan, 2020). However, there is scant research that specifically addresses the longevity and perseverance of homeschooling families. Bell et al. (2016) observed that non-efficacious families were underrepresented in their study of homeschool environments; they opined that parents who determined their role as homeschool educators were unsuccessful decided not to continue homeschooling, while those who perceived their role as successful continued to homeschool due, at least in part, to their efficacy. This prediction, if true, supports the notion that parents with improved efficacy for teaching their children are able to persevere, while those without sufficient HTSE are not as able to persevere in the practice of providing home-based education.
Another factor supporting the longevity of homeschooling families comes from the value-driven nature of homeschooling. In a study of Singaporean Chinese homeschooling families, Tan (2020) observed that many families view education as a lifelong learning process, which requires ongoing perseverance. This persevering conviction stems from the principles of HAT (Bandura, 2006b; Dennison et al., 2020). As discussed previously, HAT and SET are closely intertwined, which further suggests the existence of an agentic HTSE construct that empowers longevity in homeschooling families. This may be supported by Marks and Welsch (2018) who did not observe a large decrease in the number of Wisconsin homeschooling families until the upper grades of high school. There are many reasons that might explain this decline, such as a desire for a public diploma or early graduation from homeschool that results in the absence of homeschooled students from upper-grade level data, but the significance of the findings for this study presents itself in the fact that homeschooling families remain consistently active throughout the vast majority of their educational timeline.

**Potential Developmental Sources of Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy**

The successful educational outcomes of homeschooling parents are well documented in the literature, despite the fact that the factors contributing to this success remain, surprisingly, unaddressed (Ray, 2017). If, however, homeschool success can be shown to result from an underlying HTSE construct just as professional outcomes result from TSE, then HTSE might also develop from similar sources. Indeed, the limited literature addressing the homeschooling community alludes to HTSE developing from the same four sources that Bandura (1977a, 1997) predicted in SET. While a majority of parents who homeschool are not afforded the opportunity to experience training and mastery experiences akin to professional educators, current studies (Pannone, 2017a; Tilhou, 2020) indicate that homeschooling parents may look to alternative
experiences and informal sources to foster HTSE development by living through their own, unique enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, social persuasion, and the regulation of physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1977a, 1997, 2012).

**Enactive Mastery Experiences**

Given the shifting demographics of the homeschooling community, less than half of homeschooling parents possess a bachelor’s degree or higher (CRHE, 2017; Hamlin, 2020). This implies that most homeschooling parents have not completed formal teacher preparation courses. Nevertheless, homeschooling parents may still have knowledge and accomplishments resulting from alternative enactive mastery experiences: coaching a Little League team, teaching Sunday school, or training their own children to use a spoon, walk, or ride their bikes (Henry, 2017; Pannone, 2017a). These activities serve as informal teaching experiences that provide exposure to curriculum development and content delivery that impacts HTSE development (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018).

In addition to previous personal accomplishments, homeschool educators can improve their content knowledge and pedagogical praxis through the resources of homeschool support networks. Many homeschooling parents rely extensively upon the strength of one another and the combined knowledge and skills of ubiquitous support groups (Gann & Carpenter, 2019; Hamlin, 2020; Pannone, 2017a; Tilhou, 2020). Through these groups, parents are exposed to new educational concepts and skills, which improves content knowledge and the potential development of HTSE in the same way ongoing professional development contributes to in-service teachers’ TSE.
Vicarious Experiences Through Social Models

The benefits of homeschool support groups (HSGs) and contributions of fellow parents provide more than enactive mastery experiences; these resources also have the potential to serve as social models for vicarious development of HTSE (Bandura, 1977a). In many cases, HSGs offer cooperative environments for collaborative education that model effective instructional strategies and nurture the development of HTSE in the observing participant (Hamlin, 2020; Tilhou, 2020). As a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri in St. Louis, Henry (2017) conducted a study of how African American parents prepared to homeschool; the study found that 90% of parents reported peer-learning from other homeschooling families as a significant source of practical knowledge for providing instruction to their children. Consequently, these social models provide a basis for HTSE development consistent with Bandura’s (1977a) SET.

Even in the absence of HSGs, parents who exercise agentic choice to provide home-based instruction for their children have other social models that may contribute to the development of HTSE through vicarious experiences. Almost everyone attends a class at some point in their life; Ma and Cavanagh (2018) observed that teachers in these classes serve as social models for the purpose of vicarious appraisals in the cognitive process that develops TSE within former students. The reflexive process of recalling and appraising the efficacy of a past teacher’s behavior and motivation in previous personal learning experiences may trigger the cognitive process necessary to inform the vicarious development of HTSE in a homeschooling parent (Lotter et al., 2018; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Maclellan, 2016).

Social Persuasion

As with professional teachers, reliable and authentic feedback may contribute to the development of HTSE through the influence of social persuasion (Bandura, 1997; Ma &
Cavanagh, 2018). The familial context of homeschools provides several sources for feedback and encouragement from family members. For example, the close parent–child relationship provides a source of immediate evaluation and feedback for teachers; student feedback often serves as a valuable source for efficacy appraisals (Firmin et al., 2019; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Yada et al., 2019).

In addition to familial support, the relationships formed among homeschooling families, both personally and through participation in homeschool support networks, provide further sources for encouragement and feedback (Hamlin, 2020; Pannone, 2017a; Tilhou, 2020). Morse (2019) observed high parent involvement in HSGs. These groups provide an important social networking aspect for parents that goes beyond providing student benefits. The relationships formed in these groups provide an ample opportunity for social persuasion to inform the potential development of HTSE (Pannone, 2017a; Tilhou, 2020).

**Regulation of Physical and Emotional States**

If the construct of HTSE exists as theorized, it follows a similar developmental paradigm to TSE, in which the cognitive processes that govern its development depend upon personal perceptions and appraisals—underscoring the significance of regulating physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1977a, 1997). However, the grossly understudied nature of the homeschooling community makes understanding the extent of stress and anxiety in homeschooling families difficult (Windish & Wachob, 2017). To complicate matters, the few studies that currently address homeschool stress levels provide conflicting information. For example, Pannone (2017a) relayed that new homeschooling families in her study reported high confidence and satisfaction. While the small number of participants in Pannone’s study prevented broad generalization, the results were consistent with the findings of Windish and Wachob (2017), who found that the
reported stress levels of homeschooling families were lower than the average of public-school families. However, an earlier study by Rathmell and Collins (2013) found inconsistent definitions of homeschool stress depending on parents’ motivation for homeschooling and their appraisal of their contexts. They predicted that families who choose homeschooling out of situational necessity likely experience more stress than the families who willingly elected to homeschool for other reasons. Perhaps this explains why the rapid influx of parents schooling their children at home during the global COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a significant increase in parents’ reported levels of depression and anxiety (Lee et al., 2021). The families thrust into homeschooling due to crisis may not have fully attended to their HTSE development and, instead, encountered the stress of disorganization, poor motivation, and pedagogical inexperience that compromised educational outcomes (Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, 2021; Mælan et al., 2021; Pozas et al., 2021).

The construct of HTSE as a mediating factor for the regulation of physical and emotional states may help explain the disparity of data concerning homeschool anxiety. For example, those homeschooling parents who learn to reappraise their emotional cues as a positive factor of development might increase their HTSE, which would result in a different interpretation of otherwise stressful circumstances (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Rathmell & Collins, 2013; Tilhou, 2020). Additionally, there may be an agentic element of homeschooling motivation resulting from values reinforcement that also provides a stress-mitigating boost to HTSE (Rathmell & Collins, 2013; Tan, 2020).

**Summary**

Despite the rapidly growing nature of the homeschooling community, these families remain a perilously understudied population (Ray, 2021; Windish & Wachob, 2017). With the
recent educational policy impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, home-based education will likely expand more rapidly as an alternative to public schools (Ray, 2020). However, the decision to transition to homeschooling typically comes from parents who have already developed a sense of self-efficacy that provides them with the agentic strength and resources necessary to engage confidently in the homeschooling process (Baidi, 2019; Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Rathmell & Collins, 2013). Now, with more parents electing to homeschool out of a sense of necessity—where people may experience more stress and less efficacy—understanding the nature, formation, and impact of a potential HTSE construct becomes critical to avoiding compromised educational outcomes (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Rathmell & Collins, 2013; Ray, 2020).

The existing literature contains clear support for the role of Bandura’s (1977a, 1977b, 1982, 1989) SCT, HAT, and SET in the context of teaching and instruction. The combined effects of these theories, as manifested in TSE, demonstrate the ability of teachers’ self-appraisal of enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, social persuasions, and the regulation of physical and emotional states to influence educational quality, endurance, and outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Morris et al., 2017; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Moreover, existing research into the homeschooling community implies the existence of HTSE based upon educational outcomes and potential sources similar to TSE (Baidi, 2019; Pannone, 2017a; Ray, 2017; Tilhou, 2020). However, the dearth of current research makes developing a theory to fully define the nature, development, and benefits of HTSE impossible without further study.

Now more than ever, the educational community needs additional insight into the theoretical basis for homeschooling efficacy. Even with the historical academic, social, and civic
achievements of homeschooling families, the current choice to homeschool remains a contentious decision (Bartholet, 2019; Dwyer & Peters, 2019; Firmin et al., 2019; Ray, 2017; Sarajlic, 2019). Despite the presence of strong opposition, homeschooling continues to flourish; this serves as an indication that academic success may be more dependent upon self-appraised efficacy beliefs than academic degrees and teacher certifications (Bandura, 1997; Ray, 2017). Existing research discusses extensively the nature, development, and benefits of TSE in the professional context, while remaining virtually silent on similar foundational constructs in the homeschooling community that contains 7%–9% of students in America (Ray, 2021). Clearly, more research is warranted.

The purpose of this systematic grounded theory study was to construct a theory that explains the nature, development, and benefit of HTSE in Wisconsin. The results of this research represent a contribution to the theoretical knowledge of home-based education and help fill a significant gap in the literature. With the resulting theory, homeschooling parents and potential homeschooling parents can ensure their preparedness for the intellectual and psychological demands of homeschooling and ensure quality outcomes that withstand the voices of criticism from homeschooling opponents (e.g., Bartholet, 2019; Sarajlic, 2019).
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this systematic grounded theory study was to define and explain the development and significance of homeschool teacher self-efficacy (HTSE) among homeschooling parents in Wisconsin. To achieve this purpose, I used a grounded theory approach to explore the nature of HTSE in homeschooling parents, determine how they develop HTSE, and ascertain if this construct provides equivalent perceived benefits and outcomes as teacher self-efficacy (TSE) does for professional teachers. Through careful analysis of the data, I developed a theory to explain the development and function of HTSE in homeschooling parents in Wisconsin. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design and questions; discuss the setting, participants, and procedures; distinguish the role of the researcher; identify data collection and analysis techniques; and describe trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Research Design

This study consisted of a qualititative, systematic grounded theory approach. Although the number of studies of the homeschooling community has expanded, this community remains largely invisible (Cooper & Sureau, 2007; Ray, 2017). Therefore, a qualitative method of research served as the optimal means to make this world visible through its set of interpretive and material practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These practices benefited this study by bringing the world into view through a series of representations of the natural setting—field notes, interviews, artifacts, and memos. Creswell (2013) added that qualitative researchers collect and analyze data from natural settings, both inductively and deductively, to establish patterns and themes, which additionally benefited this study.

With themes and patterns identified, a grounded theory design of qualitative research
allowed me to generate a theory for why or how this phenomenon, practice, or process occurs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Given that the purpose of this study was to develop a theory for how HTSE develops and functions within the homeschooling community in Wisconsin, a grounded theory approach in which research and analysis exist concomitantly to generate a new, data-driven theory represented a suitable design (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Moreover, the significance of the under-researched topic of HTSE and the diversity of the homeschooling community demanded a design that explains the rich, descriptive data found in qualitative approaches through a tried-and-true procedural design that provides explanations in such a way as to allow for action and change through theory development (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

There are two popular approaches to grounded theory: the systematic approach of Corbin and Strauss (2015) and the constructivist approach of Charmaz (2014). Charmaz emphasized a theory-development process co-constructed through interactions between the researcher and participants in diverse worlds, multiple realities, and complex surroundings. This approach requires flexible guidelines and a dependence on values, beliefs, and assumptions as opposed to a strict methodology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). On the other hand, Corbin and Strauss relied upon a more systematic approach. In their method, researchers gather data until categories are saturated through a constant comparative back-and-forth between research, analysis, and more research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, their design utilizes a more structured process of categorizing, coding, and analyzing than what is found in the constructivist approach.

Because of my propensity for order and my philosophical assumptions, I selected the Corbin and Strauss (2015) systematic model of grounded theory to guide this study. Moreover, the structure of this design yielded itself well to the nature of this study and the desire to incorporate preexisting knowledge. Strauss and Corbin acknowledged that preexisting theoretical
frameworks can provide insight, direction, and initial concepts to expand and develop a substantively new theory, so long as the researcher remains open to the possibility that the new data may not conform to the existing framework. With this in mind, this design allowed for the use of Bandura’s (1977a) self-efficacy theory (SET) as the initial focus of this study.

**Research Questions**

**Research Question One**

*How do homeschooling parents perceive HTSE?*

**Research Question Two**

*To what do homeschooling parents attribute the development of their HTSE?*

**Research Question Three**

*What do homeschooling parents perceive are the benefits of developing HTSE?*

**Setting and Participants**

The homeschooling community often represents a population excluded from the evaluation of the current state of education in the United States (Thomas, 2016b). As the demographic composition of the homeschooling community changes, the growing diversity in motivation and praxis makes obtaining a large, representative sample difficult (Cheng & Donnelly, 2019). In an effort to identify a clearly defined population for this study, I selected a setting and participant group that is well suited to research (Marks & Welsch, 2018).

**Setting**

In the absence of federal legislation, the definition of homeschooling changes from state to state. However, Wisconsin has a clearly articulated definition of home-based private education, which is a program of educational instruction provided to a child by the child’s parent or guardian
or by a person designated by the parent or guardian. An instructional program provided to more than one family unit does not constitute a home-based private educational program. 
(1983 Wisconsin Act 512, 1984, Wis. Stat. § 115.001, 3g) 

Wisconsin statutes further require homeschoolers to follow the rules in place for private schools, which include the following: “(c) The program provides at least 875 hours of instruction each school year” and “(d) the program provides a sequentially progressive curriculum of fundamental instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and health” (1983 Wisconsin Act 512, 1984, Wis. Stat. § 118.165, c-d). In addition to these operating requirements, Wisconsin homeschools must report their annual enrollment to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and affirm their ongoing compliance with state law by submitting a simple form (1983 Wisconsin Act 512, 1984, Wis. Stat. § 115.30, 3). The clear definition, unobtrusive reporting requirements, and minimal regulation of content and praxis results in high compliance and robust data availability (HSLDA, 2021b; Marks & Welsch, 2018). Moreover, Wisconsin has a well-established homeschooling parents association that has operated in the state since 1984 providing advocacy, advice, and networking for the homeschooling community (WHPA, 2021b). Additionally, several local/regional homeschool support groups (HSGs) exist throughout the state (Homeschool World, 2021). The statutorily well-defined homeschool identity, the availability of current data, and the ubiquitous presence of HSGs made Wisconsin an ideal setting for this study (HSLDA, 2021b; Marks & Welsch, 2018; WHPA, 2021b).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Home Education Research Institute, approximately 3% of the national population of school-aged children homeschool in the United States (Ray, 2021; Redford et al., 2017). In Wisconsin, the Department of Public Instruction (2019) reported that 2.17% of the state’s population, 21,644
students, are enrolled in home-based education programs. However, this figure does not include information for children enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten programs. Taking this fact into account, the number of school-aged children homeschooled in Wisconsin is on par with the national average, which made it an effective setting for this design.

**Participants**

The initial selection of participants for this study followed criteria informed by TSE data from the professional teaching community. Within this population TSE varies during the initial stage of development between pre-service teaching preparation programs and the first few years of teaching (Bandura, 1997; Mahler et al., 2017; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019). Therefore, to gain an accurate picture of the overall development process of HTSE, this study concentrated on the population of homeschooling parents who were more likely to have stabilized levels of HTSE as predicted by TSE models. In other words, this study targeted homeschooling parents who were not in their initial stage of teaching. Moreover, to ensure that this study examined only HTSE, and not TSE, the population of participants was limited to those without prior formal teacher training. It was also important that the sample of participants conformed to the statutory definitions of homeschooling in Wisconsin so that people who were crisis-schooling or in home-based hybrid programs as a result of COVID-19, or other reasons, did not skew the data. Therefore, all participants had to meet the following initial inclusion criteria: (a) 3 or more years as a homeschool educator, (b) no prior participation in a Wisconsin-approved, or similar, educator preparation program, (c) have submitted a Wisconsin form PI-1206 to lawfully homeschool in the state, or did so while actively teaching, and (d) comports home-based instruction in accordance with Wisconsin homeschooling laws, or did so while actively teaching.
To satisfy the basic recommendations of Creswell and Poth (2018), this study aimed to consist of 10–20 participants who met the inclusion criteria discussed above. This number was flexible based upon the need to achieve a well-saturated theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). However, it was apparent that a final sample size of 10 parents was sufficient to no longer generate new information and to fully develop theoretical concepts. Additionally, while serving the needs of a theoretical sample, every effort was made to ensure that the participants in the study reflected the demographics of the general homeschooling community.

**Researcher Positionality**

To bolster the credibility of this study, it is important that I transparently disclose my personal relationship to the research topic and the interpretive frameworks and philosophical assumptions that motivated and guided me during this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For example, as an ordained clergyman, I hold to a strict biblical worldview based on the belief that the Holy Bible represents a divinely inspired, infallible guide for humanity (English Standard Bible, 2001, 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Consequently, I could not theorize the development of HTSE without situating this construct within the broader, foundational framework of Christianity. In this section, I discuss how this belief and others might impact my research.

**Interpretive Framework**

In addition to a Christian interpretive framework, I approach research with several interpretive frameworks, or paradigms. First, I approach research through a quasi-constructivist paradigm: Meaning is socially constructed and interpreted through human interaction (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This paradigm helps strike balance between my epistemological and rhetorical assumptions—people contribute their subjective perceptions and meanings toward the discovery of a universal truth. Second, I approach research pragmatically, in that I employ multiple sources
of data collection, I focus on practical applications of the research, and I emphasize what works best to solve the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To this end, I am also guided by a transformative framework. I believe that my research has the power to reform homeschooling education preparation and improve the lives of homeschooling families (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

**Philosophical Assumptions**

Given my personal experiences and beliefs, it is impossible to fully separate who I am from what I study; all researchers bring deeply ingrained philosophical assumptions and beliefs to their studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). How I view the world inevitably impacts how I approach research. Thus, it is important to disclose my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions.

**Ontological Assumption**

As a Christian clergyman, the way I define the nature of reality and its characteristics comes from a biblically informed ontological position that God is real and his Word is truth (Creswell & Poth, 2018; *English Standard Bible*, 2001, John 17:17). Consequently, all my interpretations of reality are subject to the guiding principles and authority of the Holy Bible as the primary means of revelation from God to humanity and the only infallible source of universal truth. While there may be disagreements or differing interpretations of this truth, I remain committed to the ontological teachings of a Christian theistic worldview (Sire, 2009). My decision to design a systematic grounded theory study flowed logically from my ontological assumption that there is a universal truth, a singular reality, that can explain the development and benefits of HTSE.

**Epistemological Assumption**

Because I believe in a universal truth, I also believe that this truth can be known.
Moreover, I believe that God reveals truth through his Word and through the testimony of his creation (*English Standard Bible*, 2001, Psalm 19:1). However, I recognize the subjectivity of people’s perceptions and interpretations of this revealed reality (Sire, 2009). Therefore, while I believe there is an overarching truth to be found, I am ethically bound to report reality as perceived by the participants, or co-researchers, of this study (O’Neil, 1998). Thus, my approach to this research was governed by a methodological restraint that ensured inductive research resulted from a balanced process that was both responsive to the data and shaped by the researcher’s experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this study, the balance manifested itself through the design choice of a grounded theory study. This type of design lends itself to a larger sample size, if needed, which provides a greater number of subjective, personal perspectives and experiences, the aggregation of which—thematic saturation—is more likely to arrive at a more accurate understanding of a universal truth that, in this case, will be manifested in the proposed theory.

**Axiological Assumption**

As I stated above, it is impossible to fully separate who I am from what I study because all researchers bring their deeply ingrained philosophical assumptions and beliefs to their studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This represents my axiological assumption, which, as Creswell and Poth (2018) recognized, must be admitted to successfully bracket out potential bias. Because of my strong biblical worldview, I approached this study with an expectation that the data would point to a universal truth that can be known and understood. This assumption influenced this study both in the selection of the design and in how the data was interpreted.

In the case of this study, my axiological assumptions were informed by my proximity to the research topic and community. I approached this study with experiential knowledge of
multiple academic sectors: private-, public-, and home-schooling. As a child, I attended a private, Christian school in a rural Wisconsin community until the sixth grade. For the sixth through ninth grades, I attended a private, Christian school in a Wisconsin community of approximately 70,000 people. I completed my high school education in the same community, at a public school with approximately 2,500 students. Following high school, I attended the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, where I earned a Bachelor of Music in Education degree and initial educator licenses in choral and general music for students from birth to 21 years old. Subsequently, I earned a Master of Divinity degree from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri.

In addition to my experience as a private-school student, I spent time in the private sector as an instructor. First, I volunteered in a private, Christian school as an instructional monitor. Second, I taught music for 5 years in a private studio, which afforded me unique insight into the differences between public and private instruction.

My knowledge of the public-school sector comes from my time as a student and as an educator in the field. After graduating from a public high school and a public university, I spent 1.5 years as a public-school teacher. My professional teacher preparation program consisted of multiple field experiences that provided vicarious social models and personal enactive mastery experiences consistent with Bandura’s (1997) SET. As an in-service teacher, I continued to shape my TSE through in-service professional development, enactive mastery experiences, following the successful models of my peer group, and reshaping my thinking through the social persuasion of a mentor–protégé relationship with a university professor in my field.

While most of my experience as an educator came from private and public institutional settings, I also have educational experience in the homeschooling community. This experience
began vicariously in my youth; my parents were homeschool educators, founders of multiple homeschool cooperatives, and advocates for homeschool law reform in the state of Alabama. When I became a member of the clergy, I also advocated for homeschooling and supported my parishioners in their transition from public- to home-based education. Moreover, as a United States Army Chaplain, I regularly interacted with homeschooling families within the Armed Forces community. Now, as a father of three daughters, I have elected, along with my wife, to homeschool our children after their experiences in both public and private schools. My family is now in our second year of homeschooling.

These experiences, my philosophical assumptions, and my research paradigms all contributed to my motivation to conduct this study. I have observed both effective and ineffective homeschooling families. Now, as I homeschool my own children, I appreciate the impact that my professional teacher preparation has on my ability to homeschool my children, but not all homeschool educators possess my academic background to help them succeed. Nevertheless, many homeschool families are successful and demonstrate HTSE in the absence of professional training. Therefore, there must exist some form of equivalent developmental process—enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, social persuasion, and the regulation of physical and emotional states—that developed their HTSE similar to professional teachers’ TSE (Bandura, 1997). I admit freely that I am positively biased toward homeschooling, and I recognize that parents must have a sufficient level of TSE to achieve acceptable academic outcomes. I have a strong desire to help homeschooling educators recognize how HTSE develops and how it impacts their overall achievement in the same way TSE facilitates professional teachers’ success. Nevertheless, I committed to bracketing these biases and implemented measures to honestly present the data with integrity. Consequently, I am
confident that this research accurately explains the development of HTSE so that all homeschooling families can benefit and demonstrate the validity of homeschooling as an acceptable alternative to public education.

**Researcher’s Role**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined the researcher as a human instrument in the study. Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2018) recognized that all researchers come to the process with inherent beliefs and assumptions. While Creswell and Poth recommended bracketing biases for the sake of objectivity, I assert that this is not fully possible. Inevitably, my experiences, my values, and my assumptions informed how I interpreted the data generated from this study; my identity cannot be removed from my thought process. Therefore, my role as a human instrument in this study was to rely upon my background as an integral part of data analysis and theory development while also treating the research honestly with reflexivity and fairly by letting participants speak for themselves. Consequently, my role in this study guided the research problem, purpose, and design; it connected me to the study participants; and it guided my theoretical reasoning while remaining true to the systematic methodology of the design.

As both a professionally trained educator and a homeschooling father, I approached this study with a keenly personal knowledge of the research problem. I was aware of scholarly perspectives and my own experiential encounters of how TSE impacts the ability to teach in the classroom and at home. Moreover, as an advocate of homeschooling rights and benefits, I appreciated the need for homeschooling parents to have research that supports the lawful practice of homeschooling in the face of opposition. Therefore, I devised the three research questions of this study, as well as the grounded theory design, to create a theory that defines the existence,
development, and significance of HTSE as a homeschool counterpart to professional TSE in the frequent absence of formal teacher training within the homeschooling community.

Because of my current practice as a homeschool educator in Wisconsin, I was uniquely situated within this study as a peer to the participants. I have personally witnessed the success and struggles of members within the homeschooling community. I know that there are parents who can effectively homeschool without any formalized training, and I know there are others who cannot. My desire to assist my homeschooling peers served as a driving force to theorize how HTSE develops so that other parents can attain desired educational outcomes through addressing deficiencies in their own HTSE development process.

My positive bias toward the homeschooling community intrinsically shaped why I desired to conduct this study, informed what I hoped to find, and guided how I developed my theory of HTSE development. In this regard, my approach to this grounded theory was more aligned to that of Charmaz (2014). Nevertheless, I believe I successfully compensated for the deleterious implications of my bias on the validity and reliability of this study by integrating measures that counterbalanced my subjectivity and kept faithful to the systematic design of Corbin and Strauss (2015). For example, by including participant feedback, triangulation, and reflexivity (Appendix J), I ensured that my interpretations were not skewed beyond the original intent of participants and the supporting evidence (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Procedures

In this section, I will describe the steps I took to conduct this systematic grounded theory study. Upon defense of this dissertation proposal, I was granted permission from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and began participant recruitment and data collection. This section includes a discussion of my proposed procedures to secure IRB approval
and solicit and screen potential participants.

Permissions

Because this study explored the nature, development, and perceived benefits of HTSE in the homeschooling community of Wisconsin, there was not a particular site that required permission for access or use. However, no aspect of solicitation or data collection occurred without the explicit permission of the Liberty University IRB. Corbin and Strauss (2015) made it clear that no data collection should occur before researchers have presented their proposals to a research committee and seek IRB approval for their research protocol. Therefore, once I successfully defended my research proposal to my dissertation committee, I applied for approval to conduct the study from the Liberty University IRB, and their approval letter is documented in Appendix A.

Recruitment Plan

Following the approval of the Liberty University IRB, participant recruitment occurred. Given that the purpose of this study was to develop a theory for HTSE development among homeschooling families, a theoretical sampling represented the most appropriate sample type for this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In theoretical sampling, researchers deliberately find people who are likely to provide data relevant to the information they want to learn more about (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Thus, as the data collection and analysis process began, I sought out potential participants who were likely to provide information that would answer emerging questions relevant to the developing theory in keeping with the criteria for inclusion in the study. This method of sampling allowed for research that successfully saturated the themes of the developing theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). While theoretically guided, the initial sampling process consisted of convenience and snowball sampling. A convenience sample saves time and effort,
but may impact the richness and credibility of the data when used exclusively (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Likewise, snowball sampling provides an easy and convenient link to additional data sources by allowing selected participants to direct the researcher to other potential participants who may be able to provide meaningful contributions. Combined, the use of these three strategies efficiently and accurately saturated research themes. Throughout the sampling process, every effort was made to select a participant group that represented the general homeschooling population and ensured thematic saturation from all aspects of the homeschooling community (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The aim of the sampling method was to recruit an initial sampling size of 10–20 participants from the sample pool of all homeschooling parents in the state of Wisconsin met the inclusion criteria of (a) 3 or more years as a homeschool educator, (b) no prior participation in a Wisconsin-approved, or similar, educator preparation program, (c) have submitted a Wisconsin form PI-1206 to lawfully homeschool in the state, and (d) comports home-based instruction in accordance with Wisconsin homeschooling laws. This number was flexible based upon the need to achieve saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Consequently, the final sample size of 10 participants was determined at the conclusion of the study, when thematic saturation had occurred.

The first participants were from a convenience sample of fellow homeschooling parents associated with regional HSGs, of which I was also a member. However, to eliminate bias, I only select participants with whom I did not have a personal relationship. From this point, snowball sampling led to recruitment of families from referred contacts, communication with other homeschool support organizations serving families throughout the state of Wisconsin, and homeschool social networking websites.
Once potential participants were identified, they were sent a recruitment letter (Appendix B) and a link to the screening survey (Appendix C). If people returned the surveys, indicating a desire to participate in the study, they were sent a letter of acceptance status (Appendix D). If accepted, they also received an informed consent form (Appendix E) and were assigned a pseudonym (Gall et al., 2007). Of note, the screening survey was not considered part of the data collection process for theory development. This survey served only to fill in important contextual information for the qualitative process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

**Data Collection Plan**

This study consisted of multiple data sources to ensure a rigorous and varied approach to data collection and theory development (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Because interviews serve as the most popular mode of data collection for grounded theory, this represented the chief source of data for this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, this study depended on data from research field notes, memos, surveys, document analysis, and focus groups. While the theoretical sampling process, constant comparison, and triangulation techniques of this study resulted in a concurrent and cyclical process of data collection, a general order of precedence existed for the data collection process: Upon the screening, selection, and receiving of signed consent forms, the first data collection occurred through interviews and the corresponding field annotations and memoing; this was followed by surveys, document analysis, and focus groups.

For this study, interviews and the corresponding field notes served as the first and primary means of data collection because they provided the information necessary to generate codes for theory development (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The surveys immediately followed this process by providing additional clarity to the HTSE perceptions and an evaluation of the impact
of these perceptions within the domain of academic achievement. In other words, where the interviews assessed the nature and development of HTSE, the surveys affirmed the interview findings and addressed the benefit and significance of HTSE. Also, the survey process led to the submission of documents and artifacts that were analyzed as an evidentiary source confirming HTSE effects on educational outcomes. Finally, the focus groups allowed for theory critique and refinement and development of the interview questions during the ongoing, simultaneous data collection process.

**Individual Interviews**

When participants who met the needs of the theoretical sample indicated their informed consent (Appendix E) and returned the screening survey (Appendix C), they were scheduled to sit for a 60- to 90-minute face-to-face or virtual interview (Appendix F). The use of a semi-structured interview format allowed participants to provide meaningful, rich data in response to the research-informed interview questions and allowed the flexibility of following the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). All interviews were recorded in either audio or video format—depending on the format of the interview—and transcribed. The digital recording files were stored in a password-protected file on a portable hard drive that was kept in a locked cabinet when not in use along with the transcripts, surveys, and analysis notes.

In qualitative data collection, interviews serve as the means through which rich, thick data are collected, and they play a central role in the grounded theory approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An interview is where social interaction leads to the construction of knowledge (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) stated that interviews help the researcher understand the world and its meaning from the perspectives of the participants. For this study, the semi-structured interview best enabled consistency over the concepts covered in
each interview while also providing flexibility to the participants and the need to follow conceptual issues as they arose (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Therefore, this study consisted of one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with the participants that initially asked the following questions:

**Individual Interview Questions (Appendix F)**

1. How would you describe your homeschool setting? (RQ1)
2. What resources or curriculum do you use in your homeschool setting? (RQ1)
3. What philosophy or principles guide your homeschool setting? (RQ2)
4. Describe a typical day/week in your homeschool setting. (RQ1)
5. What factors contributed to your decision to homeschool? (RQ2)
6. How would you describe your confidence in your knowledge and ability to achieve your desired educational outcomes as a homeschool teacher? (RQ1)
7. What prepared you to be a homeschool teacher? (RQ2)
8. What has been your experience, if any, trying to solve difficult homeschooling problems? (RQ1)
9. What has been your experience, if any, dealing with opposition to homeschooling? (RQ1)
10. How would you define your ability to stick to your plans and accomplish your goals? (RQ1)
11. How would you describe your emotional and physical response when facing homeschooling difficulties? (RQ1)
12. What personal experiences—both success and failures—prepared you for teaching prior to homeschooling? (RQ2)
13. What other educational experiences did you have prior to, or during, your time as a homeschool teacher? (RQ2)

14. What, if any, formal or informal teaching experiences did you have prior to homeschooling? (RQ2)

15. How did the experiences, or lack thereof, from the prior question influence what you do as a homeschool teacher? (RQ2)

16. What experiences, if any, did you have selecting, designing, or preparing lessons or curriculum prior to homeschooling? (RQ2)

17. What do you currently do to select, design, or prepare curriculum for your homeschool? (RQ2)

18. How confident are you in your ability, knowledge, and experiences to prepare you to face the present and future challenges of homeschooling and why? (RQ2)

19. What were your most successful teaching experiences during homeschooling, and how have these affected you? (RQ2)

20. What were your least successful teaching experiences during homeschooling, and how have these affected you? (RQ2)

21. How would you describe your experiences, if any, observing other teachers—traditional or homeschool? (RQ2)

22. Have these experiences, or lack thereof, influenced your homeschooling techniques, and how? (RQ2)

23. Who have been the most important people, mentors, or groups in your life who have helped mold your identity as a homeschool teacher, and how have they done so? (RQ2)
24. What positive or negative homeschool settings have you personally witnessed, and how have these experiences shaped your homeschooling teaching? (RQ2)

25. What sources of feedback do you have, if any, concerning your homeschooling abilities, and how have these sources influenced you, if at all? (RQ2)

26. How have your participated, if at all, in homeschooling support groups? (RQ2)

27. (If applicable) How have homeschool support groups impacted your homeschooling process, if at all? (RQ2)

28. What other sources of verbal encouragement, advice, or support do you have for homeschooling, if any, and how have these sources influenced you, if at all? (RQ2)

29. How would you describe the need, if there is one, for homeschooling teachers to have sources of positive feedback, support, or encouragement, and why? (RQ2)

30. What thoughts and feelings did you have while deciding to homeschool, and how did these affect your final decision to homeschool? (RQ2)

31. What thoughts and feelings did you have as you proceeded to homeschool, and how did these affect your decision to continue homeschooling? (RQ2)

32. What strategies, if any, did you or do you use to overcome any intrusive thoughts, anxious emotions, or physical symptoms that challenged your decision to start and continue homeschooling? (RQ2)

33. How would you describe your satisfaction with, and commitment to continue, homeschooling? (RQ1)

34. What else would you like me to know about your preparation and experience as a homeschool teacher? (RQ1, RQ2, or RQ3)

35. What else would you like to address? (RQ1, RQ2, or RQ3)
The first four questions were general, introductory questions intended to provide a contextual background for the participant and ease the person into the interview process and into talking about homeschooling. These informational questions served two introductory purposes: (a) they filled in important contextual information for the qualitative process, and (b) they provided an initial topic that was familiar to the participant, which helped the person relax (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, these introductory questions provided contextual support for the developmental factors of HTSE. Guterman and Neuman (2017) observed the correlation between parental education level and homeschool structure. If participants reported increased structure, it may have indicated increased educational experiences that, in the right format, could have led to mastery experiences and an increase in self-efficacy (Bakosh et al., 2016; Bandura, 1977a; Yeh et al., 2019). These questions were reviewed and approved by experts in the field and critically reviewed during the first interview, including soliciting on-the-spot feedback. Consequently, they provided data in response to RQ1 and RQ2.

The next three questions were designed to transition from opening questions into the thick and rich data intrinsic to qualitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). These broad questions allowed for the participants to freely express what motivated their desire and ability to homeschool their children. Question 6 provided the first formal inquiry into the perceived nature of HTSE, which supported RQ1. Question 7 provided an introduction into the background of HTSE development in support of RQ2. From this point, I followed the data or continued to subsequent questions based upon the initial theoretical framework to foster meaningful discussion.

The subsequent four questions were adapted from the General Self-Efficacy (GSE) scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). The GSE scale aims to measure emotion,
optimism, and work satisfaction as a correlation of positive self-efficacy. Research indicates the correlation between positive self-efficacy and teacher motivation (George et al., 2018; Mahler et al., 2018). Moreover, self-efficacy influences the ability of teachers to remain resilient and satisfied in their profession (Aloe et al., 2014; George et al., 2018; Perera & John, 2020). Consequently, these questions aimed to evaluate commitment, resiliency, and attitude as indicators of self-efficacy in response to RQ1. Scholz et al. (2002) validated the questions of the GSE scale as a Likert-style scale in a study of 20,000 people in 25 countries. However, because the questions were adapted to a qualitative, open-ended format, these, too, require additional validation through the critical analysis and feedback from the first participant.

The following 23 questions aimed to answer RQ2. Bandura (1977a) opined that self-efficacy flows from four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious social models, social persuasion, and physical and emotional states. Therefore, Questions 12–20 were developed to explore past mastery experiences as a potential source for HTSE in participants. It is likely that homeschooling parents have formed their own mastery experiences that have shaped their HTSE (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Pannone, 2017a; Tilhou, 2020). For example, Tilhou (2020) suggested HSGs as a potential base for both knowledge and pedagogical praxis. Therefore, these questions elicited participants’ exposure to contexts where they gained mastery experience.

Similarly, Questions 21–24 aimed to ascertain homeschooling parents’ experiences in the observation of vicarious social models. Even if nothing more than being a previous student, Ma and Cavanagh (2018) observed that everyone has some form of a social model in teaching. Likewise, many homeschoolers participate in groups that share teaching responsibilities according to ability, which may also influence the development of HTSE (Tilhou, 2020). Thus,
these questions tried to glean how participants have shaped their HTSE through the vicarious successes of social models.

In Questions 25–29, the intention was to ascertain the influence of social persuasion upon the development of HTSE. Social persuasion, especially in the form of respected and constructive feedback, changes how people self-appraise their abilities, which improves self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977a, 1997). HTSE may improve as parents receive encouraging feedback from mentors, peers, or even their children (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Tilhou, 2020). Therefore, these questions further answered RQ2 through exploring the role and importance of social persuasion in HTSE development.

Questions 30–32 also sought to answer RQ2 by providing information in the domain of regulating physical and emotional states. Bandura (1977a) indicated that the influence of anxiety on physical and emotional states negatively impacted self-efficacy. Thus, he opined that people needed to reappraise these states as positive factors of development. Research (Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; see also Tan, 2020) indicated there may be a correlation between the values and agentic forces that motivate homeschooling families and the regulation of physical and emotional states. Consequently, these questions sought to identify how homeschooling parents regulate their physical and emotional states as a developmental factor in HTSE.

The remaining questions, 33–35, served as summary questions that provided an answer to RQ1 and RQ2. For example, Question 33 assessed current manifestations of HTSE as predicted by Bandura (1977a), to include confidence and satisfaction, in response to RQ1. Question 34 sought to elicit a broad summary of factors contributing to HTSE development as asked in RQ2. The final question allowed for closure or redirection by the participant as part of the semi-structured interview process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).
All of the above questions were reviewed by experienced researchers and methodologists to ensure face and content validation. Moreover, following Liberty University IRB approval, these questions were scrutinized during the initial interview through researcher and participant feedback. Minor changes resulting from this process or from the semi-structured nature of the interview process did not substantially alter the substance of the research, which lends credibility to the interview process. These questions were fielded one-on-one with approved participants. Digital recording devices captured either the audio or video of the interview—depending on the setting of the interview. These records allowed for transcription of the data for analysis. Interviewees were sent a copy of their transcripts via email for their review of accuracy or to provide feedback.

**Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan**

In a systematic grounded theory, research and analysis are concomitant throughout the entire process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). After the first interview, the data analysis process began through the writing of memos and field notes. The process continued through each interview, building through a process of constant comparison of one to another and in comparison to other data sources. As information developed and the data started to coalesce, memos and notes led to open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Creswell and Poth (2018) described this process as moving in analytical circles through a data analysis spiral that consists of collection, managing and organization of data, reading and memoing, defining and categorizing codes into themes, developing and evaluating interpretations, and representing the data visually.

The overarching constant of data analysis in a grounded theory study manifests itself through the writing of memos and the constant comparison of data, concepts, and themes (Corbin
From the first to the last steps of grounded theory, researchers record their thoughts, their interpretations, and emerging ideas as memos and continually compare these notes to new information until saturation occurs and nothing is left to explore. Corbin and Strauss (2015) described memoing as a means of recording a researcher’s internal dialogue that occurs while interacting with the data through analyzing, comparing, questioning, conceptualizing, and relating concepts. Therefore, as I interacted with new and existing data during this study, I recorded all my thoughts and interactions through well developed and organized memos. To facilitate this process, each memo had a title, date, initial code or concept, and the interpretation, notes, or diagrams that were relevant to the analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

As a result of the initial evaluation and memoing process, initial concepts appeared within the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Identifying and labeling these concepts represented the first classifying step: open coding. First, data from the individual interviews were parsed into manageable subsections of information for examination of inherent themes. Next, the apparent concepts were labeled with one or more codes—a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns salient meaning to the passage (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2016). For this study, in vivo codes, which came from the participants’ own words, served as the initial coding method (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2016).

Following open coding, axial coding served to combine and connect similar concepts or themes from across multiple sources into organized categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Axial codes represent the formalization of the automatic connections that researchers make informally throughout the early stages of analysis (Corbin & Strauss,
Axial coding organizes the codes into broader categories or patterns (Saldaña, 2016). This step allowed for more generalized analysis of the data and their relationships that led to the next stage of coding.

The final coding phase came in the form of selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). At this level, thematic axial codes were connected into a coherent paradigm that was central to the developing theory. For this study, the selective code supported the conceptualization of HTSE through a model that was anticipated to mirror Bandura’s (1977a) self-efficacy theory. The selective code identified the central premise that encapsulated all other categories and accurately represented all participants (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2016).

**Surveys**

In addition to interviews, participants received emails with links to two online follow-up surveys to add supporting richness and depth to their interview responses and to assess the influence of HTSE upon their desired educational outcomes. The use of qualitative surveys aimed to harness the nuance and in-depth understanding of social issues offered through qualitative data sources (Braun et al., 2020). Qualitative surveys consist of open-ended questions that are answered in the respondents’ own words, which allow the surveys to produce the rich and complex data desired in qualitative research. Braun et al. (2020) opined a survey is able to provide a look at both rich, thick depth of information and a broader, wide-angle perspective. The latter is useful when the population of interest is large and diverse, as is the case within the homeschooling community.

**HTSE Survey Questions (Appendix G)**

The HTSE Survey utilized the following questions:
1. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to get through to your student(s) in times of personal difficulty? (RQ1)

2. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to help your student(s) think critically? (RQ1)

3. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to control disruptive behavior from your student(s)? (RQ1)

4. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to motivate your student(s) who may demonstrate low interest in school work? (RQ1)

5. How would you describe what you do, if anything, to make your behavioral expectations clear to your student(s)? (RQ1)

6. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to help your student(s) believe they can do well in school work? (RQ1)

7. How would you describe your experiences, if any, in answering difficult questions from your student(s)? (RQ1)

8. How would you describe your experiences, if any, in using routines in your homeschool environment? (RQ1)

9. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to help your student(s) value learning? (RQ1)

10. How would you describe your experiences, if any, in gauging your student(s)’s comprehension of what you have taught? (RQ1)

11. How would you describe your experiences, if any, in trying to craft good questions to foster your student(s)’s learning? (RQ1)
12. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to foster creativity in your student(s)? (RQ1)

13. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to ensure your child(ren) follow(s) your learning rules? (RQ1)

14. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to improve the understanding of your student(s) who is(are) struggling or failing? (RQ1)

15. How would you describe your experiences, if any, trying to calm your student(s) who may be disruptive while you are trying to teach, and what are some examples? (RQ1)

16. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to manage a group of students? (RQ1)

17. How would you describe your experiences, if any, in adjusting your lessons to properly fit the needs of your individual student(s)? (RQ1)

18. How would you describe you experiences, if any, providing alternative explanations or examples when your student(s) express(es) confusion on a topic or lesson? (RQ1)

19. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to respond to situations where your child(ren) may show defiance? (RQ1)

20. Describe what, if anything, you could do to assist other homeschooling parents help their children do well in homeschooling? (RQ1)

21. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to provide appropriate challenges for the capabilities of your student(s)? (RQ1)

These 21 questions were qualitative versions of the quantitative, Likert-style scale created by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) to measure TSE. The original questions sought to determine teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in the areas of instructional strategies, student
engagement, and classroom management. As teachers develop improved self-efficacy, it manifests itself in improved competence and quality (George et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2017; Perera & John, 2020). Therefore, the adapted questions attempted to gauge homeschool educators’ perceptions of adaptable strategies, engagement, and management skills as a measurement of HTSE, which answered RQ1.

**Perceived Success Survey (Appendix H)**

The Perceived Success Survey utilized the following questions developed to measure the educational goals and perceived outcomes of participants:

1. What goals do you have for your student(s) through homeschooling? (RQ3)
2. How has your teaching facilitated the accomplishment of these goals? (RQ1)
3. What methods have you used to measure achievement in your homeschool? (RQ3)
4. How would you characterize the academic success of your student(s)? (RQ3)
5. What artifacts/documents can you provide to demonstrate this success? (RQ3)
6. How do these artifacts/documents demonstrate academic success? (RQ3)

Several sources (Guterman & Neuman, 2017; see also Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Ray, 2021; Thomas, 2016a) indicated a potential positive influence of sufficient HTSE upon educational outcomes. Ray (2021) indicated that homeschoolers typically outperform their public-school counterparts. Moreover, Firmin et al. (2019) indicated that parents may perceive educational success in ways beyond just academic performance. Therefore, this survey aimed to measure how homeschooling parents defined their goals, their successes, and the role of HTSE in the process, which ultimately provided an answer to RQ3.

Like the interview questions, the questions for these surveys required face and content validation. Therefore, a qualitative methodologist reviewed the questions. Once approved for use
in data collection, I sent the surveys to participants for completion. Participants received copies of the surveys through emailed links to an online survey tool; however, paper copies were available if preferred. Participants completed the surveys prior to participation in focus group sessions. Digital forms of the survey were collected through secure servers and commercially available survey tools and stored on a password-protected external storage device, which was stored in a locked cabinet with other data materials when not in use. Participants demonstrated an understanding of the risks associated with digital communication and data collection prior to submitting any information.

**Survey Data Analysis Plan**

As stated above, in a systematic grounded theory study the data collection and analysis are concomitant. Moreover, the data are constantly compared to other sources, which informs the emergent research process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Therefore, the survey data analysis plan replicated the individual interviews analysis plan.

As the surveys generated data, this information was parsed into smaller sections for analysis. I engaged in memoing and comparison of field notes and annotations. Thematic concepts were coded using *in vivo* codes to symbolically represent salient passages (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2016). Following this process, axial coding identified broad themes and connections across the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2016). Next, these codes were combined with others in the process of selective coding to identify the central premise of the grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2016).

**Document Analysis**

The final question of the Perceived Success Survey asked participants to provide
documents in support of the academic success of their homeschool programs. Parents were able to take pictures or scans of their documents and submit them via attachment to the online survey or email. They could also decide to present the materials to me in-person. Therefore, the third source of data came from the review and analysis of this provided documentation. Document analysis represents a social research method that generates data and supports triangulation (Bowen, 2009). As stated in the letter sent to participants, these documents could have included test scores, report cards, standardized test results, or portfolio artifacts demonstrating student achievement of learning goals that could be submitted primarily in digital format. Because homeschooling families in Wisconsin are encouraged to maintain such documents to validate student achievement in lieu of a high school diploma, I did not expect participants to struggle to provide a document or artifact (WHPA, 2021a). However, had this become an issue, I was prepared to ask participants to provide a letter defining how they measured success in their own way. These documents and artifacts demonstrated what the homeschooling families have produced as a necessary demonstration of the level of success correlated to the perceived level of HTSE in answer to RQ3 (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

**Document Analysis Data Analysis Plan**

All documents were examined in relationship to the data provided in the Perceived Success Survey. This information allowed me to identify and evaluate the documents or artifacts as examples of achievement within the definition of success provided by the participants. Furthermore, the nature or type of documents and the information they represent were coded to identify the thematic properties of the data and triangulated with the codes used in the other sources of data. An attempt was made to evaluate and categorize the data for agenda and selection bias and to compare the information to standards of achievement found in existing
literature. For example, I analyzed each document or artifact using the following questions combined with *in vivo* coding based on the information provided by the participants in their surveys:

1. How does this document or artifact demonstrate perceived success?
2. How objective (grades, standardized assessments, etc.) or subjective (individual work, portfolios, etc.) is this document or artifact?
3. How does this document or artifact compare to other examples of perceived success within the home- and public-school communities?
4. How does this document or artifact relate to parent contribution as influenced by HTSE?

**Focus Groups**

All interview participants were invited to participate in focus groups, as the interaction among interviewees fostered more meaningful discussion on HTSE and provided the best information in support of the ongoing theory development (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Krueger & Casey, 2014). These groups occurred via remote participation through online conferencing software due to the ongoing risk posed by the ubiquitous threats of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The number of focus group sessions was determined by the total number of interviews required to achieve thematic saturation. After every five interviews, all interviewed participants were invited to review the to-date findings and provide feedback and further guidance during the focus group sessions. The cycle of five interviews and a focus group continued until saturation occurred. Consequently, because there were 10 interviews, there were only two focus groups sessions, but had there been more interviews, there would have been more focus groups with each group growing in the number of interviewed participants. All sessions were recorded using
the same protocols in place for interviews.

The use of focus groups served a dual purpose. First, these groups provided member checks of the developing themes and theory, in which I interacted with the participants to gain their approval that I was accurately reporting their perceptions instead of my biases (Koelsch, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Second, the focus groups provided an additional source of data in response to all three RQs for the sake of generating additional themes and guiding the ongoing interview process (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Morgan, 1997). During each focus group session, the participants were asked to evaluate the current themes and provide critique and additional information as they felt was necessary to further support the HTSE theory development. The nature of this systematic grounded theory required that the focus group protocol remain flexible and responsive to the needs of the study. However, the initial focus group protocol began with the following questions.

**Focus Group Questions (Appendix I)**

1. After completing the interviews, surveys, and reviewing the current synthesis presented today, how do you feel about the accuracy of the current model as compared to your experiences? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)
2. What, if anything, do you feel needs to change in the current model? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)
3. What, if anything, needs to be explored further through the interview process and the next focus group? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)
4. Based on your experience and your participation in this study thus far, what are your perceptions of the nature of HTSE as a construct within the homeschooling community? (RQ1)
5. Based on your experience and your participation in this study thus far, what are your perceptions of the development of HTSE as a construct within the homeschooling community? (RQ2)

6. Based on your experience and your participation in this study thus far, what are your perceptions of the benefits of HTSE as a construct within the homeschooling community? (RQ3)

7. What else, if anything, should we discuss today as relevant to this study?

The purpose of the first and second question was to provide an opportunity for member checking of the analysis and theory development completed prior to the session. These questions allowed for the provisional report to be taken back to the participants for scrutiny and revision (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The third question allowed participants to redirect the research for missing elements as part of the concomitant relationship between data collection and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The final three questions allowed for participants to collectively engage directly in discussion of the RQs in light of having thought of the HTSE construct through their interviews and survey responses, and they served as an additional source of potentially new data for the purpose of saturation.

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

Like the individual interview data analysis plan, the analysis of data from the focus groups was parsed into the workable sections. These sub-portions of data, along with field notes and memos, were reviewed and open coded based upon identifiable concepts within the data and assigned in vivo codes. These open codes were compared and combined with other data codes through the process of axial coding (Krueger & Casey, 2014). Finally, they contributed to the overall process of selective coding, in which the central, encapsulating premise was identified
Data Synthesis

Constant comparison represents a hallmark of the systematic grounded theory method’s process of data analysis and research (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Consequently, data synthesis and triangulation occurred throughout the entire project (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Synthesis occurs when open, axial, and selective codes are systematically compared across all data sources through triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To ensure proper triangulation and data synthesis, I developed and visualize a theoretical scheme that was outlined and ready for refinement and critique (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Diagrams were used as graphic organizers to help visualize the relationship and direction between categories (Charmaz, 2014). Furthermore, a conditional matrix was used to analyze the complex relationships between actions, interactions, and consequences (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). While not a definitive procedure, the matrix served as a conceptual guide to making comparison. From this point, the developed theory underwent additional member checking for affirmation or modification.

Trustworthiness

Stake (1995) reminded researchers to pause after their studies to ask, “Did we get it right?” (p. 107). Through the discourse of researcher, participant, and reader, answers to questions of validation and evaluation of quality appear (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Lincoln and Guba (1985) used the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to describe the qualitative equivalents of validity, reliability, and objectivity used in quantitative studies. In this section, I describe the measures I took to ensure the completion of a quality study that meets scholarly expectations of rigor, reliability, and objectivity.
Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research, as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), describes the extent to which the methods used ensure that the interpretations and theories of researchers accurately describe the issues under investigation. Corbin and Strauss (2015) defined credibility in a grounded theory study as ensuring that the theory represents at least one plausible interpretation of the data. The use of triangulation and member checking aimed to establish credibility for this study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Triangulation

Triangulation depends upon the review and synthesis of multiple sources to ensure accurate support for any interpretations and analyses of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study utilized multiple data collection methods, including individual interviews, surveys, document analysis, and focus groups, to support the nature, development, and significance of HTSE among homeschooling parents in Wisconsin. Moreover, the use of a constant comparison analytical approach allowed for real-time synthesis across all data sources.

Member Checking

According to Rossman and Rallis (2016), researchers are never fully able to represent the emic, or insider’s, perspective devoid of their own interpretations. Therefore, despite relating to and understanding my participants as a fellow homeschooling parent, I recognize that there may be some perceptions expressed by participants that I did not fully understand or correctly interpret. To avoid this pitfall and ensure credibility, I used member checking to provide participants the opportunity to review and critique my work. First, I clarified any ambiguous statements from members during interviews as a means of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Next, I provided my interviewees copies of their interview transcripts for voluntary
accuracy review. Additionally, I provided participants with a copy of my interpretations for their review and critique during focus groups.

**Transferability**

Transferability, or applicability, defines the ability of findings to be applied to other situations and populations (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability results from the use of “rich thick description” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.263) to provide detail when describing the setting, participants, themes, and findings. By providing vivid imagery and articulate writing, thick and rich description allows readers to make determinations about transferability of my study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To assist in this trustworthiness measure, I reviewed raw data repeatedly to add further descriptions as part of the memoing and writing process in multiple rounds. Moreover, I compared and contrasted my findings to existing literature on self-efficacy development. While this does not directly confirm the transferability of my study to other states and homeschooling contexts, it may provide an indication of how HTSE develops in relation to the initial theoretical framework.

**Dependability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that dependability defines the ability of a study’s findings to be consistent and repeatable. Therefore, I provided accurate and detailed descriptions of the procedures undertaken during this study. Moreover, I provided a research and reflexivity journal (Appendix J) to relay any important thoughts or decisions regarding the research process or procedures. Lastly, I invited respected colleagues with knowledge of the homeschooling community to conduct a peer review of this study. These individuals are published scholars in the field of home-based education, each with doctorates of their own. They provided
corroboration of the dependability of this study by reviewing my procedures and results to
determine my successful implementation of the method I proposed (see Appendix M).

**Confirmability**

Confirmability, as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), refers to the extent to which the
findings of a study are informed by the respondents and not the bias, motivation, or interests of
the researcher. To ensure this type of neutrality, I employed three well-established methods.
First, I maintained a detailed audit trail (Appendix K), in which I tracked the development of
understanding over time using dated entries that allow a tracking of how the themes changed
over time (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, I utilized triangulation as discussed above.
Lastly, I remained forthright in my disclosure of biases that result from my experiences and
values as I approached the data. This information, along with any other study-related thoughts
and decisions, was recorded in my research and reflexivity journal (Appendix J).

**Ethical Considerations**

Conducting an ethical study requires more than simply securing permissions from the
IRB or participants; it also requires considering and addressing all anticipated and emergent
ethical issues (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this study, ethical considerations included participant
consent, confidentiality, dignity and respect, and data storage. Consent was given by all
participants for their participation (Appendix E). To ensure confidentiality, I employed the use of
pseudonyms when describing data from participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, I relied
on my training as a pastoral counselor and military chaplain to ensure dignity and respect while
interacting with homeschooling families whose ideologies or methodologies differed from my
own. Furthermore, to ensure data privacy and security, I implemented password-protected hard
drives that were stored in locked cabinets along with all other study data. Also, for surveys that
were collected or transmitted through electronic format, I ensured the use of properly encrypted websites and communication platforms while also transparently informing participants of the risk of online communication. All collected data from this study will be stored securely for a period of 5 years after final publication, at which point paper files will be shredded and burned and the digital storage device erased and overwritten so as to preclude any data restoration attempts.

While no other issues arose during the study, any issues arising after the study will be addressed with integrity and under the direction of Liberty University faculty or the IRB.

**Summary**

Through this systematic grounded theory study, I developed a theory concerning the nature, development, and significance of HTSE in homeschooling parents in Wisconsin utilizing the methods and information discussed in this chapter. This included research aligned to a systematic grounded theory design, which was an appropriate approach given the unique nature of the homeschooling community. Once again, no data were collected prior to obtaining approval from the Liberty University IRB. Once approved, I proceeded according to the information presented in this chapter, in which I described the use of individual interviews, surveys, document analysis, and focus groups as data collection methods. All data were analyzed, as discussed, using open, axial, and selective coding and synthesized in accordance with the constant comparative technique of a grounded theory study. Through the methods described in this chapter, I am confident that I conducted a trustworthy and ethical study.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

In this chapter I provide the results of my data analysis which aimed to explain the nature, development, and perceived benefits of homeschool teacher self-efficacy (HTSE) among homeschooling parents in Wisconsin. This chapter begins with a rich, detailed description of the study’s participants. Next, I present the data and discuss the development of a data-grounded model using themes and subthemes identified during the analysis process. The central theme identified during the study was HTSE as a lifecycle model. The four subthemes correspond to four individual stages of HTSE development, operation, and outcome as expressed by (a) initial stage, (b) transition stage, (c) stabilization and influence stage, and (d) outcome stage. This chapter also includes a response to the research questions investigated during the study.

Participants

After receiving recruitment information according to the sampling method described earlier, 25 parents expressed interest in the study. After requesting more information, 13 people chose not to submit the screening survey due to a self-reported failure to meet criteria for inclusion or because they were not able or willing to commit to the study requirements. Two potential participants who chose to submit screening surveys were excluded from the study; one was excluded for having prior professional teacher training, and the other failed to submit a consent form and discontinued all communication. The remaining 10 Wisconsin homeschooling parents met the inclusion criteria, and I selected them for participation (see Table 1).
Table 1

Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Self-Defined Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Self-Reported Schooling</th>
<th>Years Homeschooled</th>
<th>Number of Children Homeschooled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barb</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>BA Psychology</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>DScPAS, MPAS, PA-C</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Scandinavian, German, English, English, N. American</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>BS Biology</td>
<td>7+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Cosmetology Trade School</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2 Years College</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> This number shows the reported number of currently homeschooled children and may not include those graduated or previously homeschooled.

Nine women and one man agreed to participate in the study and self-identified as “White” (3), “Caucasian” (5), “Columbus [sic]” (1), or “Scandinavian, German, English, N. American” (1). Six participants lived in rural towns of less than 5,000 people; three participants lived in towns of 5,000 to 50,000 people; and one lived in a city with more than 50,000 people.
Socioeconomically, two participants reported annual household incomes between $20,000–$44,999; five reported annual household incomes between $45,000–$139,999; one reported an annual household income between $150,000–$199,999; and, two reported annual household incomes exceeding $200,000.

The mixture of geographic regions and socioeconomic status represents a fair sample of Wisconsin. However, by allowing people to self-describe their race or ethnicity, it was difficult to effectively determine this aspect of demographic makeup. For example, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2022), the concept of race is separate from the concept of Hispanic origin. Consequently, Whites in Wisconsin represent 85.43% of the population (World Population Review, 2022). Thus, in a study consisting of 10 people, nine people should be White and one should be of some other race or a mix of two or more races. Given that one participant listed more than one race or ethnicity, this sample could be representative of Wisconsin. However, it is impossible to know how this sample represents the homeschooling community, specifically, because the state does not record information on race or ethnicity among homeschooling families. It is incumbent upon the reader to determine if the description below of the participants and the stories that they shared truly represents the homeschooling community in Wisconsin.

**Amanda**

Amanda is in her 30s, married, and homeschools her blended family of four children. She has an Associate of Arts degree in business management, and she has homeschooled for the past 4 years; her children are currently in Grades 1, 4, 6, and 10. Amanda decided to homeschool after her youngest son experienced bullying in their public-school system. She felt that the school district leadership refused to address the issue and she said that she “couldn’t take it anymore.” At the same time, Amanda had a daughter in the district’s 4-year-old kindergarten
program. During a parent–teacher conference, the instructor informed her that there was nothing else they could teach her child. Her daughter had already learned the alphabet, she knew how to spell her name, and she wanted to learn how to read, but the district refused to advance her to another grade or higher skill level.

Given the needs of her children, Amanda “knew it was a big decision.” Thus, she spent 2 weeks researching homeschooling, which helped her realize that “I knew that, for my kids, I would be able to help them. When they had questions we’d research it together, look through information together, and I’d be able to help them.” Therefore, Amanda ultimately decided to homeschool to provide a more protective environment for her son and a more advanced curriculum for her daughter.

Amanda homeschools from a secular philosophical framework that attempts to teach public-school content more effectively. She relies on her love of learning and her past experiences in schools to help her facilitate homeschooling. After 4 years of homeschooling, Amanda has grown from initial fear and uncertainty to confidence, satisfaction, and pride. Her success as a homeschool teacher is seen in her children’s academic advancement and recognized by family and professionals. For example, her stepson’s mother was originally opposed to Amanda’s decision to homeschool her children because she was not a certified teacher. The two of them had arguments that “got pretty bad sometimes.” However, the other parent supported Amanda’s decision after seeing the evidence of her success and that her “kids know more than most of the kids in public school at their age.” Amanda recounts the change of opinion:

I explained to her that I did research—that I did 2 weeks of research. . . . Her son, my stepson, was having issues in school as well with bullying and stuff like that, and it was to the point where he was calling her every single day from school . . . like he was sick or
something else was wrong. And we came to a compromise that we would homeschool him for 6 months so she could see what it was like, to see how he did, how his behavior was, and stuff like that. If it didn’t change, or things didn’t work out, we could always put them back into the public-school. And, she realized that he does good with it, that he’s a lot—his mental health is—better with it.

The success of Amanda’s homeschooling efforts was also noticed by her family doctor, who complimented her on how much her children had learned and grown in contrast to when they were in the public-school system. Moreover, other homeschooling families have started to solicit advice from Amanda. Consequently, Amanda worked with another homeschooling mom to start a secular HSG in her area, and she generated online resources for new homeschooling parents. Her successful experience motivated Amanda to declare, “Yeah, this is going to work. I like this. I’m proud. I’m happy of where we’re going, and I’m not going to send my kids back to public school yet.”

**Barb**

Barb is a veteran homeschooler, having taught four children for over 20 years of homeschooling. She is a college graduate in the field of finance and adeptly leveraged the resources of her PhD husband, tutors from the university in their city, and the social model of various experts to provide a strong educational experience. For example, she worked with a local surgeon to demonstrate a dissection in her children’s biology course. Subsequently, one child is in medical school to become a doctor, one is training to become a physical therapist, and all of her children feel that they learned more from homeschooling than they did in college.

For Barb, who is in her 50s, the path to homeschooling began at a playground over 20 years ago. She and her husband had concerns about their oldest child’s future schooling after
noticing a behavioral change and attitude shift among the neighborhood children who had started attending public school. What was once a playful community in which all the children played together suddenly became a divisive setting in which school-aged children excluded non-school-aged children from play and started manifesting disrespectful attitudes toward adults. While exploring alternative options for their pre-school-aged child, Barb had a chance encounter with a homeschooling family at a park. She described it as follows:

I was talking to this mom, and this one little 9-year-old boy—and I’m wondering why these older kids are at the playground—he comes up to me and he says, “Do you mind if we have your son join us in baseball?” I could almost cry. I said, “He’s only 5 and he doesn’t know how to play baseball.” And, he said, “That’s okay. We’ll teach him.” So, I said, “Well, sure.” My oldest son was really excited and so he walks with this little boy and they go over and they start showing him how to hold onto the bat, ball, and all this. I was [shocked]. I said to [the parent], “Where do your kids go to school?” . . . She said, “We homeschool.”

Following this chance encounter, Barb attended an informational meeting and decided, along with her husband, that they would try to homeschool as the best way to impart their morals and values. Barb added that the decision was based mainly on ensuring better behavioral outcomes. She stated that the behavior of the public-school children “was so antithetical to the foundation we were trying to provide in the family.”

Despite much success, Barb’s homeschooling journey was not always easy. There came a time when tensions with one of her children led to the decision to enroll that child into the traditional school system. She referred to these years as her “Period of Darkness.” This also led to a situation in which Barb perceived the teachers were attacking her son because of his
homeschooling past. Nevertheless, when she reflected on her satisfaction and commitment to homeschooling, she stated, “Could not be any higher.”

Caroline

With a master’s degree in the areas of rhetoric, teaching writing, and English Romantics, Caroline entered this study with formal teaching experience—having briefly co-taught in a high school and worked as a resident substitute teacher for a charter school. However, Caroline’s degree offered no formal teacher preparation training and she was never certified as a teacher, which allowed her to be included in this study. It was her experience witnessing the inner-working of a school, and her own negative experiences as a student, that influenced her desire to homeschool. She realized:

Schooling on an institutional level is a really weak model. . . . I’m not sure it’s possible to do it well, and that is what made me not want to with my own kids. I just think that there’s got to be a better way.

While teaching in an institutional school confirmed her decision, Caroline’s interest in homeschooling was fueled by the example of other homeschoolers. Her sister homeschooled her children, and that looked good to Caroline. She also encountered several other homeschoolers. In discussing their influence, Caroline conveyed:

Well, I would say the homeschoolers, themselves, have really been the attention getters for me. Like I said, I knew some students when I was in college who homeschooled and who were extremely skilled people. By the time they got to college, they were very good thinkers; they had really developed thinking skills. They’d ask good questions, and they all could seem to do that. They seemed to be able to do that when they were freshman, and . . . it really got my attention.
Given Caroline’s dissatisfaction with the institutional school model, she has adopted a non-conforming model of instruction that includes Mater Amabilis’s Charlotte Mason approach to curriculum and plenty of hands-on life experience from around their little homestead farm. She has homeschooled for 3 years and currently teaches three of her children aged 4, 5, and 7 years old. Despite living in a rural area of Wisconsin, she has surrounded herself with homeschooling-supportive families in her church. This, along with spending time with her family, has convinced Caroline of her love for homeschooling. As she said, “Honestly, like I said before, we had these ideological reasons for doing it, and now it’s like, ‘Oh, we will never not do this, because this is so great.’ Like, we just enjoy it so much.”

Diane

With a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, Diane, who is in her 40s, is another veteran homeschooler. She has homeschooled for 18 years; she currently teaches five of her seven children in Grades 2, 8, 9, 11, and 12. She implemented a “one-room schoolhouse” approach to education because, as Diane stated, “I had a lot of little kids at one time. . . . I needed to be able to do things as much as I could altogether.” Consequently, she has assembled an eclectic mix of curricula that allows a balance of independent and multi-level group work.

Diane’s decision to homeschool was partly ideological and partly practical. Diane and her husband initially wanted a Christian education from a private school, but the Christian school in their area was “only different by curriculum.” There were still “social issues” and “outside influences” that their son was not ready to face. Additionally, the financial burden of private school was not tenable. When combined with Diane’s desire to spend more time with her children as a stay-at-home mom, the motivation to homeschool became clear as a “win-win.”
One of the challenges Diane faced while homeschooling manifested itself as burnout. In talking about the struggles facing homeschooling parents in general and the need for positive feedback, support, or encouragement, Diane reflected:

[People] gotta have it because you just get beat down. I mean, our kids can be mean. That’s just the way it is; we’re all sinful, selfish beings, and just because they’re cute and smell good after a bath when they’re 6 months old, they get older and bigger and smellier and they talk back. They’re just . . . they can be mean. So we need encouragement to keep going.

To avoid burnout, Diane learned the importance of balancing instructional schedules, extracurricular activities, and time off. She also had to come to terms with needing breaks, although she didn’t get as many as she felt she needed. Nevertheless, growing in flexibility helped Diane avoid repeated cases of what she called “mom fail.” This also helped reshape her disposition after growing up in a home in which she felt she “never could be good enough for my family.”

Due to the ups and downs of dealing with her own feelings of potential failure and the tension that came from dealing with children with strong personalities and possible learning disabilities, Diane expressed less confidence than her peers. Consequently, she was forced to depend heavily on the strength of the ideological convictions of her faith. She defined her self-referent beliefs in her ability, knowledge, and experience to prepare her to face the present and future challenges of homeschooling by stating, “The confidence is there, but it’s with trepidation, knowing that it’s only as far as the Lord will allow me to go.”

After taking years to learn some of these valuable lessons, Dianne described her satisfaction with homeschooling by declaring, “Overall, I would say very satisfied.” However,
she added the caveat that, while she could not say she was very satisfied every day because of the difficulty of homeschooling, she was “between a three and a five—five being very satisfied and three being me taking the hard with the good.” She lamented not having more time to get away to “go and sleep, if you need to. Sleep is very important, and that’s another thing that is hard when the kids are little and you’re trying to do everything.”

**Eric**

As a co-teacher with his wife, Eric represented the minority population of homeschooling fathers. Eric is a highly educated man in his 40s who earned a Doctor of Science in Physician Assistant Studies and works as a healthcare provider in the field of hospital medicine. Together with his wife, they have centered their lives around their family and homeschooling. They built their house with a room specifically designed for their homeschooling needs at the center. Eric also has a work schedule that allows him to maximize the amount of time he spends with his family. Moreover, the family elected to homeschool so that they could accompany Eric during times he travels in support of a Christian medical mission program. In fact, every aspect of their decision to homeschool seems aimed at maximizing family togetherness.

Eric’s drive to prioritize family togetherness originated in his childhood. Eric was adopted by Christian parents at 4 days old. When Eric and his wife brought home their first child, Eric stated, “Hey, I really, really want to be involved in our children’s lives, whether or not homeschooling.” Furthermore, Eric’s Christian faith and the desire to be a spiritual leader in his home—as someone who also serves as an ordained minister—influenced his desire to control his children’s learning environment and their development.

Because Eric operates in a highly regulated, high intensity medical profession, he approaches homeschooling with the same structure and discipline as his physician duties. His
homeschool environment is very orderly and routine. He and his wife also utilize a comprehensive all-in-one teaching program that allows either parent to interchangeably serve as facilitator for their two children, who are 8 and 10 years old. While this creates an at-home environment similar to that of a traditional school, the oversight of the curriculum and the ability to augment it with activities and life skills has increased Eric’s satisfaction with homeschooling over the past 5 years. And, while he is not opposed to reconsidering institutional schooling, he stated, “I think homeschooling is a gift. . . . I don’t know where my family would be if we were not able to homeschool.”

Faith

Faith is a woman in her 40s with a Bachelor of Arts degree. She homeschooled her two children over 15 years. Faith also had prior formal teaching experience. She hails from three generations of teachers, and she taught for 2 years in the public-school system and served as a long-term substitute teacher in a private school for less than a year. However, she only had a substitute teacher’s license without any prior professional teacher preparation courses, which allowed her to qualify for this study. It was this experience in the classroom that caused Faith to appreciate homeschooling. She stated:

I think, if anything, it showed me how much I wanted to customize the education for my child—to really let each child learn at his own pace and not have to pressure them to keep up with a group or to stay behind because the group still had to catch up.

Ultimately, Faith’s decision to homeschool her children was three-fold. Pragmatically, she needed an educational option that facilitated spending time together as a family by flexibly working around the inconsistent work schedule of her husband who was in law enforcement. Environmentally, she needed a system that could accommodate her child’s suspected special
needs. Ideologically, she wanted a curriculum that presented all subjects through the lens of God’s involvement in all things. However, her faith was the most important aspect in her decision. She summarized her rationale by stating:

We got to spend a whole lot more time together as a family. I was recently given a cancer diagnosis, and one thing that I thought, almost immediately, when I was told that I had cancer was, “I have been able to spend more time with my children in my 40-some years of life than most women get in a normal 80-year life just for the very fact that we were always together, for the most part, learning and loving life together.” But, probably the most important reason we decided to homeschool was because I felt it was a calling of God on my life; I felt very clear about this.

Ironically, Faith was originally anti-homeschooling. She was the product of a positive public-school experience and a graduate of a Christian college. She confessed, “I was not educated on homeschooling. And, as I started learning about education . . . I learned . . . how much I had not been taught in public school.” By working for a Christian tour company she discovered how much information she had missed when it came to God’s hand in history. Therefore, she conducted extensive research into educational philosophy, adopted the Hebraic, classical methods of the Principal Approach developed by Verna Hall and Rosalie Slater, and eventually started homeschooling.

Faith is a self-proclaimed perfectionist who hyper-analyzes her performance. Consequently, she is hard on herself when it comes to building her own confidence in teaching. To this day, she still wonders of her children, “Did I ruin them?” Nevertheless, she stated, “I am glad I did it. . . . As often happens, the things that we find difficult become the things that we
Gwen

As a scientist with a bachelor’s degree in biology, Gwen has approached her 7 years of homeschooling three of her children—aged 7, 8, and 11 years old—with careful attention to organization and detail. Gwen, who is in her 30s, wanted to homeschool to have the academic freedom to discuss God in science and all the subjects. She recalled her inspiration during her interview:

As a scientist, I am very black and white, and I remember the moments when I was learning about things like how muscles worked and things like that, and it’s just, like, awe inspiring to me. So, I like to bring out the fact that God created these things and how creative and amazing He is. This is inspiring and beautiful because of who created it, not because it miraculously just happened. It’s because of the Creator Himself, which is why the creation has value. So, I like to especially teach science through that lens.

Gwen’s experience with homeschooling started when she was a student. Her mother had homeschooled her for 2 months but was unsuccessful in providing appropriately challenging instruction, which resulted in Gwen asking to return to an institutional school. Gwen recounted this transition by stating, “I think I was in the first grade . . . and I remember telling my mom I had to go back to school because there was no way that this was going to work out well.”

Despite Gwen’s lackluster personal experience with homeschooling, she encountered a friend who homeschooled and who talked about it frequently. Although Gwen felt she would never homeschool because she determined she was “not patient enough,” she found herself interested; she attended a homeschooling informational meeting at her church hosted by a former
public-school teacher. After that meeting, Gwen’s disposition changed: “I never desired to homeschool. . . . I had an automatic negative connotation toward it. Seeing other people do it well made me think it was possible.”

One problem Gwen has faced while homeschooling comes from her inherent personality traits. First, as a scientifically-minded individual, Gwen, like Faith, described herself as extremely analytical and as a perfectionist. Second, she is an introverted person who prefers to “be trapped in a room reading books all day long, thinking about great thoughts and contemplating them.” Consequently, Gwen has struggled to balance the demands of homeschooling with her personal needs for well-being, which has impaired her enjoyment of the experience. When asked to describe her satisfaction with and commitment to homeschooling, she stated:

My satisfaction is low; my commitment is high. . . . Every single year I want to give up, especially when it gets cold outside and I feel trapped in the house more. I am not very satisfied because it is not my jam. But, again, it’s what we’re deciding to do and what we’re very committed to, and the kids love it.

Gwen further commented, “Whenever somebody asks if I like it, I’m like, ‘Nope. Don’t like homeschooling at all.’ But the reason for that is that my personality is extremely introverted; it’s like an ascetic personality.”

Heidi

Heidi is a homeschooling parent in her 40s who graduated from cosmetology trade school and represents a second-generation homeschooler. Heidi wanted to raise her children according to her faith, but sending them to a Christian school was cost prohibitive. She affirmed, “We
couldn’t afford Christian school, and since I was homeschooled myself, I thought, ‘I could do this a lot cheaper.’ And I didn’t mind being with my children, honestly.”

In addition to Heidi’s previous homeschooling experience, she had an extensive background of working with younger children. She recalled her experiences by commenting, “I’ve always taught at church in the Sunday school. That’s probably my biggest experience, and I still do that today.” She also added:

I’m the oldest of six kids, so having that opportunity to be home and babysit—my mom could leave for a weekend and trust me to run the house and take care of my siblings—it was a confidence booster, as well.

Heidi also teaches kindergarten, first, and second grade Awana classes on Wednesday nights. Given these experiences, Heidi has a great deal of confidence in her teaching abilities.

Heidi has homeschooled for over 18 years. She currently teaches two of her children, aged 12 and 15 years. One of her strengths as a homeschooling parent is her ability to leverage resources to her advantage. She skillfully found job fairs in her community, sporting programs, and courses for college credit—allowing some of her children to graduate college early because of their homeschooling curriculum. When resources couldn’t be found, she created them. She recalled one such experience:

I have two more boys in the middle, and I said, “Let’s start our own soccer program.”

And I found another homeschool mom who had like our boys who were playing club soccer at the time—they were very competitive. We wanted them to keep soccer all year round. So, we started our own homeschool soccer team.

Looking back on her experiences, and her children currently homeschooling, Heidi feels successful. She commented:
I would say, for me, it’s the end result. Right? Like, my kids all were able to go to college and succeed. So, for me, being able to give them the resources they need to be what they want to be, that’s considered a successful experience.

She also stated, “I believe in it just because there’s so many choices for homeschooling.”

Irene

Irene is another second-generation homeschooling parent who has taught two of her four children for the past 3 years. Because both she and her husband come from homeschooling families, they are surrounded by supportive sources of encouragement and feedback. Irene and her husband chose to homeschool because they wanted to create a strong Christ-centered foundation for their children and to foster closeness as a family. Regarding the family bond, Irene stated:

I really enjoyed being homeschooled, myself, and I liked that I had such a strong bond and connection with my siblings. I remember my mom telling me that she felt like she hardly knew her sisters because she never saw them, and I thought that was kind of sad. I wanted my kids to be able to have that connection.

Beyond ideological and familial reasons for homeschooling, Irene also had pragmatic, pedagogical concerns about the traditional school model. Prior to homeschooling, Irene’s parents sent her to the public school through the fourth grade. Unfortunately, she fell behind in mathematics. She recalled her experience by stating:

I didn’t know how to tell time. It was really bad. I kind of got lost in the crowd, and I don’t think my parents really realized that. I don’t think the teachers really realized that I didn’t know a lot of stuff.
Furthermore, when Irene graduated from technical college with an associate degree in American sign language interpretation, she had additional concerns. Her work as an interpreter in the public schools allowed her to see several different teaching styles. Reflecting on these experiences, Irene expressed, “I just see the benefit of one-on-one . . . and knowing that my kids aren’t going to just get lost in a crowd of 30 kids.”

As a parent with young children, Irene works hard to balance her time commitments between homeschooling, managing her home, and outside commitments. While she makes time for some HSG participation, including a group she founded, she restricts some activities in order to avoid stress. When discussing participating in a mothers-only activity, she reported, “I thought about doing that, but I just think I need that extra evening to just get more energy other ways, not having another thing on my to-do list.” Instead, she turns to several online sources for support: podcasts, vlogs, and websites.

Now in their fourth year of homeschooling, Irene and her husband recognize that they have grown in their confidence and satisfaction. While she stated, “I’m highly satisfied with it,” it was not always that way. Initially, Irene struggled while teaching her children to read. She would ask, “What am I doing wrong? Maybe we should send her to school. Maybe they’ll be able to do it better than me.” But once her child started to grasp the concepts and excel, Irene’s confidence returned. In her interview, she elaborated:

It was mostly the first 2 years that we were wondering, “Okay, should we keep doing this?” At that point, it was probably several times a year that we were wondering, “Was this the right way?” Now, we’re both very confident that this is the way we want to go with teaching our kids, especially as the world has changed.
Jean

Jean, a woman in her 40s, has homeschooled for 9 years; she currently homeschools her four children in Grades kindergarten, 3, 6, and 8. Ironically, Jean was originally opposed to homeschooling. She stated, “I grew up in the public schools, so I thought homeschoolers were sheltered and were socially awkward.” However, she then met her future husband, who was a homeschooler. She explained:

In meeting my husband, he’s not awkward. I met a lot of his friends and a lot of people that homeschooled through meeting him . . . and I realized that maybe that was not really accurate. It’s a [false] assumption that a lot of people have.

When Jean saw that other people successfully homeschooled, she realized that she could do it, too. Jean had also had previous experience with teaching. She had attended college for a year-and-a-half and then joined Youth with a Mission (YWAM). With YWAM, Jean helped teach English language classes. She also had taught Sunday school at her church. These experiences informed Jean’s understanding of instruction. She explained, “I learned there are different ways that people learn.” This knowledge proved invaluable when she was teaching her son with autism how to read.

Teaching a child with special needs presented a challenge to Jean. Her son would have bouts of rage and impulsivity that would inadvertently hurt himself or others. Jean revealed, “I did feel a little bit inadequate at times. Do I know the right things to do? A little bit out of control.” However, Jean remain committed: “I still felt like I knew what was best for my kids—how to teach them, how to make them calm down. I know best how to react to the situation because I am always with him.” Thus, when her son learned to read, she expressed, “Well, this is great. He loves reading and it’s okay. . . . Yeah. I accomplished this big goal.”
Now, Jean feels better about teaching her children. She stated, “I feel good. My oldest is almost 14, and I feel like we can know how to talk things out. We know how to figure out what they mean.” Jean admits that it took time to grow her confidence. This was compounded by a major family tragedy that claimed the life of Jean’s mother and interrupted their homeschooling routine for a year. Nevertheless, when asked about her satisfaction with and commitment to continue homeschooling, Jean responded, “100%. This is happening, for sure.”

**Results**

The purpose of this systematic grounded theory study was to define and explain the development of HTSE and its significance for homeschooling parents in Wisconsin. Therefore, I conducted 10 semi-structured interviews with homeschooling parents, collected 20 online surveys, hosted two focus groups, and reviewed 28 submitted documents or artifacts that together represent the shared experience of the 10 participants. After comparatively analyzing the data according to the methods of Corbin and Strauss (2015) and Saldaña (2016), I created a data-grounded theory that proposes a four-staged lifecycle model to explain the development, operational nature, and perceived benefits of HTSE among homeschooling parents in Wisconsin that begins with an agentic trigger (see Figure 1).

The HTSE lifecycle model visualizes the selective code of the theory that HTSE develops, operates, and benefits homeschooling teachers through a life-long cycle consisting of four stages: (a) the initial stage, (b) the transition stage, (c) the stabilization and influence stage, and (d) the outcome stage. These stages represent the four primary axial themes of the data analysis, which were developed through a constant comparative process of analysis, memoing, and coding of collected data. As I collected data, I annotated 1,068 memos or field notes. These were subsequently open coded using 674 *in vivo* codes. Through a process of comparing data
Figure 1

Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy Lifecycle Model
against itself, these codes organized into the four main axial codes, which included 12 first-level subthemes, 41 second-level subthemes, 56 third-level subthemes, and eight fourth-level subthemes (see Appendix L).

**Initial Stage**

The initial stage represents the period in which events or experiences contribute to form an agentic trigger and impulse through which a parent contemplates homeschooling and acts to do so. For example, Amanda recalled:

My youngest son was being bullied in the school district that we live in, and the school district wasn’t doing anything to help with the bullying, which I couldn’t take it anymore, and I had decided I was going to homeschool him.

During this time, HTSE begins to develop as a result of a building sense of human agency that leads to affirming previous mastery experiences and the energizing of physical and emotional states. Caroline reported, “We were just really excited to do it, honestly, when my oldest started to be of age that I started thinking about it. . . . I started reading about educational philosophies and curriculum, things like that, and what it meant to homeschool.”

The initial stage, as a formative period, is marked by the contributions of early social influences, content knowledge mastery, experiences, personal appraisals, pre-service experiences, and transferred self-efficacy from domains outside the realm of homeschooling. Through these contributions, the potential homeschooling parent’s HTSE begins to develop so as to grant the confidence necessary to engage in homeschooling and enter the next stage. For example, after reflecting on the social influence of other homeschoolers, Jean opined, “I should say that in meeting a lot of homeschoolers before I started homeschooling, I realized that I could do it.”


**Agency**

At the core of the initial stage, agency exists as the motivational drive that transforms parents from traditional schooling adherents to homeschoolers. Agency defines the behavior of homeschooling parents to exercise their influence and exert control over their own circumstances and those of their children through intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. Amanda described the significance of intentional action by stating, “Everybody can’t handle it, because it is kind of a lot on the parents. And sometimes you have to be proactive. . . . And I think that’s what helped me in making this decision.”

In this study, agency manifested itself in three ways. Every parent reported an event or experience that served as an agentic trigger that caused them to consider homeschooling as an alternative school choice. Furthermore, every parent reported a subsequent tipping point that pushed them from contemplation to active homeschooling; this is the agentic impulse. Following the agentic trigger and impulse, parents exhibited an agentic response, through which they operated as they homeschooled their children.

**Agentic Trigger.** Every participant in this study identified a positive or negative event, experience, or series of influential moments—that either happened to them or that they witnessed—that initiated their consideration of homeschooling. Prior to the agentic trigger, parents lacked the agentic motivation to homeschool: They were previously content in the traditional school system, had never considered homeschooling, or they may have believed anti-homeschooling prejudices. Faith, for example, recalled, “I was pretty much anti-homeschool, to tell you the truth.” Thus, the agentic trigger is necessary to cause dissatisfaction with a parent’s current educational choice. This dissatisfaction can come from multiple sources and can
represent an emotional desire, a philosophical position, an environmental factor, or other factor that stands at odds with traditional schooling (see Table 2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betterment</td>
<td>A parent’s innate desire to provide a learning environment for the betterment of a child in order to give them the best experience they can have—one that is better than their own experience and better than that provided by traditional schools. Barb defining her goals: “To be better than their parents! . . . To be the best version of themselves that they could be.”</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Convictions</td>
<td>A parent’s realizations that their moral, religious, ethical, philosophical, or pedagogical beliefs are not aligned with those of the institutional school setting. Caroline: “I think that it’s difficult for public schools to make an ideology that pleases everyone, and you can’t teach free of ideology. I just, I don’t believe that that is possible. We have our ideology; we’re pretty serious about our religious faith and about our view of the world. I guess we’re pretty serious about giving our kids an understanding of the world that we think is true, and functional, and will be helpful to them. And I just think it’s unfair to ask that of the public schools. . . . So, I think we are in a stronger position to do that by homeschooling.”</td>
<td>9 (90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familial Motivations</td>
<td>A unique ideological conviction that forms an innate desire to spend more time with family and build relational closeness through the special bond afforded to homeschooling families. Irene defining her goals: “To know their siblings, and grow up with their siblings, and be able to have that connection—because that’s a connection they’re going to have for life. They wouldn’t necessarily get that in public school or Christian school, because they’re not necessarily going to have those people in their life the rest of their lives. Then, also, having a connection with my husband and I and having that relationship grow as well.”</td>
<td>4 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Factors</td>
<td>Factors of school safety, public health crises, or bullying that cause parents to consider alternative schooling options. This may also result from financial restraints or a school’s perceived inability to adequately address a student’s special needs.</td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faith: “My busy boy would have been—he had the label ADHD—I think that it would have been not only difficult for him in a typical classroom setting, but it would also be difficult for the teachers and the other students around him to learn. I really did not want to squash his love of learning, and having to sit at a table and, when the bell rings, stop what you’re doing and go on to the next subject, that would not have been a good educational model for him.”

Gwen: “I have a best friend who was homeschooling, and she was always talking about it. We used to visit them in whatever state they lived in once or twice a year, and my husband saw them and he wanted me to homeschool.”

Additional Influences

Other sources, such as social influences, personal research, or appraisal to contribute to the contemplation of alternative school choices.

Note. The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

As implied in the frequency of answers in Table 2, every homeschooling parent had at least one agentic trigger. This indicated that triggers can be singular events or a cumulative string of events. This could be due to the fact that, as indicated by the parents’ responses, agentic triggers have varying levels of strength. For instance, Eric recounted that one of his agentic triggers was that “we needed and wanted a mobile education that was going to fit our lifestyle.” Alone, this trigger was not strong enough to lead to homeschooling—as an online charter school could accomplish this task without the need for private education or homeschooling. Instead, Eric had a second, stronger trigger; he elaborated, “But for us, we chose homeschooling because we wanted a solid, biblical influence.” Eric’s ideological convictions were a stronger motivation to consider homeschooling than the environmental factor of his family’s traveling schedule. Based on how a parent appraises the significance of an event, a trigger may have a greater or lesser impact on the parent’s physical and emotional state. The strength of the trigger as
perceived by the parent determines the urgency with which a parent searches for alternative education and the speed at which a parent arrives at a decision point.

Another aspect that determines the strength of an agentic trigger comes from the emotional direction of the event. A positive experience may create less agentic urgency to break from institutional norms than a negative one. For example, Caroline experienced a positive agentic influence based upon the social model of several well-performing homeschoolers in her college. However, a stronger agentic trigger came from her negative experience in high school. In her interview, she described her negative experience as a factor that contributed to her decision to homeschool:

I would say definitely my experience in institutional schools: not super positive, both academically and socially. I basically arrived at college with extremely rudimentary math skills because, somehow, it was missed that I really did not have a good math foundation. I failed math classes in high school and, somehow, was still able to go on. And it was really discouraging to arrive at my freshman year of college and have to go all the way back to very remedial math to try to rebuild my math skills. . . . I felt a little failed by that.

Caroline also went on to describe her negative experience with bullying. However, of her experience in math, she explained:

I think that math—having a weak math—stopped me from pursuing a career that I would have really loved. I wanted to be a veterinarian, and that’s why I majored in science for my first 3 years of my bachelor’s, but I was too weak in math.
Consequently, how a parent appraises the significance of the triggering event and how they respond in their physical and emotional states will help determine the overall impact of the event as a motivation to pursue homeschooling.

The emotional direction and strength of an agentic trigger can also be affected by the target of the event. There were apparent differences between a primary agentic trigger—one that happens to the potential homeschool parent—and a secondary agentic trigger—one that is witnessed by the potential homeschool parent. For example, Barb described how impactful it was to witness the neighborhood public-school children treat her child poorly; this was a secondary event. However, Barb also recalled in her interview a difficult primary event; she described, “High school was hard for me. I think sometimes there’s a cross between being bullied or being ignored. So, those are hard, living through those situations.” Given the emotional bonds of the protective parent/child relationship, a secondary event aimed at a child may be more motivating than a prior primary event. Barb implied this possibility when she described how she felt when homeschooling opponents directed their opposition toward her child: “So, I didn’t expect adults to—because they couldn’t get at me or [my husband]—go after our kids. Boy! That was an eye opener.”

As agentic triggers accumulate, the motivation to pursue homeschooling grows. This growth can be fueled either positively or negatively by factors in addition to personal appraisal and the resulting physical and emotional states. Positively, personal research into homeschooling can provide content knowledge mastery that strengthens agentic triggers. HSGs and other homeschooling families can also provide additional information, social models, and social persuasion that encourages potential homeschooling parents to choose homeschooling. Inversely, vocal opponents of homeschooling or examples of those who have homeschooled less
successfully can negatively impact a parent’s decision through negative information, models, or dissuasion. Moreover, external factors, such as financial limitations, a perceived lack of time or ability, and legal constraints—like custody agreements—can counteract the influence of an agentic trigger.

**Betterment.** While there are many events or beliefs that serve as an agentic trigger, none were more consistently reported than the concept of providing an improved experience for children based on their best interests. Every participant expressed the view that no one was more invested in the best interests of children than parents. Barb attributed this to the unique parent/child relationship:

> I knew I loved my kids more than anybody, more than any teacher, and I really believed that adage that they say, “The worst day of homeschooling can be better than the best day of a public school.” I knew that I was in tune with the kids. So, when they were having . . . a terrible day . . . we could abort whatever was happening and maybe we’re going to discuss fractions as we make chocolate chip cookies, or maybe we’re going to just stop everything. . . . So, I knew I loved my kids. I knew that I was intuitive with my kids.

This sentiment was affirmed by Heidi, who stated in her interview:

> I found a lot of parents suggest to me that they felt they could teach their kids better than any teacher—public, Christian, or private, it doesn’t matter. They have their kids’ best interests in mind, so they would be the best resource in terms of giving their kids what they specifically need. . . . Most parents want for kids to succeed.

In discussing what it takes to be a successful homeschool teacher, Jean emphasized the importance of this essential agentic trigger. She stated, “It probably takes loving your kids mostly and wanting the best for them.”
Ideological Convictions. In addition to betterment, every participant expressly stated or implied that ideological convictions served as another important agentic trigger to consider homeschooling as a viable choice. While ideological factors typically refer to religious or political beliefs that motivate homeschooling choice, the participants’ responses indicated that pedagogical rationales can create the same emotional intensity and conviction as philosophical ones. For example, Amanda recalled an ideological desire to homeschool with a different pedagogical approach to the subject of history. She stated:

It was always confusing to me; one year we’d be learning world history, and in the next year we’re learning about World War I. And I could never figure out where the timeline was. So, one thing I said when we did homeschooling is, “I want to teach history in order.” And we have done that.

Amanda was not the only parent with pedagogical rationale impacting her ideological convictions. After teaching in the public and private schools, Faith affirmed her desire to integrate more differentiation in the classroom. Instead of forcing students to comport to group performance, she observed, “Knowing their personalities, you could still custom fit those topics to the child, even though they were doing them together.”

By combining pedagogical and philosophical rationales into one descriptive category, one can better explain blended rationales. For example, Gwen—a scientist with a Christian worldview—desired to teach her children science with the academic freedom to incorporate her faith through topics like intelligent design. Her agentic trigger was a blend of scientific pedagogy and religious convictions. In her interview, she described her homeschooling practice in light of her ideological convictions:
There's just so many things in science that are so beautifully created and point back to God. I love to be able to do that with my children and talk about those things. We start off every morning with learning the history of a hymn and then we sing the hymn together and we talk about the story of it. Then, we do Bible, and we read different Bible verses, and those kinds of things. So, we start off at the beginning of every day focusing on Christ and who he has created us to be, and then we learn everything through that lens, because the "why" is extremely important.

**Familial Motivations.** Another agentic trigger comes from the desire to bond as a family and spend time together. In her interview, Caroline explained:

It’s so exciting for us to just have this protected time for us to spend together. . . . Really, I get very excited about the fact that this is something I have to spend time with my kids and do this, and everything else can, more or less, fall by the wayside because this is so important. . . . That’s a really self-perpetuating reason for doing it. Like, that just gets better and better the further we go on.

Sometimes, the agentic trigger to consider homeschooling is a forced necessity to ensure one can accommodate the desire to spend time together as a family. For her children to be able to see their father, Faith determined they had to homeschool. She recalled:

One of the reasons we decided to homeschool was because of my husband’s schedule. He was a state trooper and so he worked days, he worked nights, he worked holidays, he worked weekends. So, we honestly did our schedule around his work schedule. If he was off on a Monday, we were off on a Monday. If he was working at 7:00 p.m. and he had the morning off, we were doing school at 7:00 p.m., while we enjoyed our time with him during the morning and not in school. So, it was a very flexible schedule by necessity.
**Environmental Factors.** Agentic triggers can also be caused by external factors of the environmental context, such as school safety, special education needs, or financial limitations. For example, in terms of school safety, Eric discussed the perceived sense of danger that accompanied his loss of agency had he relinquished protective control over his children by leaving them in an institutional setting:

I think it would be dangerous for me to put my children in some form of education that is not homeschool because I would then be relinquishing some of my parental control over what my child is taught, over the influences that are happening to my child, and over any mandates that may be happening on a national, state, local level, whatever. I then would not have any choice over it, and I’m just not ready to relinquish that parental control over my children.

When it comes to a school’s ability to accommodate children with special needs, Jean expressed her concern over whether or not a teacher would be able to handle her child with autism. This concern formed an agentic trigger for Jean, who recalled:

I know when he was younger, I would feel nervous about him being with somebody else. He could hurt himself because other people would not be aware of what he would be thinking. He could climb a tree and not realize that he should stop at the 10th branch. So, I would say, “Hey, remember to stop at the 10th branch. You can climb the tree, but remember to stop at the 10th branch.” Then he’d be fine, because he would do that. But if I wasn’t there to tell him that, I think he would just fly up to the top and get stuck or fall. I don’t know. I did, sometimes, feel like, “What am I doing? How do I do this?” But I also felt like I could probably handle it better than somebody that didn’t know him as well.
Furthermore, financial factors can also form an environmental agentic trigger. Some parents who are dissatisfied with public school would consider private alternatives over homeschooling if they felt they could afford to do so. For instance, when Faith realized the public school had failed to teach her as much history as she wanted for her children, she determined, “I knew we—our family—could probably not afford private school education for our children, and so I decided to homeschool.”

*Additional Influences.* Other sources, such as social influences, personal research, or appraisal, also contribute to the contemplation of alternative school choices as agentic triggers. Just like Barb’s experience meeting a homeschooling family in the park while with her son, other homeschooling parents help provide social influence and information to those considering homeschooling as a school choice. For example, Diane learned from the parents in an HSG before she decided to start homeschooling. She recalled,

> Like that first group, I just sat and listened a lot. Thankfully, they actually let me join before I started homeschooling, so I was able to sit and listen from the winter to spring... and then we started that fall.

Both Barb and Diane were triggered to consider homeschooling after interacting with the social influence of homeschooling parents. Moreover, Barb’s story further shows how research and appraisal can influence the agentic trigger. After her meeting at the park, Barb attended an informational meeting. She stated, “I went to a meeting and I met all these women and they weren’t crazy. . . . And I was like, ‘Interesting.’” At the meeting, Barb gained content knowledge information about homeschooling and she appraised that the source—the other parents—were not “crazy.”
**Agentic Impulse.** As the agentic triggers build and dissatisfaction with traditional schooling grows, the strength of a single agentic trigger or the combined influence of many triggers can culminate in a tipping point that serves as the agentic impulse that moves a parent from consideration of homeschooling to the final decision to homeschool. At this point, parents’ agency motivates their actions to control their children’s education and ushers them into the transition stage of the HTSE lifecycle. The agentic impulse can occur as a result of multiple factors (see Table 3).

**Table 3**

**Sources of Agentic Impulses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Effect</td>
<td>When the influence of multiple agentic triggers results in sufficient dissatisfaction and agentic urgency, the combined effect results in a tipping point that generates the impulse to act. Caroline describing her final decision to homeschool: “So, it was a really long process of positive experiences with homeschoolers and people who had homeschooled. Institutional education, looking at that, did not look that great to me. It was a really long process.”</td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Factors</td>
<td>The motivational forces of events outside the influence of agentic triggers that either prevent or force an agentic impulse to homeschool. This might be due to family work schedules, school closures, or immediate crisis points that force the decision to homeschool or not. Diane discussing her mother’s impulse to homeschool: “Then my dad moved with his job to Georgia, and the people that had gone before said, ‘Do not put your kids in school down here; They’re like 2 years behind us.’ So, we sat and homeschooled.”</td>
<td>4 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Risk Initiative</td>
<td>Sometimes the impulse to homeschool comes from a realization that there is nothing to lose from the attempt. Some parents are more willing to accept the risk to transition into homeschooling based on their increased agency caused by their triggers and the low-stakes nature of homeschooling due to the safety-net of alternative school choices readily available in the event of failure.</td>
<td>6 (60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Barb: “I said to my husband, ‘You know, we could always just give it a try. We could always abort at any time.’”

*Note.* The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Cumulative Effect.** For many of the parents in this study, the agentic impulse to commit to homeschooling came as the result of a growing list of agentic triggers that led to a tipping point, which catalyzed their thoughts to action. For Irene, the impulse to commit to homeschooling resulted from a series of agentic triggers, as she explained:

> My husband and I were both homeschooled, so that was part of it . . . and I liked that I had such a strong bond and connection with my siblings. . . . I wanted my kids to be able to have that connection. We did think about sending our oldest to preschool and kindergarten at a local Christian school, but when we looked at the cost and wanting to have one-on-one time with her, we just thought it would be better to just homeschool her. She also struggled a little bit with learning, especially when she was really young. So, I knew that in a classroom setting she’d probably get lost and might get labeled. I didn’t really want that.

In Gwen’s situation, it was a culmination of social influences as agentic triggers that formed the impulse to homeschool. She recalled the transformation of her opinion during her interview by relating the following story:

> At church there was a Mother of Preschoolers meeting, and someone said, “After church tonight, a 5 o’clock, we’re going to have a meeting for anybody who wants to learn about homeschooling.” So, the person who was speaking had been a teacher in the public
schools for a long time, and now she homeschools her kids. And she was going to explain homeschooling to people. So, I’m an information person; I just love information. So, I decided to go and learn about homeschooling in Wisconsin, and I sat there for 2-and-a-half hours. When I came home, I said to my husband, “Well, I know I said I could never, but I guess I could homeschool.” He put his arm on me and he’s like, “What? That’s awesome! I wanted you to homeschool for 7 years.” . . . Also, my daughter—my oldest daughter—at the time was 3-and-a-half, and she was already begging to do school all the time. . . . So, that’s what kind of led it; it was the push of my oldest daughter constantly asking to do school and him saying, “Well you can totally do this.” And me finally saying, “Well, I guess I could.” So, I never desired to homeschool ever, I think, because of the experiences in the past of thinking my mom didn’t do it well. So, I had an automatic negative connotation toward it. Seeing other people do it well made me think it was possible.

**External Factors.** For some parents, their agentic impulse to commit to homeschooling was impacted by external factors. For example, within Irene’s description above of her cumulative agentic trigger, she revealed the financial limitations that pushed them away from private schooling and toward homeschooling. However, external factors can also cause barriers to agentic triggers, such as in Diane’s scenario. While she had experienced several agentic triggers that pushed her toward homeschooling, she had to delay her transition to homeschooling because of the family’s financial inability to start. She recalled, “My oldest had wanted to be homeschooled the whole time, but my husband just wasn’t quite ready for that financially. He was looking at it from the financial part.”
**Low-Risk Initiative.** As parents contemplate homeschooling, one realization that can serve as an agentic impulse, or tipping point, to engage in homeschooling comes from recognizing the low-stakes nature of homeschooling. As several of the participants began to consider agentically taking over their children’s education, they were empowered to take the risk knowing that they could always return to traditional schooling. Irene noted, “I just thought, ‘Well, I will try this. We’ll see how the first year or two goes, and if it goes well, we’ll keep going.’” Eric also shared this advice with future homeschooling parents, “Give it a try. You can always enroll your kid in public schools.” Additionally, Heidi relied on this model when she ran into difficulties. She confided:

I didn’t want my kids to fail. I didn’t want them to get to a point where they’re like, “Well, I never learned math because my mom held me back.” I didn’t want that to be said about me. So, that would have been probably my biggest hesitation, but that’s when I reached out to the public school for my twins and said, “Here you go. Can you help these kids out?” And the public school here was very helpful.

**Agentic Response.** Once potential homeschooling parents’ contributing factors build to a tipping point of the agentic impulse to homeschool, the nature of their agency will inform the level of their commitment to homeschooling, the extent to which they will comport to traditional schooling models, and the nature of their educational objectives and measures of success. In other words, the intensity of parents’ agentic triggers and impulses will help determine the extent to which their agency will rebuff the control and influence of the institutional system (see Table 4).
### Table 4

**Manifestations of Homeschooling Agency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, ( n (%) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Commitment**   | The strength of homeschooling parents’ agency informs the extent to which a family will remain loyal and committed to homeschooling as informed by their agentic impulse. This manifests on a spectrum of complete loyalty to homeschooling, no matter what, to regular reevaluation of school choice or the decision to homeschool only temporarily in response to a transient trigger or impulse.   
Diane: “So, for me, it was I definitely knew that we were in it for the long-haul—we weren’t just praying about this year-by-year. If people asked, we homeschool, that’s what we do, and I just never really was sacred of it.” | 7 (70)                    |
| **Non-Conformity** | The extent to which homeschooling families will break from the models of traditional, institutional schools. This also manifests on a spectrum from radical unschooling to formal school-at-home models. This also describes the amount of interaction or shared control homeschooling families are willing to have with institutional authorities, such as utilizing public-school classes or extracurricular activities to augment homeschool curriculum.  
Heidi: “You don’t homeschool your kids to make it look like the public school; you school your kids for what your family’s faith is, what your family’s goals are, what you’re trying to accomplish.” | 8 (80)                    |
| **Alternative Objectives & Measures** | In addition to instructional non-conformity, homeschooling agency informs the overarching educational objectives and assessment measures of homeschooling families. Many homeschoolers adopt alternative objectives that may not align with the intentions of public schooling, such as spiritual and character development, family leadership, or vocational goals. Moreover, parents may rely on non-traditional assessment strategies to measure their perceived success.  
Faith: “Ultimately, my idea of success would be that someday we will all be in heaven together eternally. . . . I wanted to educate for eternity.” | 6 (60)                    |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reevaluation, Renewal, Exit</td>
<td>Despite commitment to homeschooling, homeschooling families may periodically review their homeschooling objectives, achievements, and resources against their original agentic triggers and impulses to determine if homeschooling remains the best choice. This may not reflect HTSE development or agentic strength, but practical and logistical needs. Upon reevaluation, parents will either renew their decision or exit the lifecycle early. Eric: “My wife and I agree that we take it one year at a time, and I don’t anticipate that changing anytime soon—especially given the educational horizon that we are being faced with. . . . I would not necessarily be opposed to going to a good Christian school that I would agree with and I would feel comfortable sending my child to.”</td>
<td>6 (60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Commitment.** With stronger agentic impulses comes stronger manifestations of agency as seen in homeschooling parents’ professed commitment to homeschooling. For example, the strong ideological convictions that motivated Faith’s decision to break from traditional schooling created an unwavering commitment to homeschooling. She opined:

> We were committed to homeschool. We were not going to not homeschool when times got bad. Because, as I would tell people in our homeschool support group, times will get bad. There will be things that are inconvenient. There will be times when, for instance, in my case, you get cancer. It would be easier to send my child to school, but we homeschooled, again, for that biblical reason. We wrote out a mission statement, philosophy statement, and so every decision we made reflected back upon that statement. We did not change what we were doing based on circumstances unless it fit into that mission statement or philosophy statement.
On the other hand, Eric’s agentic trigger to homeschool was based largely on the need for a “mobile education.” While he had ideological convictions for a Christian education, this demand could be satisfied through a private school, and his desire to exert agentic control over his children’s development could also be satisfied in his volunteer involvement in such a private school. Thus, the overall strength of Eric’s decision to specifically homeschool was weaker than the ideological motivation of someone like Faith. That is why his commitment to homeschooling is apparently less absolute, as indicated by the following statement:

Do I think my children would benefit from a school setting? Do I think there’s stuff to learn about and be involved? Sure. I was a public-school kid my whole life! I didn’t turn out the best, but I manage in society. My wife did, too. She spent a lot of her days in public school. It’s not that we would never send them anywhere else, but we can troubleshoot problems at home.

Non-Conformity. Just like commitment, the extent to which a homeschooling family will break from the traditional instructional models of institutional schools depends upon the strength of the agentic triggers and impulses that inform a parent’s homeschooling agency. Parents whose primary motivation to homeschool was based on the desire for faith-based instruction, for example, may not otherwise have a problem with the instructional methods and content of institutional schools. Thus, parents like Heidi were willing to reenroll their children into public schools for full- or part-time instruction. On the other hand, someone like Caroline, who came from a disappointing school experience and has a pedagogical dissatisfaction with institutional schooling, chose not to conform to mainstream instructional structures. She explained in her interview:
They don’t have a regular school schedule—a public school schedule—to adhere to. We have a lot of flexibility. . . . I mean, we just feel that education can be everything, and I want them to have that in their heads. I don’t want them to feel like education is the thing that we do for 6 to 7 hours a day in this particular setting. It’s everything, and if you have a question about something you should be able to go and find out about that—not just from looking at a library book, but by finding an expert that knows about it, or by going and doing it by trial and error, and going to the place where it happens. I just want their sense of education to be very broad.

**Alternative Objectives and Measures.** Similarly, parents who break from traditional instructional norms seem prone to developing their own, alternative educational objectives and measures for adjudicating success. Parents like Faith have recognized the tension between social normative definitions and measures of success and her own feelings of what is important. During the second focus group, Faith expressed this frustration:

I have an overarching question about the premise of what is success, and it’s difficult to measure because, of course, you have a worldly idea of what success is—not that its bad—then you have God’s idea of what success is. With me coming from an academic background, just from my own perceived idea of what success was growing up, it was getting all As, graduating from college, and those tick the boxes. Yet I’m making a whole lot less money than some of my counterparts who did not graduate nearly as high as I did in college, or even high school. So, you know, it’s really hard for me to say, “Okay, my child is successful.” . . . You can have a good self-efficacy, for instance, and have a student that still might not be in the top 90th percentile.
For this reason, homeschooling parents tend to have non-conforming methods of assessing learning and success. As Caroline explained:

We don’t test. I mean, we do Charlotte Mason philosophy, so the kids narrate and that’s how I know they’re actually picking up on things, and I observe a lot. I mean, we’re just here all together, all the time—mostly. I see what they are playing and what they’re talking about. I hear what they’re talking about and I see what they’re interested in.

That’s what I use to evaluate. I’m not a big believer in tests, I guess, because I think that that goes with the narrow sense of education of sitting at a desk and reading a book and regurgitating information. I don’t really want to know that. I want to know that they’re listening, but narration does that, and just watching what they’re doing does that.

**Reevaluation, Renewal, and Exit.** While the agentic response of homeschooling parents seems to foster commitment to homeschooling and non-traditional-school-conforming manifestations of agency, the dependence of this response upon the relative strength and impact of the agentic triggers and impulses may lead to periodic reevaluation or reappraisal of homeschooling motives. For some parents, reevaluation results from the uncertainty of insufficient HTSE development. Irene shared that during her initial 2 years, while her initial HTSE was low, she reconsidered her decision several times. As she recalled:

It was mostly the first 2 years that we were wondering, “Okay. Should we keep doing this?” At that point, it was probably several times a year that we were wondering, “Was this the right way?” Now, we’re both very confident that this is the way we want to go with teaching our kids, especially as the world has changed. The way the world is changing and the things that are allowed into the schools now is definitely a confidence booster. Like, “Okay, we’re doing the right thing.”
Although low HTSE can trigger reevaluation, it does not account for every incident. For example, some parents, like Eric, determined to regularly review their motives and progress to determine if homeschooling remains their most viable option. Furthermore, some parents reevaluate their decision to homeschool based upon their ability to access resources that are important to their values. For example, Heidi’s family values participation in team sports. Thus, she described her family’s reevaluation experience as follows:

We originally told our kids when they were in high school they could choose if they wanted to go to the public school or not. My oldest son I didn’t want to be influenced by the public school because of where his faith was at, so I didn’t let him go, but my second son was super academic; he said he wanted to play football. . . . So, we allowed him, and he said, “If I start public school, I don’t want to go in and out. I prefer to just stay at it the whole 4 years.” So, we allowed that, and he was very studious—he did very well there.

As parents engage in the process of reevaluation, they may choose to either renew their commitment to homeschooling or allow their students to exit the homeschooling lifecycle early, as in the case of Heidi’s second son. However, parents also have the choice to renew their commitment to homeschooling with a modified approach. As a case in point, when Faith had to change her schedule to help her mother run for a statewide political office, she no longer had the time to implement her preferred instructional design. She described how her reevaluation led to a change in her homeschooling approach:

So, I knew I wouldn’t be able to continue the kind of methodology I was using. So, I tried to find other curricula that married my philosophy, but I could take a step back and my boys could be a little bit more proactive in learning for themselves. Isn’t that the goal of education eventually—that they can pick up and teach themselves? So, at some point, I
started branching out into other curricula that had that same biblical worldview but some of the methodology was a little bit different.

**Pre-Service HTSE Development**

Once homeschooling agency inspires a parent to begin considering homeschooling, the process of HTSE development begins. As parents begin to conceptualize themselves as homeschool teachers, their minds begin to appraise their previous encounters with self-efficacy source streams and consciously, or subconsciously, begin to construct initial HTSE that prepares them to enter homeschooling. The participants of this study revealed multiple source streams for HTSE-developing information (see Table 5).

**Table 5**

*Informational Source Streams for Pre-Service HTSE Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transferred Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Developed self-efficacy from other domains can transfer knowledge, skills, and competencies into the domain of homeschool teaching to provide the initial HTSE construct prior to actually homeschooling. Barb discussing her confidence: “But even if I didn’t have a college degree, the mere fact [is] that I could be a stay-at-home mom and make the finances work, [and] make the doctoring work, make the running of the household work where people aren’t crazy.”</td>
<td>6 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Service Mastery Experiences</td>
<td>Homeschooling parents may have previous encounters teaching formally or informally that serve as mastery experiences in the domain of instruction that directly informs initial HTSE development. This may include, for example, working in a child development center, teaching Sunday school, or formal teaching experience.</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Sub-Code</td>
<td>Description &amp; Example Quotation</td>
<td>Frequency, ( n ) (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Service Social Influences</td>
<td>Gwen: “So, I know that I had tutored a little bit for pre-calculus and in my science classes; I loved helping people learn. . . . I feel like that was helpful because it helped me learn how to communicate things. . . . I ended up working at a YMCA with the kids and at a Kinder Care. Then a friend at church convinced me to nanny. . . . So, I feel like that—being around the children—helped me realize that I could possibly do it and that teaching kids was fun.”</td>
<td>7 (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Intervention</td>
<td>The information provided by social influences through social persuasion or the example of social models can foster pre-service HTSE development for future homeschooling parents. Caroline: “So, when I was in college, I knew several students who had homeschooled and they were light years ahead of me educationally, and not just in terms of, like, factual knowledge, but their skills in learning, and studying, and self-educating were really advanced. I was really impressed by them. So, keeping them in mind and also the experiences of homeschool families that I have known, yeah, I think that those are the things that I draw on.”</td>
<td>2 (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Transferred Self-Efficacy.** As parents envision their potential roles as homeschool educators, they begin to assess their domains of self-efficacy to imagine how their beliefs in their knowledge and ability of other competencies might benefit them in teaching their children. Both Barb and Diane, for example, reflected on their parental self-efficacy (PSE) in anticipation of homeschooling. Barb realized her success managing her household prepared her to effectively
educate her children. Diane, when reflecting upon parenting courses taught by Kathy Cook, realized how parenting relates to teaching; she affirmed, “She usually has really good sessions when it comes to parenting, because the parenting . . . it’s so much that that’s what homeschooling is about—parenting is shepherding your kid’s heart.”

For parents with previous professional experiences, self-efficacy can transfer from vocational competencies in addition to parental mastery. As both a physician and a pastor, Eric expressed how his professional competencies impacted his HTSE:

For me, dealing with patients and administrative people—some don’t know what a blood draw is for anything, they wouldn’t know what an oral blood sugar is as opposed to other people who have clinical experience and they’re administration—you can talk to them differently. So, there’s that. Also, I teach Bible studies, and I’ve taught Sunday school. Being able to take a passage of Scripture and break it down, “Okay, here’s the author, here’s the context, here’s what’s happening” and then being able to field questions when people would ask. . . . So, being able to explain that to other people, we felt like, absolutely, this gives us a good basis.

**Pre-Service Mastery Experiences.** In addition to transferred self-efficacy from other domains, the presence of previous instructional mastery experiences can foster the early development of HTSE for future homeschooling parents. Every parent in this study expressed some type of formal or informal experience in teaching or an exposure to content knowledge in instruction that helped prepare them for homeschooling. Amanda confirmed her experience when she stated, “Well, I did want to be a teacher when I was younger. In school, I did do a job shadow with one of my favorite teachers from middle school when I was in . . . my senior year of high school.” Diane relayed her content knowledge mastery by stating, “I do have a college
degree in psychology, and I’ll have to say that that did come in to play sometimes when it comes to child development and things like that.” The content knowledge mastery and various mastery experiences of potential homeschooling parents directly inform their homeschooling praxis. Heidi highlighted this fact when discussing the benefits of her experience teaching Awana:

So, I created our projects or things for the kids to be hands on, and I think that carries over into my homeschooling in that I say, “Okay, sit on the floor and play.” And it goes well; we read this history story and it works.

**Pre-Service Social Influences.** Pre-service HTSE development also occurs due to the influence of social persuasion and social models. Gwen, for instance, learned vicariously what worked well in homeschooling through the observation of social models. In talking about these social models, Gwen recalled that she “went to their homes and tried to figure out how this actually logistically works when you have a nursing baby on you and now they’re running around, and then you’re also trying to teach someone.” For Irene, her experience observing teachers in the public school helped her learn effective, relational strategies for classroom management; she conveyed:

One of the things that really stood out to me, being in a bunch of different classrooms with different teachers, were the teachers that remained calm when they talked and the kids would listen intently. Some of the teachers had a really good way of getting the kids to pay attention and commanded respect in their classrooms without yelling.

Irene also commented on how these social models shaped her homeschooling. She added, “Probably a lot with trying—it doesn’t always happen—to maintain emotional stability with how I teach, and not getting too frazzled when they’re not getting it.” Thus, the social influences
helped her learn to better regulate her physical and emotional states, which likely improved her HTSE.

**Divine Intervention.** Although only directly referred to twice in the context of pre-service HTSE development, the role of the supernatural represented a reoccurring theme throughout the various stages of the HTSE lifecycle. For those with strong ideological convictions, the perception of divine support influenced the appraisal process, which played an important part in how HTSE developed. When asked what prepared her to be a homeschool teacher, Faith’s responded:

I think lots of prayers of people ahead of me. Those generations I mentioned—that were all public-school teachers—those ladies were praying, praying ladies, a lot of them. And so I really think that that had a lot to do with it.

The belief that God called and equipped these parents helped them face the initial challenges of homeschooling with greater confidence and perseverance until HTSE could develop from their own mastery experiences.

**Pre-Service HTSE Benefits**

As parents develop their pre-service HTSE based on self-referent judgements of their previous experiences, they also begin to encounter the benefits of HTSE that enable their smooth entry into the transition phase. This occurs because parents and children manifest the byproducts of HTSE such as boosted confidence or better regulated physical and emotional states. In this study, a majority of participants \( n = 8, 80\% \) indicated positive benefits experienced by either the parents \( n = 5, 50\% \) or their children \( n = 4, 40\% \) that helped the family transition into homeschooling.
**Parents.** For parents, the benefits of pre-service HTSE resulted in better physical and emotional states and more effective instructional praxis. For example, because Heidi had increased HTSE from her prior experience and strong support network, she described her confidence in choosing homeschooling by declaring, “In terms of making a good decision or not, I guess I’m overconfident, but I have a lot of support.” For Caroline, the process of growing her content knowledge mastery increased her HTSE and resulted in an improved emotional state. Instead of experiencing anxiety, she experienced excitement; she recalled, “I started... educating myself about it. I got really excited about it.” As for instructional praxis, Gwen described how her pre-service experiences gave her the confidence to break from traditional educational philosophy and adopt differentiated instruction. In speaking about her experience working with unique children in a childcare center, she stated:

I think that’s one of the most strong emotional things that I’ve felt when I think about education in brick and mortar buildings and people all being in a room supposed to do everything exactly the same. It makes me very sad. It makes me feel like God created us all so very different, and we don’t all develop in the exact same areas at the exact same time. And in a regular school setting, everybody’s expected to have the same developmental milestones at the exact same moment, and that’s not true... I have to recognize that their personalities are different and God has given them different strengths that can be used as strengths or weaknesses depending on how I help them cultivate that. So, I think that was probably the most impactful thing for me—working with those kids ahead of time—before I started homeschooling.

**Children.** For homeschooled children, the benefits of their parents’ pre-service HTSE development manifest as an increased likelihood for an easy transition into homeschooling.
Because homeschooling parents are likely to develop their pre-service HTSE by transferring their PSE into the domain of homeschooling, they are also more likely to transfer their established household management patterns into their classroom management schemata. Barb confirmed this reality in her HTSE survey response when she stated, “Rules and discipline were just continued from family life throughout school life. There was a lot of intermixing.” Caroline also commented in her survey response, “My children learn a habit of obedience when young, and that goes a long way toward curbing disruptions.” Thus, while professional classroom teachers have to spend time creating an atmosphere of classroom participation and clearly communicated behavioral expectations, parents have years of established household expectations and patterns as a foundation for their homeschool management.

**Transition Stage**

Once potential homeschooling parents experience the agentic motivations that lead them to begin homeschooling, they enter the transition stage of the HTSE lifecycle. This period is a vulnerable, exploratory stage in which parents work to define their homeschool identity and praxis. The instability caused by parents trying to find their homeschooling routine, which can take the first few years, presents a challenging time for overcoming initial states, but the reward for perseverance is rapid HTSE growth resulting from immersion in early source stream information and experiences.

**Introductory Instruction**

In this study, a majority of participants \((n = 6, 60\%)\) identified needing time to find what routine or curriculum worked best for them while transitioning into homeschooling. For example, Irene used three different curricula each of her first 3 years homeschooling. When Amanda started homeschooling, she found it helped to take time off from any formalized
schooling, both to relieve her initial physical and emotional states and to give her family time to find what worked best for them. She described this experience in her interview:

I was nervous. I felt, at first, scared that I was going to fail my kids, that I was doing something wrong, that I couldn’t do this. I wasn’t a certified teacher. . . . We kind of took [a couple months] off, just kind of adjusting a little bit. We also did more movies at the time than anything, any actual physical bookwork. We did more watching movies or playing games together before we actually jumped in, feet first, into a book. We just kind of did movies. We found some YouTube channels and played some board games we had just sitting around already at the time that we never got to use because we were always so busy.

Amanda added that “it really seemed to help us once we got going.” Amanda’s experience underscores the importance of easing into homeschooling with a flexible time of finding a workable routine. Because she spent time building small mastery experiences in a low-risk environment of games and videos, she had an easier time finding what worked for her family and getting going.

Unfortunately, many families did not take such an unstructured approach to introductory instruction. Several parents launched into full-time homeschooling with a rigid drive to stick to their initial plans. For example, Diane adopted a format for homeschooling that she modeled off her public-school experience. However, she shared what she learned from that experience:

You quickly learn that you don’t have to have that many hours to do school. . . . I had people in my world, then, that encouraged me to “just kind of let it feel its way out.” I didn’t understand what that meant until later on. So, when people talk to me and they’re
taking their kids out of school, I’m like, “It takes a while to kind of unwind from what you’ve known and then let whatever homeschooling is going to be kind of find its way.”

Diane clarified,

It’s like . . . you try things and they may work and they may not work, and you just need to be flexible—have an attitude of flexibility—and just be willing to say, “That didn’t work; we figured out a way not to do that, and we’re going to see if we can figure out something else.”

Navigating Initial States

The danger of the transitional stage, with its trial-and-error approach to finding what works best, is that initial, underdeveloped HTSE results in vulnerability to unregulated physical and emotional states. As parents take the agentic risk of controlling their children’s education, it brings a tremendous feeling of responsibility and a dread of failure. Most participants \((n = 8, 80\%)\) reported struggling with early feelings of anxiety—especially in the first year. Barb described her first thoughts and feelings by stating, “Fear initially. Right? Reluctance—I don’t want to do this, I want to have coffee.” Moreover, the emotional states can also affect how one teaches. Faith recounted her experience feeling overwhelmed while teaching:

My first son was in kindergarten and was not catching on to something, and I got frustrated. I raised my voice—I was more, probably, frustrated at myself for not understanding how to help him understand—but, I looked at his face and there was just hurt on it. It brings tears to my eyes now because I let my temper rule over me.

Parents navigating their initial physical and emotional states during the transition stage lack the prior experience and skills that come from properly developed HTSE. While they learn to properly regulate their states, parents must rely on the strength of their agentic triggers, such
as ideological convictions. For example, Faith confirmed how the agentic trigger she had after her first job helped her persevere through the initial emotional and physical states. She stated, “But after my experience with my first job out of college, I was buffered from [nervous second guessing] somewhat because [homeschooling] was something I knew I needed to do—I should do.”

**Early In-Service HTSE Development**

Despite the dangers posed by initial states, the transition stage represents the first period of major, in-service HTSE development. As parents experience the first success and accomplish meaningful milestones, their HTSE tends to grow rapidly over the first few years. This growth, as reported by the participants \((n = 8, 80\%)\), occurs as parents interact with source stream information and encounter the benefits of HTSE in their lives (see Table 6).

**Table 6**

*Early In-Service HTSE Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, (n) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Mastery Experiences</td>
<td>Achievements of the transition stage help parents reappraise their knowledge and abilities to raise HTSE and replace doubt with confidence and excitement. Amanda: “The failures kind of got me down a little bit. I wasn’t sure what I was going to do, where we were going to go from there, or how to help. At first, I wasn’t sure how to help, but once we overcame them, it was amazing. Like, you could just see the happiness in the kids’ faces, and that’s been one of my favorite things of all with this learning.”</td>
<td>3 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Social Influences</td>
<td>Homeschoolers rely heavily on positive social influences, such as mentors, family members, and homeschool support groups, to provide social models and meaningful social persuasion to develop HTSE for transitional homeschooling parents.</td>
<td>4 (40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faith on the need for social support: “Oh, absolutely, whether it’s from a person or from God. I have friends who all of their family is totally against what they’re doing, and they do it just fine, but it’s difficult—especially in the early years before they see the fruit. I would say it’s essential.”

Early HTSE Benefits

As parents begin to experience and appreciate the benefits of their growing HTSE, it positively reinforces their HTSE growth with feelings of satisfaction and perseverance that also inform the appraisal of future experiences.

Gwen on how social influence improved her HTSE and changed her appraisal: “I talked to other homeschooling moms in the beginning a lot. I still do, but in the beginning that was the most important thing for me because I just felt like a constant failure, which I now see as a massive benefit. I felt like a failure all the time so I wanted to keep doing better. I wanted to keep challenging myself to better for them. . . . So, we look at failure of the teacher and we move on from it in the direction where we’re going to learn. Instead of looking back, we look forward.”

**Note.** The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Early Mastery Experiences.** As parents engage in homeschooling, they start to see the results of their labor in mastery experiences, which reinforces their confidence and develops their HTSE. When new homeschooling parents witness their first successes, they have hope for the future. Jean recalled her struggle teaching her children to read and write; she stated:

That was almost like pulling teeth, but we did it. . . . So, I feel like that was a win because he could’ve loved writing. My daughter could have hated reading, but she’s slowly just picking it up and she’s doing really good now.

Jean also recalled how her confidence built up after mastery experiences like these. She added, “I was very stressed out. . . . But I think after that first year, I feel like every year I gradually felt more and more confidence.”
**Early Social Influences.** Because of the time it takes for parents to see their first mastery experiences, new homeschooling parents often rely more on social influences to foster their early in-service HTSE development. For example, before Jean experienced the success of teaching her children to read and write, she was dealing with mounting frustration. She had to adjust her strategy to ensure her children’s success. She recalled:

> I had one child that was a little harder to read, a little slower catching on to reading and one that wasn’t super interested in writing or drawing, and I found that just taking it slower so that they learn to love it—that’s something another homeschooling mom told me—was a really good piece of advice I picked up early on. Take it slowly so they don’t hate it.

In essence, new homeschooling parents borrow from the HTSE of established homeschooling mentors and social models until they develop their own. Barb recounted her early years with her homeschooling mentors:

> The thing that I did is, especially in the younger years, I met with three mentor women. They were about 5 years ahead of me, and I said, “Okay, what did you do for this grade? What did you do?” So, I basically sat at the feet of the masters—that’s what I called it. “Sitting at the feet of the masters.” They were Socrates and I was the peon. So I would just take notes as to what they did. That’s how I started. When I was planning my year, that’s how I would start off, to say, “Okay, what did you do? What worked for you? What didn’t work for you?”

**Early HTSE Benefits.** As new homeschooling parents begin to develop their own HTSE, they also start to experience the byproducts of HTSE in such a way as to reinforce the developmental cycle. For example, following Faith’s frustrating experience of losing her temper
with her son, she developed her HTSE, which helped her avoid future incidents of frustration. She stated, “I grew patience. I learned how to get control of my tongue and my anger.” Faith’s HTSE development helped her learn to regulate her physical and emotional states, which further developed her HTSE because, when she encountered new situations, she was able to have less emotionally reactive responses. Her ability to control her anger then led to greater confidence in other situations. Likewise, Gwen’s early HTSE growth helped her learn to reappraise failures as opportunities to grow (see Table 6).

**Stabilization and Influence Stage**

Once parents pass through the transition stage, they enter a period of HTSE stabilization and outward influence. During the first 1 to 4 years of homeschooling, parents experiment to find the homeschooling model that works best for their family. In that time, they are also rapidly growing their HTSE as they interact with source stream information while celebrating victories and navigating obstacles. Once homeschooling parents settle in to their routines, however, the rapid and dramatic changes of HTSE start to normalize. Those with low HTSE tend to continue a slow march toward dissatisfaction and possible exit, whereas those with higher HTSE tend to continue to grow into a state of maturity, satisfaction, and outward influence.

As an example of an HTSE struggle, Diane reported not having a group of mentors like she desired. She confided:

I didn’t want to put myself in this weird place of being in an awkward spot with somebody that’s in my support group and now they’re mean, or whatever unnecessary and silly situational fear. First starting out, it really had to do a lot with just not knowing who to ask and knowing what to ask.
Because Diane lacked the support that her peers received, she was left facing the threats to effective homeschooling on her own and learning how to overcome them without as much direct, personalized social influence from others. Thus, while others may have learned lessons sooner, Diane stated, “I think it took a few years for me to realize [the need for] office time—having time to plan things. . . . But it was just things that I needed to learn along the way because nobody was really telling me.” Consequently, Diane reported less satisfaction with homeschooling than her peers and greater relational strife with her daughter after 18 years of homeschooling.

On the other side of the spectrum from Diane, Amanda manifested moderate to high levels of HTSE. Despite having only homeschooled for 4 years, she commented, “I am very satisfied. I am very proud of how far my kids have come and very happy to see that they are getting to follow things that they are passionate about.” Moreover, she started her own HSG and provides resources to help fellow parents navigate homeschooling with their children. Thus, it seems Amanda has entered a period of maturity and social influence thanks to her sufficient HTSE development.

When parents like Diane or Amanda enter the stabilization and influence stage, they continue to experience HTSE development through interaction with source stream information, and they experience the most benefits of HTSE than during any other stage. However, they also face ongoing threats to homeschooling. While homeschooling parents in this stage may also start to see some of the outcomes of homeschooling, this stage chiefly marks the period between stabilization and the completion of active homeschooling.
**HTSE Development**

Although HTSE development begins in the initial stage and continues through the transition stage, it occurs most clearly and broadly in this stage. Parents spend the majority of their homeschooling careers in the stabilization and influence stage. Consequently, they encounter the most source stream content during this stage. While this information may not cause as drastic a change in HTSE, the interaction with multiple sources does continue to shape HTSE as reported by the participants (see Table 7).

**Table 7**

*Sources of HTSE Development in the Stabilization and Influence Stage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastery Experiences</td>
<td>Knowledge or experiences that facilitate or demonstrate achievement in homeschooling as appraised by the homeschooling parent as occurring due to their own teaching abilities. These experiences grow HTSE when parents improve their self-referent beliefs of their ability to achieve similar outcomes in the future. Irene: “So, I definitely gained a lot of confidence that way, seeing her progress and seeing how the other kids have done really well with it.”</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Influences</td>
<td>The influences of social sources, such as mentors, family members, experts, and HSGs to provide social models for vicarious learning or encouragement through social persuasion that a parent appraises as meaningful to their own homeschooling experience. Faith: “You doubt yourself, but that’s when you have to surround yourself with like-minded people to give pats on the back and encourage each other. Homeschool conferences were wonderful to help educate myself.”</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical &amp; Emotional States</td>
<td>The experience and subsequent regulation or dysregulation of the physical and emotional manifestations or feelings resulting from encountering homeschooling scenarios.</td>
<td>8 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Sub-Code</td>
<td>Description &amp; Example Quotation</td>
<td>Frequency, n (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene: “Sometimes it’s pretty stressful. Sometimes I talk to my husband and you’re like, ‘I need a break.’ Then, a lot of times what happens is I’ll be working with my oldest, and we’re trying to get through math, and it’s just really not working, and I can tell my blood pressure is starting to rise. She’s getting annoyed at me, and I’m like, ‘Okay, we just need to stop.’”</td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Technological Resources | The advent of homeschooling resources and instructional technology has made source stream information ubiquitous for all with access to the internet. Parents can now interact with technology to create digital source stream encounters that develop their HTSE.  
Caroline: “I have read books about educational philosophy, I listen to podcasts, I talked to other parents, I read blogs, I look at journals, I read statistics endlessly about what does and does not work, what’s working in other countries, what’s not working here, what is working here, and I’m always asking questions about what we’re doing.” | 5 (50)          |
| Additional Contributing Factors | Ancillary factors, such as divine intervention, that do not fit well into a particular source stream category but have the ability to impact HTSE development.  
Jean: “I think Jesus helps me every day, and I pray to him and ask him to guide me. That’s my main success because he’s leading and guiding our school.” | 5 (50)          |
| Appraisal | The personal analysis and assignment of value to sources, feedback, feelings, and experiences encountered while homeschooling and the subsequent impact on self-referent judgements allow or disallow changes in HTSE levels.  
Eric: “When somebody gives you some type of criticism, we look it as C.S.I.—and the letters for C.S.I. stand for the content, the source, and the intent.” | 5 (50)          |
| HTSE Multipliers | Some scenarios can impact HTSE more significantly than others, given parents’ appraisal of the source material or conditions of the event. These events multiply or diminish the significance of source stream information by operating within an environment of low risk and meaningful reward as perceived by homeschooling parents. | 10 (100)        |
Diane: “And that has been one of my biggest joys of watching the kids learn. Then, when they sit and show somebody else. . . . Being able to see them learn things and celebrate those with them right there—I’m not having them come to the door at 3:30 with a worksheet that says, ‘Look what I did.’ So, I love that.”

Note. The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Mastery Experiences.** Throughout the stabilization and influence stage, homeschooling parents continue to have mastery experiences that influence their ongoing HTSE development. Mastery experiences provide knowledge or demonstrate success so as to provide personal affirmation that the teacher is doing well. This source stream has multiple tributaries of information (see Table 8).

**Table 8**

*Sources of Mastery Experiences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Knowledge Mastery</strong></td>
<td>Research, education, and information provided by others gives knowledge that informs HTSE development by shaping parents’ understanding of a subject and their self-referent view of efficacy for the future due to that information. Amanda: “I did a lot of research. Any time I wanted to change anything, I would research it.”</td>
<td>8 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal</strong></td>
<td>Internal mastery experiences are achievements perceived by homeschooling parents as a success in such a way as to elevate their individual HTSE beliefs. Caroline: “I feel like I’ve got, in the 4 years that we’ve done homeschooling, that I’ve gotten three doctorates. It’s just like, ‘Wow!’ I thought graduate school was hard? This is hard. This is exhausting. This is growth like I’ve never had in my life. So, I think those are the reasons right there why I’m confident about it, because even when things get really hard, usually, when they pan out . . . they’re usually positive.”</td>
<td>6 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Sub-Code</td>
<td>Description &amp; Example Quotation</td>
<td>Frequency, $n$ (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>When other people or sources, such as standardized tests, provide evidence of success, it serves as a mastery experience that elevates the self-referent beliefs of the homeschooling parent. Gwen: “I think other people—who are teachers—recognizing how great my kids are doing is probably one of the, sadly, biggest things that has made me recognize that I’m doing a great job.”</td>
<td>7 (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative</td>
<td>By noticing the observable differences between the HTSE benefits and outcomes of one’s own children in contrast to those of students in other school settings, a parent can perceive a mastery experience. Barb discussing her teaching experience: “When hearing some of the eighth and ninth graders and hearing the stuff they were saying and seeing how prepared they were . . . I came home to [my husband] and said, ‘Honey, we are so far ahead of the group. We’re so far ahead of the game.’ I mean, it just felt like I could relax and not teach for the next year.”</td>
<td>3 (30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Content Knowledge Mastery.** Part of growing HTSE from mastery experiences includes growing in knowledge of the subject. Whether this knowledge comes from formal academic courses, informal instruction, or personal research, the resulting deeper understanding of the subject shapes a homeschool educator’s self-referent judgements about his or her abilities. As Caroline reflected on her research, she explained how she has come to value the knowledge:

I realized that different approaches work for different people. I realize that, actually, all of the time that I spend questioning, and researching, and asking questions of homeschool parents around me, or reading things . . . that’s good! I should not stop doing that. That’s really exhausting, but not in a bad way. It’s not, like, an anxiety driven, like, “Oh, my
gosh! I have to find all the answers right now or else we’re going to fail.” It’s not like that. It’s like, “What else is out there? Let’s explore what else is out there.”

Amanda also mentioned the importance of research as a source of content knowledge mastery. In discussing how she faces challenges, she commented:

I think for the most part, I just kind of sit back, look at the big picture of everything, and do what I like to do best, which is research. Just research, look at the options, look at the pros and cons of everything.

**Internal Mastery Experiences.** In addition to content knowledge, internal perceptions of success create mastery experiences for homeschooling teachers. When parents see their children learn a concept that they are teaching, it reinforces their belief in their knowledge and ability to achieve future success. When Jean was asked to describe what influenced her growth of confidence the most, she stated, “I think just time and seeing that they’re doing good—that they’re learning. It just took some time to see the change and growth in them.” Likewise, Gwen commented on her increased HTSE as a result of seeing her child develop her character, which was one of Gwen’s alternative educational goals. Gwen described:

Watching them grow in their character over time, that really helps the homeschool stuff, too. Like, my eldest over time—she was kind of a procrastinator and not very worried about making sure she got her stuff done on time—she learned her lesson, and now she’s very, very on top of everything. So, I think with time I’ve become very confident that this is something that, no matter what comes up, it’ll be fine.

**External Mastery Experiences.** Mastery experiences also facilitate HTSE development when external sources provide proof of achievement. For parents, this information can come from formal feedback provided by tests, teachers, or professionals, or it might come from
informal sources, such as family members or strangers informally quizzing children in public.

For example, Eric recalled a time when he had a friend with a master’s degree in education come and assess his children:

> We’ve also had her come over to the house, and we said, “Can you just hear our kid read? Can you just watch him? Can you look at some of his papers? I mean, not to critique them, but what do you think—you are a teacher, you got your master’s in education—what do you think?” And she said, for every one of our children, “They are both functioning at least a grade higher than what they would be in the public school. Both of them, at least a grade higher.”

Eric also commented about another time he had his children assessed. He recalled:

> We had another lady who’s a speech pathologist in the public school . . . come to our house and listen to our kids read. . . . For 2 hours we had her come and listen to them, and she’s like, “Oh yeah. They’re top of their class, easy. Top of their class.”

Between these events and other external examples of mastery, Eric increased his HTSE. He described, “Again, just another verification. . . . They’re seeming to follow along and seem to be—I want to say—advanced. But they’re definitely keeping up with their level of education, if not more in some areas. I mean, I think that’s good.”

**Comparative Mastery Experiences.** In addition to internal and external mastery experiences, these experiences can derive from unique situations in which parents are able to draw a conclusion of success based on the comparison of their students to students in institutional-school settings. For instance, Heidi described a time when she received feedback from a professional teacher after allowing her children to take a couple classes at the local public school; she stated:
It was interesting because I always made an initiative to go to all the parent–teacher conferences for both my kids’ successes or failures. It was very encouraging to me to hear these people say, “We know your kids are homeschooled, and it makes a difference. Like, your kids are in the top 10 in the class. They’re the influencers in the class. They answer the questions, they raise their hands and ask questions.” . . . My son was taking biology from a college professor who happened to be the high school teacher. He said, “I never give my high school students in this class an A, because they don’t even work at it.” But he said, “Your son has shown so much potential that I gave him an A because he really knows what he’s talking about. He’s listening and doing the homework.” That was awesome.

Social Influences. Just like mastery experiences, social influences have the potential to impact HTSE development in homeschooling parents. When mentors, family members, experts, members of HSGs, or others provide feedback, encouragement, or examples, they cause parents to appraise the information in relation to their own experience. If appraised positively, the information can cause HTSE to rise. In this study, the participants described three types of social influences (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Types of Social Influences in HTSE Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Persuasion</td>
<td>The advice or encouragement of others can cause parents to reevaluate and reappraise their homeschooling experiences in such a way that encourages growth and positive self-referent judgements about their situations.</td>
<td>9 (90)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Axial Sub-Code | Description & Example Quotation | Frequency, n (%)  
--- | --- | ---  
Social Models | Amanda: “She was the first homeschool parent that I ever talked to about homeschooling that was nearby. . . . If I’m having a rough day, she’s like, ‘Don’t worry, mama, you got this; you can do this.’ . . . It’s been really nice to have somebody back me up with that and to give me that encouragement when I need it.” | 8 (80)  
Homeschool Support Groups | Social Models Homeschooling parents learn vicariously through the observation of social models provided by others as they appraise their own abilities based on the successes of their peers or mentors.  
Caroline: “So, informed by people around me who have been through this already and having people I can ask questions of, I do feel confident in our ability to do this.” | 9 (90)  
Homeschool Support Groups | Groups provide a unique context of social influence in which a variety of activities and influences flow together to create multiple avenues for HTSE development, including content knowledge, social persuasion, and social models.  
Faith: “I felt very much at home with my homeschool friends. We get each other. We don’t necessarily agree on everything—hardly. Who agrees on everything? But that support group of people was [instrumental]. . . . Just to decompress and compare stories: ‘Oh, really? That’s not unusual that my child did that?’ So the camaraderie and the reassurance, maybe, that’s the way it helped.” |  

*Note.* The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Social Persuasion.** Just as verbal encouragement and feedback were critical in the initial stage, they remain an important element of homeschooling support and HTSE development during the stabilization and influence stage. When asked of the need for homeschooling parents to have sources of feedback, support, or encouragement, Barb responded, “Absolutely, absolutely. Because you have to have somebody saying, looking, and seeing what you’re doing and remind you that, ‘You’re doing a good job.’” Amanda also expressed how social persuasion provides a quintessential source of encouragement to homeschooling parents:
Having that support is kind of important, even if it’s just from a parent, like your mom or your spouse just being like, “It’s okay. There’s always tomorrow.” Like, to let you know that “You’re okay; it’s going to be okay. It might be rough for a couple of days, but it’ll get better.” Just having that support, I think, is very important.

**Social Models.** In addition to social persuasion, social influence includes the examples set by homeschoolers, teachers, or other people that help homeschooling parents vicariously realize their own potential to succeed based on observation of the model. For example, Amanda described the influence of a social model in her homeschooling:

My area doesn’t really do co-ops; it’s kind of a small-town area. But we have gone on field trips with other local families about an hour away. So, it was kind of a drive, but the leader of the one field trips we took was actually another homeschool parent, and getting to see them teach it kind of was like, “Oh, okay, okay. That’s how you do it.” Just getting to see different things and seeing how they do it, it’s like, “Okay. I kind of want to try that, too. Let’s see if this works for us.”

While Amanda’s story indicated how parents learn from other personal examples, Gwen’s experience indicated how parents can learn from historical social models, too. Although similar to growing HTSE through content knowledge mastery obtained by personal research, Gwen’s experience shows how historical figures can come to life in the mind of the modern homeschooler to provide a mental visualization of the social model for vicarious learning. When asked about her most important homeschooling influence, Gwen described her encounter with Charlotte Mason as follows:

I would say it is currently Charlotte Mason because I feel like learning about her educational philosophy from the early 1900s has really opened my eyes more to being
less empirical about everything. Being able to respect the educational philosophy of her, because she is just so much smarter than me, I’m like, “Okay, I can listen to what you’re saying.” She also is very, very focused on habits being 9/10ths of who you are. You have to create consistency in what you’re doing so that you don’t have to think about it and it’s not a struggle. You can just do it well, and that the Holy Spirit is guiding all of it. I feel like reading her volumes has been very helpful for me to be a better parent while homeschooling and not just be focused on the factual data and retaining fact to my children as a classical teacher likes to do. Being more like Charlotte Mason is really helping me recognize the need to share ideas and dialogue more than just facts.

In Gwen’s description, her response is more than just the assimilation and application of knowledge from researching a particular educational philosophy. Instead, Gwen has adapted her teaching based on her mental visualization of the descriptive narratives of how Charlotte Mason taught and acted in the homeschooling classroom.

**Homeschool Support Groups.** The unique culture of HSGs represented a significant social influence for the parents in this study. Each parent acknowledged participating in an HSG or having connections to fellow homeschooling families so as to experience the benefits of an *ad hoc* HSG. Interestingly, HSGs provide multiple HTSE-building opportunities through their social influence—not just social persuasion and social models. For example, HSGs provide an outlet for venting the frustrations caused by mounting physical and emotional states. The resulting social debrief and commiseration fosters better regulation through the social influence of others. Barb conveyed this benefit when she talked about her support network:

I would [meet with my mentors and go to homeschool support groups] and sometimes they would just be talking all fluffy, “blah, blah, blah,” and then I would say, “Okay, how
about when things really suck like they did today?” Or whatever. Then, all of a sudden, it was like they just needed one person to say it—sometimes the homeschoolers are afraid to talk about that this is hard; this is just hard sometimes. So, I would bring that up and the floodgates would just . . . it would be a [gripe] session, but I kind of called it “squeezing the zit.” You get everything out, you come home, you realize that other people have three-headed children as well. So, now I can hunker back down and go at it again.

HSGs also provide opportunities to increase content knowledge mastery through the social influence of shared resources. At HSG conferences, for instance, homeschooling teachers can engage with fellow homeschoolers, receive social persuasion from guest speakers, and socially share personal research and curriculum options so as to expand content knowledge through the shared wisdom of curriculum designers, teaching experts, and other parents—not just personal research. Heidi explained this unique context:

Every year in the spring we would go [to homeschool conferences]. That was really great for me because usually in the spring—March and April—you were like, “I am done. I am never doing this again.” And those speakers kind of lift you up, like, “You can do this. Let me tell you some better ideas and how you can fix this problem and that problem.” They would address very specific issues in your homeschooling experience. You could sign up for individual classes. At the conference they had guest speakers that were keynote speakers, but then they also had all these classes on the side, and you signed up for each hour which ones you wanted. Then, on top of it, they had curriculum vendors come in, and you could walk through the gymnasium and talk one-on-one with the people who make it. That was huge learning for me.
While formal HSGs provide an abundance of resources, formally instituted groups are not the only means of experiencing these benefits. As stated earlier, some families are able to experience the benefits of HSGs *ad hoc* through the informal alliance of homeschooling families. The cooperation of homeschooling families is especially important in rural areas, where sparse population and geographical isolation makes formal meetings difficult. Consequently, families still support one another, as Caroline explained:

Well, I do belong to some online forums; that’s something that’s easy to do no matter where you are. We looked into a homeschool co-op in [the nearest city], but distance has made that—[and a] one-vehicle situation has made that—something for the future, not for now. Honestly, we haven’t hugely taken advantage of that, not in a formal way. I mean, we have our homeschool support group, which is the other homeschool families that we know, essentially. It’s just not a formalized support group.

**Physical and Emotional States.** Another source of HTSE development comes from the regulation of physical and emotional states. As parents face the challenges of homeschooling, they may encounter strong feelings, such as anxiety, depression, or anger, and they may experience physiological manifestations, such as increased blood pressure. These arousal states that result from the stimuli of homeschooling difficulties threaten to derail parents from the successful implementation of their teaching knowledge and skills. Homeschooling educators must effectively identify and regulate these states to efficiently homeschool. When they do, they further develop their HTSE by informing their trust in their ability to face and overcome future challenges.

For some homeschool educators (*n* = 2, 20%), the ability to regulate strong physical and emotional states can be found in the agentic strength of their ideological convictions. For
example, Barb described the role of her faith during her “Period of Darkness” in dealing with her son when she stated, “I acted as if [God’s] promises were true, and his promises were true.” Furthermore, she added that her first response in trying to solve difficult homeschooling problems was “prayer—first of all.”

Other homeschoolers \((n = 5, 50\%)\) have learned to reappraise their anxiety in different ways. As a case in point, Caroline has adapted to view her anxiety as an indication that she is mentally sharp and paying careful attention to her children’s education. In her interview, she described how she uses her anxiety to hone her awareness:

Honestly, I even feel fairly positive about my anxiety about that because, okay, I’m paying attention. I’m not just happy with being in my comfort zone. I am still paying attention to how they feel and what’s going to be good for them. So, maybe I should feel some anxiety about that. I should—not anxiety—but I should be awake to it, and I am. So, as time goes on, honestly, even the anxiety has become somewhat positive because it’s on my radar, and it should be on my radar.

While some people, like Caroline, can learn over time to reappraise their anxiety as a positive factor, other parents implement strategies to actively regulate their physical and emotional states in anticipation of challenges. Eric explained how he utilizes his drive home from work as an intentional time to prepare himself:

Now, are there days when I don’t have peace and I’m anxious about something else outside of work or that’s going on at the house . . . ? Absolutely. So, I may not be in the best mental, emotional state to work with my child or to deal with that kind of a thing. So, I guess, realizing what my strengths are—I have an hour-and-a-half drive home from
I have a lot of windshield time that I can decompress. I can think about my day, my night, and I can think about the day ahead.

By learning to regulate their physical and emotional states, some homeschooling parents ($n = 5, 50\%$) reported developing an emotional stability that increases their HTSE for facing future challenges or homeschooling opposition. Barb reported a negative encounter she had with her school district that initially left her very distraught. Over time, however, the experience developed her HTSE, and her focus gradually shifted from the offense she suffered back to her homeschooling mission. She described her progressive response to being on a negative telephone call with a district employee:

She went on to shame me about how arrogant I must be to think that I could teach something that these other people have gone through the education to be prepared to teach, and how arrogant of me to come in thinking that I could do an adequate job, and I was doing my children a disservice. I came off that phone conversation and I was—I couldn’t help myself—I was literally shaking and my face was all red. I had never been spoken to like that by another—I don’t even remember being spoken to like that when I was a kid—but the arrogance, speaking of arrogance, that she talked to me in that particular way—another peer and fellow adult. I got off the phone, my husband looked at me and he said, “Who died? What happened?” And I told him the conversation. Well, he was ready to go down there and kick some butt. Alright? And I was like, “[husband], pearls to swine.” And I said, “The best thing that I can do is to prove them wrong with what I have done with my children.” It was interesting because that’s how I felt at the time, but then afterwards I thought, “I don’t need to prove anything to anybody. All I need to do is have the kids be better than me and get them to graduate.” I went back to
what [my husband] and I had decided: get them to graduate so they could go to Harvard, or they could be a hairdresser, or whatever. I just went back to that, and I just went on my way.

**Technological Resources.** The above source streams—mastery experiences, social influences, and physical and emotional states— all work together to foster HTSE development in homeschooling parents. However, in the current era homeschooling parents have the added benefit of using technology to access this information. The proliferation of computers and smartphones, 5G cellular technology, satellite-streamed broadband internet, statewide digital infrastructure initiatives, and online homeschooling content providers has created an environment of ubiquitous source stream information for HTSE development. Parents, whether in remote areas of Wisconsin or major metropolitan areas, can now experience digital encounters that foster their growth.

Forty percent of the participants \((n = 4)\) identified that digital resources can now provide information for content knowledge mastery, online assessment tools, and online classes. These resources serve as digital mastery experiences for homeschooling educators. Eric’s family relies on an instructional platform that provides them online access to educational content and services. He and his wife can rely on this service to affirm their progress as a successful mastery experience. Eric explained:

> We do oral reading tests, so my wife will record my daughter reading for 4 minutes and then we send it to Abeka and they grade it. That really takes time, and it takes effort, and it takes a very dedicated child. It takes a dedicated parent. It takes good internet service. It takes a lot of things that other places really don’t have to deal with that that we get to
deal with, but I feel the benefits far outweigh any of the obstacles that we would have to deal with.

Online homeschooling resources also served as a means of social influence for a few of the parents in this study ($n = 4, 40\%$). Homeschooling parents can turn to blogs, podcasts, and YouTube channels to find online social models and words of encouragement. Amanda indicated how she relies on YouTube to find social models that influence her homeschooling teaching; she shared:

I rely a lot on YouTube and watching other homeschool parents on YouTube, and how they do stuff. Actually, that’s where I got my ideas about, like the “Monday Funday”: having one day out of the week kind of be the fun courses, the fun subjects. I got that from another mom on YouTube. I can’t remember which one it was I follow so many.

Amanda’s experience also indicates how homeschooling parents can utilize digital resources to help regulate their physical and emotional states. By comparing herself with the experiences of other parents on the internet, Amanda can better tolerate the feelings that she faces while homeschooling. She explained:

A lot of the YouTuber parents or homeschool parents do a “day in the life,” where they videotape themselves teaching their kids that day, and that’s been kind of fun to see. “Why does my homeschool seem so chaotic? Is everybody’s like that?” So, getting to see other people’s homeschool experience kind of helps out a little bit with that. Not everyone is sitting in perfect little rows at home.

**Additional Contributing Factors.** While the majority of HTSE development occurs through interacting with the above source streams, there were two additional factors that the participants identified in this study. The first additional factor was the interdependence of source
streams, or how the interaction between information from the separate sources can have a combined influence on HTSE development. The second additional factor reported to contribute to HTSE development was divine intervention.

Several of the parents in this study (n = 4, 40%) indicated an interdependence of source streams. In many situations, homeschooling educators can develop their HTSE independently across multiple domains. Thus, parents can develop HTSE by relying on strong social models to show them how to teach, but they may still feel nervous doing so because their ability to regulate their physical and emotional states is weaker—having developed independently from domains impacted by their social influences. However, in some situations the strength of influence in one domain directly impacts the strength of another. In some cases, for example, the lack of content knowledge mastery may impact a person’s ability to appraise the value of a social model, or the absence of effective social influence may directly impair the ability of a parent to regulate physical or emotional states. Caroline addressed the interdependence between social influences and her own emotional states when she stated:

Like I said, I’m really an introvert, and so my general approach is to be fairly happy with no interaction with other people that much. But you could get really isolated, I think, as a homeschooling parent, and that for me is anxiety producing, which I don’t want to be the only one with my kids. I would feel vulnerable if I were because I can’t see everything.

Likewise, several parents (n = 5, 50%) identified the role of divine intervention as an additional factor in HTSE development. For parents with strong ideological convictions, there exists a perception that part of their HTSE development occurs due to the influence, not of source stream information, but of God’s providence. Faith described this by stating, “I think it was almost a supernatural something that just kept me going and made me realize that this was
something I had to do for my kids. It was an intentional feeling that I had. I think it was just, almost, a grace that God gave me.”

**Appraisal.** Regardless of what source stream information facilitates the development of HTSE within homeschooling educators, all sources are subject to appraisal by the parent. What parents believe about themselves, the source of new information, the content of the message, and the context of the encounter will directly impact whether or not source stream information will change their HTSE. Homeschooling teachers can have appraisals that are positive, an assessment that will grow HTSE; negative, an assessment that will diminish HTSE; or conflicting, an assessment that may skew how source stream information impacts HTSE development.

Positive appraisal occurs when homeschooling parents consider a source or event as meaningful and relevant to the reassessment of their self-referent judgements about their knowledge and skills to face present or future scenarios. Their positive value-judgment informs how they feel about themselves in relation to the new information. For example, when I earlier described Gwen’s views on Charlotte Mason, her story contained an appraisal. Because Gwen appraised that Charlotte Masson was “smarter” than her, she viewed that social model as positive and assimilated the information into her own praxis. When positive appraisals are authentically matched to one’s own potential ability, it raises HTSE. Caroline defined how appraisal and authenticity work together. She opined, “I think you do have to be real with yourself about being able to do it. . . . The challenges in my life have made me realize that I think I can do it.”

In contrast, negative appraisals occur when parents determine that source stream information is not valuable or relevant to their experience or that they cannot readily assimilate the information within their context. For example, Diane discussed her experience observing other homeschooling teachers; she stated:
I think early on there was a little bit of a comparison game of, “Oh, I can’t do that. Oh, she’s actually wearing her baby on her back and she’s teaching! How’s she doing that?”

But I don’t do that anymore because we’re all different. Because Diane determined she could not match the social model, she dismissed it with a negative appraisal that allowed her to justify not following the social model because “we’re all different.” However, the negative appraisal caused her to perpetuate a negative self-referent judgement of her own ability in contrast to other homeschooling parents to the point where she stopped making comparisons altogether.

In addition to positive and negative appraisal, there were two parents who indicated times of conflicting appraisal. In these instances, parents positively appraised source stream information but could not assimilate the information into their HTSE development due to limitations of personality or context. For example, Faith recalled positively appraising the social models of parents in her HSG but not being able to follow them:

There are times, still to this day, when I say to my husband, “Boy, I wish I could have been more like those moms.” Our homeschool family was a small homeschool family; we were two children, and I’d have homeschool moms in our co-op that had several. I don’t know if it’s because of my husband’s profession, or what, but we were very much, “You will stay still. You will be quiet. You will not run.” And, especially for my older son, that did stifle him a little bit; it was very tough on him to be so controlled. And I would look at some of these other moms who just, for lack of a better term, let their kids run wild. Sometimes, I wished I could just do that. Even in their own teaching methods, they were a lot more relaxed and nonchalant.
Gwen had an experience similar to Faith. She conveyed the struggle between positively appraising her peers and the limitations of her personality:

Because I’m so black and white, I have a hard time looking at other homeschoolers or other public-schoolers. I have an ideal in my head of what should be happening, but when I look at my other friends—who don’t check off every box—sometimes I recognize that they might have an emotionally healthier situation. I recognize that that’s better to not have to check everything off, not have to finish, every time, your little thing. . . . I almost have a feeling like they’re not doing it right if they’re not getting all the way through. I know logically that it isn’t true, but it’s the emotion I have to struggle against when I see other people doing that.

**HTSE Multipliers.** Because appraisal dictates the extent to which source stream information influences HTSE development, it is not surprising that every participant indicated circumstances in which appraisal bias caused particular events, achievement, or social influences to more profoundly influence HTSE development. In these cases, some sources of information had greater influence than others based on how parents’ biased appraisal multiplied the positive or negative influence of the source stream information by making rewards more meaningful and failures either more significant or more low-stakes (see Table 10).

**Table 10**

*Types of HTSE Multipliers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Bond</td>
<td>The unique, intimate attributes of the family relationship give greater emotional meaning to successful mastery experiences, which results in greater HTSE development.</td>
<td>9 (90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Sub-Code</td>
<td>Description &amp; Example Quotation</td>
<td>Frequency, ( n ) (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spousal Support</td>
<td>The unique, intimate relationship between spouses results in an enhanced appraisal of a spouse’s social persuasion that is more meaningful in building up or tearing down the self-referent beliefs of homeschooling parents than the persuasion of others. Barb: “I knew that I had a partner—and this is so key. My husband was incredibly supportive. He has been my absolute rock, and not only when I felt like I didn’t know what I was doing. He would say to me, he would let me know in his words and in his actions, how much he believed in my ability to homeschool our kids.”</td>
<td>9 (90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Stakes Risk Taking</td>
<td>Homeschooling families agentically take more risks due to the safety net of alternative schooling to fall back on. When the risks pay off, the success feels more significant, but when the risk fails, the forgiving nature of the family and the safety net lessens the blow to HTSE as the family learns together through the struggle and operates as a team. Irene: “My kids will let me know if I need to chill out and relax by the way they’re acting and responding to me or if they’re just getting a lot of mental blocks and are acting out. . . Then, sometimes, I’m not getting the concept across to the kids—it’s just not working—so my husband will come and he can help me figure out ways to get the concept across to the kids.”</td>
<td>4 (40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family Bond.** One of the most mentioned multipliers of HTSE development that results from parents’ appraisal bias was the presence of the family bond. While professional teachers may be excited to see their students succeed, parents are emotionally bound to their children and feel a heightened sense of pride at their successes. This heightened emotional response triggers a more significant appraisal of mastery experiences. Thus, when parents successfully teach their children how to read or watch their eyes light up as they understand a difficult concept, the
resulting feelings multiply the impact on HTSE development. Amanda expressed this feeling when she stated:

Seeing her face light up and seeing it click in her head when she’s doing a math problem and realizing, “Oh, I understand it now.” It was just, it’s just amazing. And that’s my favorite part about the successes, too, is seeing that excitement the kids feel when they do good, seeing how proud of themselves they are when they are successful.

Inversely, the family bond multiplier can also have a negative influence on HTSE if the parent perceives they did not maximize the benefit of the family relationship. For example, Faith questioned if she missed the joy of the family bond multiplier by overemphasizing structure. She asked, “Did I enjoy the moment or was I busy planning the next theological lesson we were going to study? Did I enjoy them rather than rush, rush, rush, rush, rush?” Her questioning, in and of itself, seemed to form a negative multiplier that impacted her HTSE development to the point that she is still asking these questions year later, despite her reporting that her children told her, “Oh, mom, you were way laid back, way relaxed.”

**Spousal Support.** Just like the family bond, the power of the spousal relationship can create an appraisal bias that multiplies the positive or negative influence of spousal social persuasion or support. Jean commented on the type of feedback she received form her husband. She stated, “My husband gives me good feedback. . . . He’ll comment on how he’s really proud of how the kids are doing, and things like that.” Moreover, Barb emphasized the importance of spousal support when she relayed the need for positive feedback by stating, “And especially having that come from your spouse. . . . I think that is number one. It has to come from the spouse. If the husband and wife are not on the same page, then homeschooling is infinitely more difficult.”
Perhaps the strongest example of the difference between positive and negative spousal support on the influence of HTSE development comes from Gwen’s account of homeschooling. When Gwen first started homeschooling, she did not perceive her husband’s support as emotionally effective. However, this changed over the years, and Gwen described the contrast:

I think my husband is the current strongest source. When I was first homeschooling, he was not very supportive emotionally about it because we both have very high standards. So he wanted everything to be happening immediately, all at once. . . . So, it just felt like there wasn’t a lot of success. There was always something else to do. But fast forward several years, and now I feel like my husband is constantly talking about how amazing they’re doing, how great I’m doing, how much effort I’m putting in, and how much he sees the outcome of the effort that I’m putting in, and I feel like that’s been the most relieving thing—knowing that the other person who’s there all the time, who sees everything, is like, “Wow. This is working really well.” I think that would be my most emotionally supportive thing nowadays.

**Low-Stakes Risk Taking.** Another HTSE multiplier comes from the appraisal bias found in the combination of the low-stakes environment of homeschooling and the risk-taking nature of homeschooling agency. As discussed earlier, homeschooling families tend to demonstrate more risk-taking initiative due to their agentic impulse and the realization that, in the event of homeschooling failure, there are always other schooling options available. Given this dynamic, when risk pays off, homeschooling parents perceive a greater sense of success. However, when the risk fails to pay off, the familial relationship of the homeschooling family tends to be more forgiving and more supportive. In the face of difficulty, homeschooling families support one
another as a team to rebound and recover. In her interview Jean volunteered her appraisal of the ease of homeschooling and its low-stakes. She opined:

You start out in kindergarten; it’s easy. It’s really very simple and it’s usually only just one kid at a time—unless you have twins. If you jump into homeschooling and you pull your kids out of school, they’re pretty adaptable. And there’s plenty of time to go back and teach them something if you feel like you missed something; they are sponges.

**HTSE Benefits**

Because the stabilization and influence stage serves as the period in which homeschooling parents experience the clearest and broadest exposure to source stream information for HTSE development, this stage also represents the time that parents most perceive the benefits of their developed HTSE. Not to be confused with homeschooling outcomes, the benefits of HTSE development manifest as those qualities that improve the homeschooling experience as a result of the improved homeschooling teacher. In this study, participants identified several perceived benefits of HTSE (see Table 11).

**Table 11**

*Perceived Benefits of HTSE Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agentic Control</td>
<td>The homeschooling agentic nature continues to strengthen as HTSE provides greater confidence. This results in a proactive desire within homeschooling parents to do whatever it takes to exert control over the structure, content, and delivery of their children’s education to achieve their desired outcomes. Eric: “I want to be in complete control of what happens to my children, and nobody’s going to tell me what to do for our family.”</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>As HTSE develops, homeschooling parents are left with a feeling of increased confidence in their achievements and their ability to face future challenges.</td>
<td>8 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Sub-Code</td>
<td>Description &amp; Example Quotation</td>
<td>Frequency, n (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>Homeschooling allows parents with effective HTSE to develop closer relationships with their children by reducing strife, meeting student needs, and sharing successes, which helps to improve the quality of relationships within the family as a whole. Amanda: “Well, my daughters have gotten closer—like to one another. They’re not just sisters, like, they’re best friends too. I’ve also felt like, as a family, we’re closer because we can go and take field trips whenever we want, all together. . . . We all seem to be a bit closer.”</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>With the increased confidence and positive self-referent beliefs that result from HTSE development, homeschooling parents are better equipped to endure potential setbacks and remain committed to homeschooling. Faith: “As I approached teaching my children, we were not going to give up. We were going to continue, and we were going to thrive even when we didn’t feel like we were thriving.”</td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Because HTSE development leads to teacher improvement, homeschooling educators tend to report higher levels of satisfaction corresponding to higher levels of HTSE. Caroline: “My satisfaction with it could not be higher. Honestly, I’ve been so pleased with it, which, you know, that’s just the clincher on our determination to continue.”</td>
<td>8 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>Increased HTSE helps give wisdom to homeschooling parents and the ability to maintain a healthy level of commitment to internal and external responsibilities and demands without overextending the family or dropping the ball in any areas. Diane talking about her involvement in 4-H and HSGs: “If anything, I have to be careful of my balance, because those things pull away.”</td>
<td>8 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Sub-Code</td>
<td>Description &amp; Example Quotation</td>
<td>Frequency, n (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replication of Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>As parents live out their growing HTSE, they naturally replicate their self-efficacy in their children by modeling effective strategies and facilitating student mastery experiences. Gwen: “We may fail. We learn from it. We move on. We set up a plan in how we’re going to fix it, and then we do that. So, not giving up. That’s very hard for my son, specifically. He has a really hard time with that. So, I have to model how.”</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Outlook</td>
<td>Because HTSE is built upon positive appraisals, parents begin to develop a positive outlook that helps them appraise problems as less threatening, which regulates physical and emotional states and perpetuates HTSE benefits. Caroline: “I have an optimistic feeling about those issues the further we go on, because the further we go on, the more I realize that any anxiety that I did have about doing it has either been resolved or have been proven to be things that, with time, will resolve.”</td>
<td>4 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Improved HTSE helps to regulate physical and emotional states, which facilitates stable environments as parents remain patient with students, address root problems, and better manage classrooms. Irene: “I learned through that experience that getting it all done is not always worth it if it’s going to be a negative atmosphere. You can learn a lot more when it’s a happy and good atmosphere.”</td>
<td>8 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>By nature, effective homeschooling parents become social influencers for the next generation of homeschooling families as they transition to veteran status. Diane: “I love to encourage people, like, “You can do high school. You really can.” Because I think high school really scares in my world; my friends, they get really nervous about it.”</td>
<td>8 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>As HTSE develops through self-referent beliefs, homeschooling parents learn to be mindful of how their thinking impacts their teaching. They also learn to identify their agentic limitations. Diane: “When it comes to other people messing around with how we make it to those goals, I figured out a while back that I can’t control all of that.”</td>
<td>4 (40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As parents exercise greater agentic control, they provide an environment of flexibility that facilitates academic freedom for students to control their learning schedules, advance through subjects at their own pace, and finish schooling free from the grade-level and schedule restrictions emplaced by institutional schools.

Amanda describing her child: “She is actually, technically, supposed to be in third grade. She is working at a fourth-grade level on all subjects, that includes art and stuff like that. She also is reading at, like, a sixth- or seventh-grade level.”

**Note.** The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Agentic Control.** Just as agency grows the desire to homeschool, so effective homeschooling grows the desire to exercise agency. As HTSE develops a homeschooling parent’s trust and reliance on their own knowledge and abilities, it also fosters parents’ conviction and action to do whatever it takes to achieve their desired homeschooling outcomes through controlling the structure, content and delivery of their children’s education. The HTSE benefit of agentic control reportedly manifests in how parents apply their control over their homeschool (see Table 12).

**Table 12**

*Manifestation of Agentic Control as a Benefit of HTSE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, ( n (%) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>As parents demonstrate confidence in their control over the content and schedule of instruction, parents freely alter curricula, routines, settings, and requirements, as needed, to facilitate effective learning for their students with flexibility over institutional rigidity.</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Sub-Code</td>
<td>Description &amp; Example Quotation</td>
<td>Frequency, n (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingenuity</td>
<td>Homeschooling teachers demonstrate instructional risk-taking that fosters innovation and creative teaching that is engaging and individualized based on the needs and interests of the students.</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heidi: “So, just being creative and remembering what my mom said, ‘Your homeschool doesn’t have to look like a public school.’”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
<td>If parents cannot creatively deliver effective instruction, their desire to succeed motivates them to augment their instruction with a broad range of additional resources that overcome any limitations that might otherwise stifle ingenuity and flexibility.</td>
<td>7 (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barb: “The best thing—one of the best things—that we did was, since we are right down by the university, we had Spanish tutors, we had biology tutors. And it wasn’t tutors because the kids didn’t understand what they were doing. It was a tutor because these kids really loved the topic and they wanted to go deeper.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>The desire to control outcomes leads to a heightened sense of order and intellectual structure that results in better research, organization, planning, preparation, and adherence to plans.</td>
<td>6 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amanda: “I love planners. I’m a big planner person in everything. I always make a planner at the beginning of the school year; I go through and do in order how everything is laid out in the curriculum. I’m really good about that.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Sacrifice</td>
<td>In order to control the outcome of homeschooling, parents will make sacrifices, if necessary, to achieve their agentic goal to ensure a successful education for their children.</td>
<td>3 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jean: “Figuring it out myself and taking notes on myself, this is it. It’s me choosing the sacrifice of my time to get them that opportunity. It just takes a little more effort on my part.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Flexibility.** For parents who decided to homeschool based on an agentic drive, the ability to have agentic control over the content and style of instruction represents a tantalizing benefit of HTSE development. As homeschooling parents manifest their agency in controlling their children’s education, they confidently demonstrate a willingness to flexibly make any change to the curricula, routines, environment, or requirements at any time they feel it is necessary to foster effective learning accomplishments. For example, Heidi discussed her willingness to change her curriculum and mix-and-match programs based on finding what works best for her children. She explained:

> So I decided I should probably find something that was a little bit better in terms of not everybody doing a separate grade, but something we could do all together, and a friend introduced me to My Father’s World. It’s more of a Charlotte Mason approach, if you will, where all kids can work on the same material at the same time. That seemed to work a lot better, because then we could all be in the same subject at the same [time]—the only thing that they had to do differently was their math and their language arts. I did Abeka for language arts because I feel like it’s a stronger program.

While the flexibility of agentic control can apply to curriculum content, it also can influence how a parent implements their daily schedule. Gwen described her willingness to flexibly adapt her learning routine to accommodate the needs of her child in a way that was unusual to a child from a public-school setting. She recalled:

> But, as a parent, I’m willing to take that extra 15 minutes to discuss important heart issues of things and then I’ll move on. So, a lot of times, school will take longer on days that, obviously, they’re having more issues. Sometimes they just need to go jump on a trampoline and run outside for a while. I think, as a parent, it’s really nice to be able to do
that stuff. Like, we had my nephew come over the other day because he was out of school for the day. He thought homeschooling was the most amazing thing ever. One of the reasons was because you could get up and take a break when you needed to. . . . Like, those are the kinds of things that—like the freedom—were insane to him.

**Ingenuity.** The same drive that motivates the flexibility of agentic control also fosters the ingenuity to provide creative, engaging, and individually response instruction. This comes from the willingness to explore and try new things in the low-risk, agentic environment of homeschooling. Parents that benefit from sufficient HTSE development are more likely to provide innovative and effective instructional strategies in order to succeed. For example, when Irene realized that her child learns better with music, she decided to use that to her advantage. She stated, “So, I’ve learned if she is not understanding the concept, we can find a tune for it to help her learn it really fast. So, maybe she can learn it faster than other kids if it’s to a song.” Likewise, Jean also found that she can augment instruction with creative activities to foster student engagement in a difficult topic. She added:

I have art with my curriculum, but I have one child—who really loves art—and he doesn’t necessarily enjoy what we do for it. So, there are things that “you’re going to do this because you’re just going to learn how to do it,” but I can expand it and have him do extra things, like dioramas, building things, carvings, and drawing—things like that.

**Resourcefulness.** If flexibility and ingenuity fail to provide homeschooling teachers with sufficient ability to control their educational outcomes, their resourcefulness can help bridge the gap. When their capabilities fall short, homeschooling parents’ desire to succeed motivates them to find and implement any resource necessary to overcome their limitations in providing a quality education. Thankfully, the homeschooling community provides a plethora of resource
networks. For example, Diane discussed her access to the author of her curriculum, when she stated:

So he, the author of the books, encouraged the students to email him and said that when [my son] had a question he could email him. So, that’s another cool thing about homeschool curriculum, it’s generally that they are written by people who are approachable, so you can have access to them. I just think that’s cool.

For those parents who are not concerned about non-conformity, there are also several resources that homeschooling parents can find outside of the homeschooling community. Groups like 4-H, chambers of commerce, local colleges, and even school districts have resources accessible to homeschooling parents to augment their children’s education. For instance, Heidi told of a time where she needed to provide mathematics instruction beyond her comfort level. She ended up turning to the public-school district for assistance, as she recalled in her interview:

I think I know enough to where I could get my kids up to the eighth-grade algebra and geometry. Any higher-level math beyond that I was counting on my husband because he’s a computer programmer and he’s awesome at that. And I said, “If you don’t want to tutor them, then let’s send them to the public-school for those classes.” So, I don’t know if you know, but different states allow two classes in the public-school for homeschooled kids. So, with our twins, we did that.

**Organization.** As parents exert their agentic control to achieve their desired educational outcomes, their HTSE tends to lead to an increased sense of order and intellectual structure that provides better research capabilities, greater organization, more effective planning and preparation, and an ability to adhere to plans. As Gwen indicated:
I like to get things done fully and I’ll make sure that things are finished—I make sure that we’re doing the work well. In my mind, I always think that if I can’t do it as well or better than the teachers in the school I would choose, then I should let them do it. So, I like schedules; I like routines.

Homeschooling parents like Gwen utilize organized routines to help establish important learning cues for their children. Although homeschools often have very flexible schedules and customs, the practice of routine within the fluidity of most homeschools serves to mentally prepare students for learning. Amanda mentioned this in her homeschool teacher self-efficacy survey. She stated, “We also start every morning with a read aloud, which helps the children know it’s school time.”

**Self-Sacrifice.** If all else should fail, homeschooling parents reported a willingness to make sacrifices of themselves, if that is what it takes, to ensure they successfully control the outcomes of education. As Gwen discussed her emotional and physical response to homeschooling, she commented:

> It is the hardest thing I’ve ever done because I like to be alone; I like to be contemplative—I like to think about the empirical things. But when you are with children it’s never that way. It doesn’t ever feel that way. So, emotionally, it’s extremely draining for me. So, I have to constantly be making a choice, like I said, every day, that this is what is best.

For Gwen, homeschooling requires constantly being with other people in her family, a practice that is antagonistic to the needs of her introverted personality. While Gwen may be an effective teacher, her current praxis compromises her well-being. However, her desire to see her children
succeed overpowers her instinct of self-preservation. She described the parental self-sacrificial nature during her interview:

I feel like that’s one of those things where, as a parent, I’m willing to sacrifice [my life] to make sure that my kids would be able to recognize who they are, how they work, and what’s going to be the thing that they are most passionate about. Nobody wants that more than a parent, and we’re willing to sacrifice anything to make sure that our kids are whole and happy and know what God created them to do so that they can actually have joy in what they’re doing. As I said, I don’t really enjoy homeschooling, but that’s the sacrifice.

**Confidence.** The agentic nature of homeschooling parents to exert control over their children’s educational outcomes may stem from the increased confidence that accompanies growing HTSE. As source stream information builds a feeling of success and positive self-referent views within homeschooling educators, their confidence builds. Because confident parents approach future challenges with an increased expectation for success, they are more willing to take risks and exercise control. Caroline indicated that this confidence also comes from knowing she is surrounded with the right tools; she explained, “I feel like we have really good resources. So, I’m kind of confident that any issue that we have we’re going to be able to problem solve it to some extent.” Diane also expressed this sentiment: “Just knowing that, you know, I have people in this, the shift came, I guess, from, ‘Can I do it?’ and ‘I’m a little nervous.’ to ‘I have this!’”

**Improved Relationship.** Often, with increased confidence comes decreased anxiety. Within the homeschooling family relationship dynamic, less anxiety brings improved relationships. Because homeschooling parents have greater confidence, they can interact with their children with reduced strife, they can take more risks to meet student needs, and they can
foster successful experiences with their children. Consequently, the quality of the family relationship improves.

As parents draw closer to their children through improved HTSE, they are more likely to have an intuitive awareness of their children’s interests and needs and a more agentic desire to meet them. Thus, according to participants \((n = 10, 100\%)\), improved relationship contributes to a more personalized instruction. Caroline addressed this capability when she compared her ability to know and address her children to her inability to do so as a professional educator; she described:

I can see what it is [my children] are learning. I can see what it is that they’re struggling with. If I spend enough time on it, I probably will be able to figure out why they’re having problems with it, whether it’s an approach, or it’s the amount of time spent, or whatever. The things that got missed for me, I’m hoping, will not get missed for them because there’s just me and them—it’s not a teacher with 25 students, and the teacher only has them for a year, and then they move on, and now they have a new teacher who has to learn them. I felt like I was perpetually at a disadvantage with my students because of that.

Having a closer relationship with their children may also allow homeschooling parents the ability to better regulate behavior in their homeschool. By building a positive family relationship through improving the quality of time spent together through increasing HTSE, two parents reported establishing an environment of clear expectations and cooperative learning. For example, Irene indicated that the time a parent spends with their children helps effectively manage the classroom; she stated that her strategy included “being around and present to make sure that they’re following the rules.”
**Perseverance.** Another benefit of HTSE manifests as increased perseverance. As positive self-referent judgements continue to form, homeschooling educators may be more willing to fight their way through the setbacks and challenges of homeschooling. These parents are more likely to remain committed to homeschooling because their interaction with source stream information informs their belief that they will make it through. Moreover, their homeschooling experience becomes an intrinsic part of their personal identity, which makes the notion of giving up unconscionable. Barb defined it this way:

> When you have a kid that is sick and you feel like they aren’t going to get any better, how do you maintain the resolve to get that kid better? You know? When you got a kid that isn’t getting along with the scoutmaster, or something like that in scouts, or maybe having trouble in choir or hand bells, or whatever, and there is an issue, do you bail? What do you do? How is that any different? I mean, homeschool is life. Homeschool is just life. You don’t bail on life.

**Satisfaction.** The perseverant nature of homeschooling parents with ample HTSE development may also contribute to their feeling of satisfaction when they overcome challenges. As homeschooling teachers develop HTSE, they tend to improve as educators because of their ingenuity, which contributes to corresponding satisfaction with outcomes. Irene described this progression by stating, “So far, it’s gotten better and better, and I enjoy it more and more. I see the benefits a lot better than I did back then.”

In the same way that parents with improved HTSE experience greater satisfaction, parents with less developed HTSE reported their satisfaction with greater hesitancy. As discussed earlier, Diane’s experience suggested the possibility of less developed HTSE than her peers. Consequently, when she described her satisfaction with homeschooling she vacillated,
stating, “I feel like I’m doing a little [back and forth between] very satisfied to taking the good days with the bad days.”

**Balance.** Part of parent satisfaction with homeschooling may come from the HTSE benefit of maintaining a healthy management of internal and external responsibilities and demands. When HTSE increases, homeschooling parents develop the experience and wisdom to know how much they can effectively control with their agency. This knowledge of their limitations informs what learning activities and commitments should be included or excluded to ensure the family is not overextended or placed in a state of unhealthy disequilibrium.

When it comes to external commitments, homeschooling parents with effective balance know the proper level of engagement in activities and events that will augment learning without detracting from the foundational mission of the homeschool. Several participants ($n = 5$, 50%) mentioned their need to limit external commitments, however good they may be. For example, after describing the social benefits his family receives from groups like 4-H, Eric discussed his decision not to participate in his church’s HSG. He stated, “We were never part of the homeschool group. We thought, ‘Oh my goodness. Just another thing to do.’”

On the other side of external commitments, families also have to balance their internal instructional commitments. According to the participants ($n = 6$, 60%), effective balance helps families navigate between too much structure and too much flexibility or too much routine and too much freedom. For example, Caroline described her instructional balance in her HTSE response by stating:

We are pretty routine oriented. We don’t keep a strict time table, but there’s an order to which we do things, which helps everyone have appropriate expectations for the day. We all know school time starts with certain things (prayers, Bible, poems, memory work,
something fun like artist or composer study, Spanish). . . . Because of the daily routine no one feels disappointed that we aren’t playing with LEGO, say, at the time we all know we expect to do math.

Balance also helps homeschooling parents maintain a healthy well-being for both teachers and students. Several parents \( n = 5, 50\% \) discussed the activities they do to maintain their physical, psychological, and emotional well-being in the face of homeschooling challenges. This includes finding equilibrium between self-sacrifice and self-care. For instance, Jean admitted, “I knitted a lot. It was a stress reliever. I think that’s why I did that. I don’t do that now, but when the kids were younger, I needed to do something other than change diapers and feed people.”

**Replication of Self-Efficacy.** As homeschooling parents exert control, persevere, and demonstrate balance, they also conduct their homeschools in such a way as to naturally replicate their self-efficacy in the lives of their children. By modeling effective behavior and by facilitating student mastery experiences, parents ensure that their children develop their own sense of student self-efficacy. Homeschooling parents become conduits of source stream information and facilitators of self-efficacy-building mastery experiences for their children.

In this study, most of the participants \( n = 8, 80\% \) described scenarios in which their instruction created moments for students to generate mastery experience for the development of their own self-efficacy. Parents encouraged their students to research their own answers or work independently to solve problems. In Irene’s family, she encouraged independent learning activities. She described:

At certain points, if you don’t have the time to sit down and work with them, have them do some more independent things and find different things. Like, I got some subtraction,
addition, multiplication, and division wrap-ups. So, I did the wrap-ups and the music CDs and I enjoy that a lot more. So, just finding different things that can be independent and not necessarily me sitting down there with them for 6 hours a day.

In addition to creating mastery experiences, a majority of parents ($n = 8, 80\%$) reported serving as sources of social influence for their kids. They provided social persuasion, social models, or blends of both. For example, Jean described helping her children develop a value for learning. She stated, “I think they value what they see us value. So, showing that we, parents, have a love for learning helps them value it as well.”

**Positive Outlook.** Another benefit of HTSE development manifests itself in the ability of homeschooling parents to appraise problems as less significant. Because HTSE develops in people based on their own appraisals, the more parents learn to appraise situations as valuable and meaningful for their development, the more they see challenges as possibilities for growth. This also helps homeschoolers regulate their physical and emotional states by diminishing the emotional intensity of perceived threats. For example, despite having faced homeschooling opposition and having recent deaths in the family from the COVID-19 pandemic, when asked to describe her solutions to difficult problems, Amanda indicated that she did not appraise any of these problems as major. She said, “Huh, I don’t think we’ve really ever come across any problems—major problems. Um, trying to think of any of that.” Gwen, also, relied on a positive outlook to reappraise her homeschooling difficulties; she indicated:

I feel like my emotionally draining failures and recognizing that I’m not ever going to be perfect has been something that drives forward the idea that this is exactly what we’re teaching our children. Right? Failure is okay. Failures is progress in motion.
**Stability.** Just as HTSE provides homeschoolers with a positive outlook, it also promotes overall stability through the regulation of physical and emotional states. The benefit of stability helps educators remain calm in the face of student behavioral outbursts or social opposition—allowing teachers to focus on rational response rather than reacting in dysregulation. This stability can help parents better manage their classrooms, as Eric implied, “When I help my child with a difficult problem, I try to stay calm and focus on the issues, not attack the person.” Moreover, Faith—who, as discussed earlier, experienced the heartache of reacting to her child in anger—discussed her stability by stating, “I have more experience in trying to calm myself as a teacher than in calming my students!”

**Influence.** Perhaps as a result of their positive outlook and stability, another benefit of growing HTSE results in the natural influence homeschooling parents have on other parents. Just as homeschool parents naturally replicate their self-efficacy in their children, mature homeschooling educators transitioning to veteran status naturally provide social influence for people following behind them in the lifecycle. Parents may exert their influence by serving in leadership of HSGs, by mentoring, or by providing social models for others. As a case in point, after discussing the influence her mentor had on her development, Amanda discussed her transition into that role. She stated:

She was always very encouraging and vice versa. I’ve gotten to that point, too, where I have some friends that I was the first person they went to when they started homeschooling. So, when I see them saying how they’re having a rough day, or this day of homeschool was rough. It’s like, “Don’t worry. There’s always tomorrow, you know. You got this.”
**Self-Awareness.** Given the profound influence homeschooling teachers with ample HTSE have on both their students and other homeschooling families, it is appropriate that another benefit of HTSE development is the awareness of how thinking impacts one’s actions and acceptance of limitations. These parents’ metacognitive realizations inform their awareness of how their thoughts influence how they teach others and how they react to situations outside of their agentic control because they have recognized how their self-referent beliefs impact their HTSE. For instance, Faith demonstrated self-awareness of her own limitations while selecting curricula; she explained:

You can say a lot about a child’s learning style, and that indeed is important, but the child eventually is going to have to learn all learning styles, because whatever job they have, or if they go on to the academic setting, it might not be as flexible. So, one of the main things I looked at was my teaching style. Will this work with how I’m wired as the teacher? Certainly, our education is student centered, but I didn’t want it to be overly student centered, where I was doting on my children. It had to work for me, as well.

**Unbound Academic Mobility.** As parents manifest the benefits of their HTSE development, it is fitting that these benefits also impact the students in home-based education. While most student benefits occur during the outcome stage of the HTSE lifecycle, in this stage, homeschooled students benefit from their parents’ agentic nature by an environment of flexible academic mobility. While students in an institutional setting are generally subject to rigid schedules, grade levels, and compulsory attendance through the end of their senior year, many homeschooled students in this study were able to exercise partial control over the independent aspects of their daily schedules, they had mobility to work on learning material that was independent of their overall age or grade level, and they were able to dispense with compulsory
attendance when they finished all their high school requirements—regardless of the academic calendar.

A few parents (n = 3, 30%) reported specifically mentioned granting their children the freedom to complete daily assignments according to their leisure, which provided students at least partial control over their daily schedule. Gwen, for instance, provides her children with independent work to do on their computers, and she indicated, “When they’re finished, then they can finish doing their independent work. Whenever they’re done, then they’re done.”

With a flexible, independent schedule also comes the freedom to work at appropriate ability levels without regard to an arbitrary, one-size-fits-all grade classification. For example, Diane reported of her child that “she just turned 8, so she’s technically a second grader. That’s what we have her listed at for 4-H, but she’s like a third-grade math and science, or social studies . . . a couple of subjects she’s ahead.” Thus, students like Diane’s daughter have the opportunity to freely move around grade levels without limitations so as to find an appropriate learning challenge.

Because students have the freedom to advance academically as they are able, they also have the potential to graduate early—without regard for the academic calendar. Barb shared how her children learned this difference after one child reenrolled into the public-school system. She recounted:

She was done with all her [advanced placement] stuff in the beginning of May; she had taken all the tests. . . . So, now she was, for all intents and purposes, done with school, but, because she had to put in the days, she had to go to school every day and watch movies. They watched Up, they watched—I don’t remember the other movies—but she had so much work to do and she wanted to be working on it. I said, “[Daughter], you’re
in the system, honey. You gotta play the game.” Because they would not give her her diploma unless she sat there and watched all the movies, because you have to check the box. It was a good lesson for everybody. [My other daughter] was the next one coming up; she’s like, “Hell no! I’m not going to go to school all the way through.” So, she did all of her clubs that she could, and she ended up starting over at the [local university].

**Homeschooling Threats**

In addition to the benefits homeschooling parents enjoy, they must also face challenges during the stabilization and influence stage that threaten to derail their homeschooling journey and force an early exit from the homeschooling community. While there are many non-HTSE factors within the homeschool lifecycle that will lead homeschooling educators to reevaluate their agentic motivation to teach a child at home, homeschooling threats represent a negative experience, circumstance, or condition that demoralizes, decreases HTSE, stunts HTSE growth, or results in a dissatisfying homeschooling journey. The participants in this study identified three primary categories of homeschooling threats (see Table 13).

**Table 13**

*Categories of Homeschooling Threats*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Opposition     | Homeschooling parents may face opposition to their school choice directed against themselves or their children by people in the community, institutions, or their immediate family. Environmental factors, such as legal restrictions, can also represent opposing forces to homeschooling agency.  
Eric: “There have been people outside our church-family, even some like my immediate family, that have said, ‘Why’d you do that? Why don’t you just put them in school? Your life would be so much easier.’” | 9 (90)           |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Homeschooling Incompatibility | Some families are ill-suited for homeschooling due to personality traits, family conflicts, or physical, psychological, or emotional challenges that can prevent one from effectively developing HTSE or experiencing the full benefits of its development, which may result in a deleterious homeschooling experience and ongoing difficulties.  
  Caroline: “I would say the one thing that I continue to have some anxiety about is the social side of it, because I am an introvert.”                                                                                   | 6 (60)           |
| Pseudo Benefits               | There are some circumstances of HTSE development that imitate authentic growth and benefits, but that are false indicators of success that serve to undermine positive outcomes by creating an inaccurate sense of maturity and growth that interferes with actual HTSE development.  
  Barb: “The homeschoolers I’ve met with now aren’t interested in mentoring. They’re not interested in being mentored because they don’t need to be mentored—they have the internet.”                                        | 9 (90)           |

*Note.* The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Opposition.** Inevitably, homeschooling parents will face some form of opposition to their decision to homeschool because it represents an agentic defiance to the social normative experience of institutional schooling. As Caroline observed:

There’s like this kind of tacit or passive disapproval, and I don’t think that’s my insecurity speaking; I think it’s people. The norm is public schooling here, and people don’t understand why you would want to do anything different because it seems to work for them. Although, I would argue that’s because they don’t know there’s something better. But I don’t think it’s something that has crossed their radar a lot, and there is some tacit resistance to doing anything different—that’s mostly the form it takes.
The opposition to homeschooling exists on a spectrum of resistance from passive curiosity to active disapproval, and it can take multiple forms (see Table 14).

**Table 14**

*Types of Homeschooling Opposition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, ( n (%) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Opposition</strong></td>
<td>Opposition directed toward homeschooling parents by people, institutions, or immediate family that question or condemn the decision to homeschool or criticize the process. Faith: “My father-in-law was on the school board for the public school; he had a hard time—he had a hard time with a lot of our decisions.”</td>
<td>9 (90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Opposition</strong></td>
<td>Opposition directed toward homeschooling students by people or institutions that harass students for their parent’s decision to homeschool through questioning or criticizing that also impacts the parent’s HTSE development. Amanda: “Then it was people, random people, at the grocery store complimenting me on my kids and stuff like that, or people quizzing my kids out in public.”</td>
<td>3 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Limitations</strong></td>
<td>Financial limitations, legal restrictions, or lack of access to instructional support can represent an environmental opposition to school choice that makes homeschooling more difficult or impossible. Caroline: “Now, we’re in a position that I can stay home with the kids and school them because my husband works. Things can change, and I wonder about that.”</td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

*Primary Opposition.* The most prevalent form of opposition comes in the form of that which is directed at parents who make the decision to homeschool. However, even within this mode, parents can experience primary opposition from multiple sources. For example, participants reported opposition from other people \( (n = 8, 80\%) \), institutions \( (n = 1, 10\%) \), and immediate family \( (n = 2, 20\%) \).
External opposition to homeschooling, or that which comes from people outside the home, was the most commonly reported form of primary opposition. In these instances, parents face questions, concerns, or criticisms from strangers, friends, or extended family members. Diane provided an example of this type of opposition. She stated:

I was in Walgreens one day, and—I’m from Louisiana and I come from a very sarcastic family, and sometimes that pops out—one of my kids, I guess it was my oldest, was standing there next to me. This woman, she’s like, “Oh, you are out of school today?” He was like, “No. I’m homeschooled.” He was probably 9 or 10 at the time. She kind of looked at me and she said, “Well, when is he going to experience the real world?” And I kind of looked at her and thought, “Maybe it’ll click with you in a minute.” I probably get more people that, they’re not necessarily opposed to homeschooling, but they’re really pro-public-school, and that’s a little bit of a different spin.

Gwen also commented on this type of opposition, which she feels stems from the non-conformity of homeschooling families. She stated:

I think most people think it’s weird. They think, socially, everybody is supposed to be the cookie-cutter, exact situation. All kids, they’re supposed to be around a ton of kids their same age all the time. So, when they first hear about homeschooling, it’s weird or they think you’re trying to—it’s almost like people are offended that you’re homeschooling. In some way, their first reaction is either offense—offended—or defensive, like we’re trying to be different than them, which is a little weird to them.

In addition to external sources, Barb reported a form of primary opposition that came from institutional sources. While her physical and emotional response was discussed earlier, her interaction with her local school district also illustrates the type of institutional opposition that
exists toward homeschooling families. She recalled the time she was trying to obtain the history books that the school district was throwing away:

So, anyway, I call over to the department of education and I talked to the woman—some librarian type person; I don’t remember her name anymore. But I said, “I understand that these books are being thrown out.” And she said, “Yes, indeed, they are.” And I said, “Well, I would like to procure those.” And she said, “Well, what for?” . . . I said, “I’m part of a homeschool community, and we would love to get ahold of these books.” And she said, “Oh! You don’t want those books” in this condescending sort of way. . . . And she said, “Well, you know, what grades are you teaching?” And I said, “Well, all grades.” And she said, “Look. Do you have a degree?” And I said, “Well, actually, yes I do.” Because I do have a degree, and it happens to be in finance, but you know, whatever. But then she said, “Well, but do you have an educational degree?” And I said, “No, it’s actually in finance.” . . . Then she said, “You do not want those books because you would not want to be teaching your children all of these wonderful facts using cast offs.” And I was like, “Cast offs?” And then she went on to shame me.

Another form of primary opposition that can cause greater turmoil manifests itself in the internal opposition put forth by immediate family members. In these cases, homeschooling parents face mounting resistance to homeschooling from unsupportive spouses or their growing children. This type of opposition represents a greater challenge than external opposition because of the enhanced influence of the spousal or family bond that intensifies the appraisal of the threat and results in a greater likelihood that parents may exit homeschooling. For example, Barb recalled the difficulty she faced with her son:
We ended up allowing him to go to [a private school] because what he did is—he has a little bit of a stubborn streak—he would not work for us. So, I had homeschooled him up through freshman year, and he did maybe half a year’s worth of work because he didn’t care about stuff anymore. . . . And there comes a time that I had to make the decision with [my husband] that it was more important that we held onto our relationship with our son and let homeschooling kind of go by the wayside.

**Secondary Opposition.** Homeschooling educators face another significant threat when people or institutions harass their children as a result of the parents’ school choice. Like primary opposition, students can face opposition from multiple sources, and when they do, parents must deal with the stress of this flank attack. Faith described how family members would harass her children, which caused her to have to be on the defensive for her kids; she stated, “We have to justify our actions a lot to people, or over a Thanksgiving dinner where someone started drilling your kids on math facts to make sure they’re learning.” Moreover, Barb described how this type of opposition can also come from institutional sources:

People don’t want to deal with me. Okay? That’s fine. I have no issue with that. I have no problem with that. So, what they’ll do then is they’ll deal with my kids. [They’ll] wait until I’m gone and then they will take it out on my kids, because adults are jerks sometimes. That happened to [my son] at [the private school]. You can’t do anything when they’re calling them out in the classroom in front of his peers—15 years old, who has tried to make a go of it, and he’s got to decide if he’s going to throw his family under the bus or if he’s going to be ostracized. Jeez! That’s a hard one! My girls, the bus driver would just talk about how stupid homeschooling was. They would ask them questions and make them prove that they knew their times tables, or whatever.
Environmental Limitations. Homeschooling parents also face opposition from factors within their environment. For example, financial limitations, legal restrictions, or a lack of access to proper support can represent forms of opposition that interfere with or prohibit the decision to homeschool. Caroline described how her friend could not homeschool all of her children because of the legal restrictions imposed by custody rulings and the determinations of a former spouse; she shared:

Her husband brought four kids to the marriage, but shared custody with his previous wife. So, those kids were public-schooled because that was what [the ex-wife] wanted. So, she has experience on both ends of the spectrum because she was co-parenting those public-schooled kids, but for her own kids had chosen to homeschool.

Jean also provided another example of an environmental limitation that resulted from a family tragedy. When her mother was accidently struck by a car, the family was thrown into an unforeseen time of grief and the responsibilities of estate management that interfered with their homeschooling. Jean recollected:

Well, we had kind of a tragedy in our family; a year-and-a-half ago, my mother passed away. I’m an only child, so I had to take care of everything. So, I’m also my kids’ teacher; I just didn’t have time to do all the school that I planned to do or wanted to do with them. I felt like I really didn’t do a very good job for that year-and-a-half.

Homeschooling Incompatibilities. In addition to the opposition homeschooling families face, some parents will encounter internal aspects of personality, family conflict, or physical, psychological, or emotional challenges that result in an incompatibility with the demands of homeschooling. These incompatibilities prevent one from effectively developing HTSE or enjoying its full benefits. Certain traits or circumstances have the potential to create a deleterious
homeschooling environment full of ongoing difficulties that may cause a homeschooling parent to be dissatisfied, frustrated, or unwilling to continue (see Table 15).

**Table 15**

*Potential Factors of Homeschooling Incompatibility*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maladaptive Cognitions</td>
<td>Negative or distorted patterns of thinking can create long-term misappraisal of source stream information that interferes with proper HTSE development. Due to a disassociation between themselves and social influences, parents will dismiss sources of growth and instead rely on agentic motivations and greatly restricted source streams for perseverance in homeschooling. Diane: “I mean, I guess just my confidence is in God; it’s not myself.”</td>
<td>2 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low HTSE</td>
<td>If parents fail to adequately develop their HTSE, they are unlikely to withstand the rigor of homeschooling and the corresponding stress. Amanda: “And I have told her over time, you know, it’s not for everyone. Not everyone can do that. . . . But she realized that she can’t do the schooling; she just doesn’t have the patience, and stuff like that, for it.”</td>
<td>2 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>When parents attempt to maintain an unsustainable self-sacrifice, such as trying to overcome limiting personalities or learning/teaching styles, they can experience psychological, emotional, or physical drain that threatens their ability to remain in the homeschooling community. Diane: “I’ve had depression, anxiety, definitely a sense of ‘I can’t do this’ some days.”</td>
<td>3 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Needs Challenges</td>
<td>Some parents may struggle teaching students with moderate to severe special needs without adequate support, resources, or additional training. Consequently, parents’ HTSE may also struggle due to how the challenges of the special needs impact the parents’ appraisal of mastery experiences and social influences on their regulation of physical and emotional states. Faith: “But just because of how he was created, those were topics that he would not excel at, and I wasn’t going to force something on him that would crush him for no other reason that he was born with this movement disorder.”</td>
<td>2 (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note. The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Maladaptive Cognitions.** Some parents, perhaps due to trauma, low self-esteem, or hostile philosophies, develop negative or distorted thought processes that routinely interfere with how they appraise source stream information and how they are able to adjust their self-referent beliefs. Because of these maladaptive cognitions, some parents will dissociate from social models and dismiss opportunities to develop HTSE. For example, it was mentioned earlier that Diane grew up in an environment where she felt inadequate. Consequently, she appears to guard herself against current feelings of inadequacy in her homeschooling by discrediting potential sources of social influence that trigger feelings of guilt. Instead of allowing the discomfort of contrast to motivate improvement by vicariously learning from the observation of social models, she avoided the comparison altogether. When asked to define how other homeschooling parents influenced her own teaching, Diane responded:

They probably didn’t necessarily influence the homeschooling techniques as much as I had to battle through, “The grass is not greener.” Like, I can’t be that person. So, I was trying to be like, “Well, she does all these fun unit studies. I don’t do those.” And there would be guilt around that, but then after a season of time it was okay. Like, we’re still learning fun things, we just don’t dress up in medieval costumes when we do.

Because Diane’s maladaptive cognition that she could not become the type of homeschooling teacher she had witnessed, as time passed, she taught herself to ignore social models as a source stream for HTSE growth. Thus, when she described the impact of HSGs on her teaching, she only stated, “Just encouragement, and also a source of resources.”
Low HTSE. When parents do not successfully develop HTSE, they do not experience the full range of benefits that make homeschooling a satisfactory experience. Consequently, low HTSE levels tend to result in discontentment and struggle that may lead to families exiting the homeschooling lifecycle. Because Diane struggled with maladaptive cognitions, her HTSE also appeared less developed than her peers upon analysis of her responses to the HTSE survey. Her survey responses in the domain of engagement lacked specificity and indicated potential self-doubt. For example, when asked what she could do to assist other homeschooling parents help their children do well in homeschooling, she responded, “Being available to sit and listen. Answering questions as they come up if I’m able. Pray with and for them.” The fact that she questioned her ability to answer homeschooling questions—as someone who has homeschooled for 18 years—is indicative of her potentially lower than expected HTSE. Moreover, her possible impairment in the HTSE domain of engagement manifests itself in her difficulty motivating her children. She admitted:

I guess the biggest problem would be motivation. When I have a kid that has a lack of motivation, it’s difficult. My husband and I both struggled with—many times—kids that are not motivated. So, we have to continually walk with them through the idea that they have to own their responsibility and that I can’t make them learn. So, those are just very sobering realities that just eventually hit you once they get big enough to refuse to do work.

Burnout. Like maladaptive cognitions and low HTSE, burnout threatens the homeschooling process through depriving parents of the perceived benefits of HTSE development and creating an environment in which parents are physically, emotionally, or psychologically drained. Burnout results from parents’ attempts to prolong homeschooling
through unsustainable self-sacrifices, such as trying to reconcile incompatible personality traits or teaching styles in order to meet the needs of students at the expense of the teacher. Gwen, for instance, described the emotional drain she experiences by trying to continue homeschooling without an effective strategy to address her introverted personality; she stated:

I get energy from being alone—a lot of people don’t really understand introvert/extrovert, like where you gain your energy from. If you’re introverted, I gain energy from being alone. But as a homeschool parent, I’m never alone, which is extremely draining. That’s the reason that my satisfaction is low, because emotionally I’m not getting charged—ever. I’m always around four children, and my husband also works from home most of the time.

If people like Gwen do not restore a balance to their homeschooling life, they can face serious health consequences from burnout. Thus, the severity of Gwen’s burnout required professional help; she shared:

I’m going to a counselor right now; I’ve gone for six sessions to try to figure out how to be more selfish, which sounds weird. But that is the goal: to try to get me to be a little more selfish, which makes sense of what we’re talking about. So, I’m trying to get professional help to be a little more well.

**Special Needs Challenges.** Another potential threat to homeschooling comes from the challenge of educating students with special needs. While homeschooling education is well-suited to the individualized instruction that benefits many students with special needs, the challenges of providing adapted instruction to students with moderate to severe exceptional needs can impair a parent’s HTSE development in the absence of adequate support, resources, or training. Part of the challenge results from the modification of learning objectives and
instruction. Because some students will require additional time and alternative outcomes, homeschooling educators who are forced to modify their expectations may struggle to identify and appraise mastery experiences. Faith addressed the strain of this challenge when she stated:

Oh, there were days where I was a basket case. Even kindergarten, when I was first teaching phonics, I was like, “What am I doing? How am I going to do this?” Because I was dealing with that busy boy, you know, that the teachers would have had difficulty with in the classroom setting. So, there were days that I was very concerned, and I still am.

Faith’s description of her ongoing concern shows how teaching a child with special needs permanently impacted her ability to experience the confidence that comes from effective HTSE development.

**Pseudo Benefits**

In some cases, homeschooling parents’ journeys are threatened by conditions that imitate authentic growth and benefits. However, the pseudo benefits exist as false indicators of success that actually undermined genuine development by creating an inaccurate appraisal of maturity and growth that arrests authentic HTSE development. The participants in this study identified three types of pseudo benefits (see Table 16).

**Table 16**

*Types of HTSE Pseudo Benefits*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, $n$ (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over Confidence</td>
<td>Parents with extensive pre-service HTSE development may develop a false sense of confidence that leads them to ignore their need for further in-service HTSE development, which results in lower overall HTSE levels.</td>
<td>2 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Sub-Code</td>
<td>Description &amp; Example Quotation</td>
<td>Frequency, ( n ) (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Heidi: “I would say I was fortunate my mom homeschooled me. So, I already knew what it was supposed to look like.”</td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Isolation or Over-Reliance</td>
<td>The extreme use of the agentic nature to control the homeschooling context can result in unhealthy isolation. Isolation can lead to a lack of social influences for parents and “sheltered” children who struggle to adapt to real-world settings upon graduation. Jean: “But I did know of a couple families that really didn’t go outside of their group and didn’t really get to meet other people a lot. I feel like they had a bit of a struggle when they went into the real world after graduating and moving away from home.”</td>
<td>2 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents who rely too heavily on digital source stream information cannot properly validate their appraisal of the source. Moreover, the information provided is impersonal and unable to fully replace the value of face-to-face mentorship with the specific knowledge of one’s unique context. The overabundance of resources can also threaten homeschooling balance. Barb: “So, it’s kind of sad, because so much of how I dealt with things relied on my mentors. It’s different now, and ‘You don’t need mentors. All you need is the internet.’ She says with sarcasm.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

**Overconfidence.** Confidence represents a positive benefit of HTSE development. However, there are cases where too much confidence too soon can be a pseudo benefit that convinces people with arrested HTSE development that they have no need for further growth. As a result, these people—who often come to homeschooling with an extensive amount of preservice HTSE development—fail to continue learning from additional source stream information. Their false sense of confidence deceives them into believing they have highly developed HTSE, and they cannot understand why they continue to face homeschooling problems that result from their actual low HTSE levels.
As an example, Heidi approached homeschooling with a tremendous amount of confidence given her status as a second-generation homeschooler. However, the analysis of her HTSE survey responses indicated only low to moderate HTSE development overall—several of her answers lacked detail or described ineffective strategies across multiple domains. Moreover, while Heidi indicated that having sources of positive feedback makes one a better teacher, she stated, “I, personally, am not the kind of person that needs a lot of feedback in terms of ‘good job; you’re doing awesome.’” When asked about why she felt she didn’t need a lot of feedback and where her confidence comes from, she responded:

Well, partly because I was homeschooled myself. So, I have an idea what it’s supposed to look like. Whereas, a lot of people are like, “Oh! I don’t even know where to start. What does that look like, and what would I give for books?” And blah, blah, blah. Mostly, my personality, I think. My husband said I bulldoze people. Overconfident.

**Isolation.** Similar to how overconfidence threatens homeschooling, so the overuse of the agentic nature threatens homeschooling by leading to isolation. Some homeschooling parents strive to control the homeschooling environment to such an extent that they remove the majority of external influences, the interaction with which is necessary to provide social influence and growth. Furthermore, isolation can lead to having children who struggle to adapt to the real-world context upon graduation and entry into society. As Diane pointed out, “I would just say I think homeschooling should not be done alone. You really do need a cheerleader and, sadly, sometimes that is not your family.”

**Digital Isolation or Over-Reliance.** Physical isolation can also result from the over-reliance on digital sources. The prevalence and accessibility of technology and internet access can represent both a strength and a weakness. The danger of relying too heavily on digital
information is that the quality and accuracy of the source cannot be easily validated by those appraising the online information for the purpose of HTSE development. Moreover, online information lacks the personal specificity that a mentor or other social influence can provide to homeschooling parents in their unique contexts. Without face-to-face interaction with people, homeschooling parents can be left in digital isolation and can be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information without help to analyze it all.

Irene’s homeschooling situation serves as an example of potential over-reliance and digital isolation. For example, when asked about the influence of HSGs, Irene turned the conversation back to digital sources by stating, “Also, I forgot to mention before, one of the things is not like a homeschool support group, but I talked to you about the [podcast]. . . . Her podcast has been super helpful for me.” She specifically mentioned her favorite podcast on three different occasions during her interview and how important a source it is to her. However, she then described meeting with other homeschooling parents in person as “another thing on my to-do list.”

Outcome Stage

The final stage of the HTSE lifecycle is the outcome stage, in which parents anticipate or experience the outcomes of their homeschooling program in terms of academic or alternative goal achievement that are perceived as resulting from their HTSE development. In this stage, both teachers and student evaluate their results and enter into veteran status, where they decide to exit or perpetuate the lifecycle in the next generation through active or passive continuation. The participants identified three components of the outcome stage (see Table 17).
Table 17

Components of the Outcome Stage of the HTSE Lifecycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Success</td>
<td>Homeschooling parents positively or negatively assess outcomes of their homeschooling experience as resulting from the influence of the HTSE. The appraisal of success is based on their perception of accomplishment or failure. Faith: “So for me, that is an idea of success. But in the same way, if my child did not reach that academic goal, ultimately I’ve raised a couple of very nice young men.”</td>
<td>10 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Success</td>
<td>Parents can also determine some measures of success or failure based on the objective comparison of documents or artifacts that demonstrate the difference between homeschool and institutional-school students. Heidi: “I ended up taking the kids to one of those IOWA Basics tests... So, we went and did those, and my two boys that I took to the test both scored at a college level and they were only sixth and eighth grades.”</td>
<td>6 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran Status</td>
<td>After completion of homeschooling, parents and students enter veteran status. Based on their experience homeschooling, veterans will choose to exit into society or recycle into the next generation through active or passive continuation. Faith: “I lived and breathed homeschooling and academics. I’m starting—hopefully once we move—an after-school mentoring program, because my heart hurts for those kids I taught in public school.”</td>
<td>8 (80)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

Perceived Success

Because homeschooling parents serve as the administrators of their own school program, setting their own goals and measuring their own success, they typically enter the outcome stage by making their own determination of achievement and success based on their contextual perceptions. Because parents have controlled the planning, execution, and assessment of the
homeschooling program, these perceptions may be either subject or objective measurements. The parents in this study identified four potential domains of perceived success (see Table 18).

**Table 18**

*Potential Domains of Perceived Success*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, $n$ (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Academic Achievement</td>
<td>Homeschooling parents tend to report a belief that their children have achieved a higher level of academic success than their traditionally schooled counterparts. Faith: “So, it’s been extremely gratifying for my eldest to do the same—for me to say, ‘Oh! He got all As.’”</td>
<td>6 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Outcomes Achievement</td>
<td>Homeschooling parents tend to perceive that their children have successfully achieved alternative goals for education, such as adoption of ideological convictions and character development, through their homeschooling. Barb: “That’s why our ultimate goal, which was to get these kids to the best level possible and to be better than us, I think we were excellent; I think we were 100%.”</td>
<td>9 (90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Contribution</td>
<td>Homeschooling parents perceive their children as value-adding members of society. The replication of self-efficacy and agency results in the perception of children who are more willing and able to actively contribute to society through effective socialization, employment or entrepreneurialism, civic participation, and volunteerism. Amanda: “And I love that I’ve been able to show them how to be a good person and, I guess you could say, a value to society.”</td>
<td>3 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared to Succeed</td>
<td>Regardless of parent’s definitions of success, they seem to perceive that their children are prepared for any future challenge—families, careers, post-secondary education, or alternative pathways based upon individual interest. Jean: “Which, if they go to college, they’ll be prepared for it if they want to.”</td>
<td>4 (40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.
**Improved Academic Achievement.** Although academic success was not the top priority for the majority of parents in this study, it still represented an important factor in the perceived success of the homeschooling experience. In this domain, parents assessed traditional measures of academic achievement, including reading comprehension, internal test scores, internal grades, content knowledge mastery, and critical thinking skills. Thus, Gwen responded to the perceived success survey by stating:

My children are very successful academically. My children are voracious readers, can converse with adults in an appropriate and insightful way about a broad range of topics, score well when assessed with a letter grading system, make pertinent connections between old and new information, and ask great questions.

Like Gwen, other parents also expressed their perception of their children’s academic achievement in traditional academic vernacular. Although it is only known for sure that four of the participants had students who graduated from their homeschools, parents were allowed to determine on their own what artifacts they submitted as proof of their accomplishment. Three parents reported high cumulative grade point averages (GPAs) as part of their children’s transcripts (as seen in Table 19). All of the reported GPAs surpass the 2019 national average GPA of 3.11 for seniors (Nation’s Report Card, 2022).
Table 19

_Homeschooled Students’ GPAs as Reported by Participants_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing Participant</th>
<th>Document Name</th>
<th>Cumulative GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barb</td>
<td>2019 Senior Transcript for Student 4</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017 Senior Transcript for Student 2</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>2021 Senior Transcript</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019 Senior Transcript</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>2013 Senior Transcript</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The problem with parents’ perception of improved academic achievement is that parents may rely on subjective measures. For example, it may be difficult for homeschooling parents to objectively assess their children’s artwork. While parents might be able to identify developmental progress from one drawing to another or they might be able to see that their child has grasped a concept such as contour lines, they may lack the ability to assess the quality of the product in relation to other students at similar grade or ability levels. Notwithstanding, in this study, three parents provided samples of their students’ artwork as evidence in support of homeschooling success resulting from HTSE (see Figure 2).
Student Artwork Submitted as Evidence of Homeschooling Success

Alternative Outcomes Achievement. While homeschooling parents observe academic success, the majority of parents in this study reported a greater concern for the perception of successfully achieving alternative goals for their development. These goals include character
development or the adoption of the ideological convictions that are important to the parents. However, the subjectivity of this domain also makes success harder to measure. Faith addressed this in her response to the perceived success survey; she wrote,

“Academic” achievement, while important, is not the only type of achievement that was required for our family. It is more difficult to measure those other types though. Having someone compliment your children’s behavior, work ethic, or other attributes is equally satisfying in this mother’s eyes.

Despite the importance of alternative outcomes achievement for homeschooling families, it is not always easily obtained. Even in the best of circumstances, children with independent agency can make choices to reject the ideological components of their education. When parents complicate instruction with the deleterious influences of under-developed HTSE, the achievement of alternative outcomes presents a more intense challenge requiring greater emotional collateral. As Diane described:

You’re watching your kids build and exercise their world view. You’re so hopeful.
You’ve done due diligence to raise them right, but at the end of the day they have free will and they have the ability to choose. And they may not choose what you had hoped that they would choose, and it can break your heart.

**Social Contribution.** Despite the stereotype that homeschooling students are not properly socialized, homeschooling parents often perceive success in homeschooling based on the potential social contribution of their children. As parents invest their HTSE into the production of their children’s self-efficacy and agency, it creates a greater perception that children can contribute meaningfully to society through effective social interaction, vocational
contributions, civil participation, or volunteerism. For example, Barb commented during the first focus group:

 Basically, our kids are socialized and not just with their peers. . . . It’s amazing how many times people would come up and say, “Oh, my gosh! I just had a conversation with your son or daughter, and they looked at me in the eye.” . . . I guess that doesn’t always happen.

Additionally, Barb provided a document showing her daughter repeatedly volunteering at dance shows and as a martial arts instructor as well as interpreting for a mission trip to Peru as subjective evidence of her social contribution. Similarly, Diane responded to her perceived success survey by stating:

 My oldest son went on to perform above average at his job and continues to be successful. He is smart and continues to learn new things to continue to grow and be useful in his own family and for his employer.

**Prepared to Succeed.** Each of the homeschooling families seemed to have their own unique combination of academic, social, vocational, and ideological goals for their instructional programs. Moreover, many of the parents in this study defined their success by how well they felt they equipped their children to pursue whatever future they desired—giving them the tools to face any future requirements corresponding to their field of interest. In these cases, the parents perceived they were adequately able to prepare their children to succeed in any endeavor, be it family, career, academics, or others. Diane defined these goals and her efforts to facilitate her children’s success within their interests by stating:

 [My daughter] has some aspirations, but I wouldn’t say that she wants to go to a 4-year college, or anything like that, to get a degree. I will definitely set her up for that so she
can be successful. With my boys, I was like, “I want you to be a father and a provider; you need to have a degree of some sort so that you can have a good salary and provide for your family.” That’s what kept me on track. . . . Anyways, he ended up doing really well, and at the end said, “I’m thankful that you pushed me towards what you knew my interests were.”

This goal was also present in Barb’s homeschool, where she stated her desire for her children was “to be able to get into an ivy league college, if they wanted to, or to excel at a trade, if that was God’s plan for them.” Barb added, “We accomplished all our goals!”

**Comparative Success**

Although many of the above measures of success were subjectively dependent upon the perception of the parents, several parents also reported looking to objective documents or artifacts to demonstrate success in comparison to other students. For example, some parents submitted reports from standardized assessments that provided comparative evaluations of their students (see Table 20). These reports indicated that these homeschooled students performed remarkably well when compared to students in traditional schools.

**Table 20**

*Homeschooled Students’ Performance on Standardized Assessments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing Participant</th>
<th>Report Type</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barb</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Top 5% nationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>1480</td>
<td>Top 5% nationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Top 5% nationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi</td>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Top 15% nationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IOWA Form C/14</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>Top 5% nationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>WIAT III – Reading Comprehension (Grade 6)</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>&gt;12.9 Grade Equivalence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Veteran Status**

Upon completion of the HTSE lifecycle, homeschooling parents and students achieve veteran status. These veterans analyze their overall homeschooling experience and either choose to exit homeschooling and enter the general society or reenter the lifecycle with the next generation through active or passive continuation of homeschooling. Active veterans contribute to homeschooling by providing mentorship, serving as social influencers, or leading HSGs. Even veterans who had negative experiences with homeschooling can impact the future of the HTSE lifecycle by actively opposing homeschooling or passively dissuading others through their example of failure. In this study, participants described four potential veteran responses to homeschooling (see Table 21).

**Table 21**

*Potential Courses of Action for Veteran Homeschoolers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Sub-Code</th>
<th>Description &amp; Example Quotation</th>
<th>Frequency, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Active Continuation</td>
<td>Veteran homeschooling parents can actively continue the HTSE lifecycle through providing positive or negative education, mentorship, resource sharing, or leadership for subsequent homeschoolers. Barb on what she could do to help other families: “Be a mentor. Share what worked for me. Listen and allow them to process—many times, just in the sharing, one can figure out the solution to one’s own problem.”</td>
<td>6 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Passive Continuation</td>
<td>Teachers who choose to exit the lifecycle model still passively influence others through the social model of their prior homeschooling experiences—positive or negative—and the influence they have on their children. Heidi “I feel like I might get to the point where I want to retire in a sense, or I don’t want to get up every single day.”</td>
<td>2 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Active Continuation</td>
<td>Veteran homeschooled students actively perpetuate the lifecycle by positively or negatively persuading others who are considering homeschooling or by homeschooling their own children when the time comes.</td>
<td>3 (30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Passive Continuation

Jean: “My husband was homeschooled; he wanted me to try it.”

Students who choose not to actively continue an association with the homeschooling community exit into society. Their lived example serves as a passive—positive or negative—example to others concerning the efficacy of homeschooling.

Eric discussing a former homeschooler: “She’s just not motivated to do stuff. She’s not highly a perfectionist by any means. So, it’s like, ‘Holy cow! I do not want my children to turn out like that.’”

4 (40)

Note. The content of this table is ordered according to the sequence of identified axial sub-codes in Appendix L in lieu of hierarchy of frequency.

Teacher Active Continuation. Veteran homeschooling teachers have many ways they can remain active in the homeschooling community after completing their children’s course of instruction. Parents who had a positive experience can help answer questions that provide content knowledge mastery, share resources, provide social persuasion, or facilitate HSGs. As a veteran homeschooler, Faith described her transition:

After my last child graduated the old homeschool group I was part of said, “Are you coming?” I was like, “Well?” And one of the ladies’ husbands said, “Why is she going to come? She’s retired. Right?” And she said, “Well, because she knows so much.” And, again, that’s not because I know so much, but it’s just that experience. I’m sure curriculum changes—a lot of the stuff I started out with is probably way outdated—but we do have a little bit of experience, just been there done that type of thing.

People like Faith end up sharing their experience to inspire the next generation through the early stages of the HTSE lifecycle. Moreover, they share the tools they have used over the years.

Diane recalled the aid of a veteran homeschool as she was starting out:
When I began homeschooling 18 years ago, our very first year was lean. I started with no experience, of course, and had no real mentors, but I had a sister-in-law who was homeschooling at the time in another state. She was using Accelerated Christian Education (ACE), but I couldn’t afford that at the time. Somebody else was retiring—her kids were gone, her last kid was going to high school—and I’m like, “Well, I need some curriculum. How do I do that?” And she sold me her box of curriculum for like $100.00. And that’s how I started homeschooling.

**Teacher Passive Continuation.** While some veteran homeschool teachers choose to actively perpetuate the cycle, others do not. These teachers choose to remove themselves from the homeschooling community for various reasons. Nevertheless, the teachers who choose to exit the lifecycle still provide a passive influence due to the social model of the homeschooling experience they left behind. Whether positive or negative, the example of their teaching remains an influence on their children and on those who witnessed or heard about their experience. For example, Eric shared his knowledge of a homeschooling family that left a bad reputation in their wake. When the family’s daughter struggled with school, Eric said of the parents’ former teaching, “I feel like that’s the parent’s fault because they didn’t hold to a standard. They didn’t make her do that.” Thus, the family who exited the homeschooling community left a negative impression among the other homeschooling families.

**Student Active Continuation.** Just like their parents, veteran homeschooled students have the opportunity to perpetuate the homeschooling lifecycle by their active participation in encouraging other families and homeschooling their own children. For example, four participants in this study reported one or both parents having previously homeschooled. Furthermore, during the first focus group session, Barb and Diane both commented on how their children want to
homeschool their own children. Diane stated, “I only have one that’s an adult and has a family, but he knows he has options and he knows, like right now, that they’re planning on homeschooling.” Barb opined that these decisions were based on the benefits of HTSE that the students experienced and appreciated; she explained:

But the gratitude, the way they talk to each other, the way they interact with each other, the way they interact with me and their dad, the way they are coveting my library and just asking me not to get rid of stuff because they want to homeschool someday—all of those things are those benefits.

**Student Passive Continuation.** For those students who choose not to actively continue their involvement in the homeschooling community, they continue to represent passive examples, either positive or negative, of the benefits of homeschooling. When veteran students enter the mainstream society, their success represents the viability of homeschooling as a valid school choice, which serves as a social influence for those considering homeschooling in the future. For example, Caroline discussed the models of former homeschoolers that she witnessed in college:

Three of my kids’ godparents live in Oregon, and they are both homeschooling families, and their kids were very successful. They did a really good job; their family dynamic was so harmonious. Their kids were very intelligent people, knowledgeable, and able to interact in different scenarios. Really successful; they’re really successful now. Actually, a bunch of their kids who graduated have graduated college at this point. So, I think some of the fears that were voiced by people in the opposition party—like they wouldn’t be able to get into college or that they wouldn’t do well in college—were blown out of the water.
Outlier Data and Findings

Because this is a grounded theory study in which the data guide the development of the theory, I worked hard to consider all points of data and findings and incorporate them into the proposed theory without dismissing anything as an outlier. However, there were three issues that merit discussion in this section. These issues are the role of gender in HTSE development, curriculum selection, and the duration of the transition stage.

The Role of Gender in HTSE Development

The theme of gender roles and disparity in HTSE development manifested as an unexpected theme during this study. While gender may serve as a factor in how HTSE develops in homeschooling teachers, the scope of that theme was too broad to address in this study. Furthermore, the scarcity of male homeschooling teachers, as indicated by only one male participant in this study, makes collecting sufficient data difficult. However, there were several interesting observations made during this study that are worth noting.

The first observation made during this study regarding the role of gender in HTSE development was the disparity of available social support between men and women. For example, Diane commented:

I do wish that there was more connectivity for my husband. He is a very relational person. We both are very talkative. It’s kind of unusual; usually you have one spouse that really likes to talk and the other’s kind of quiet—we’re not that way. But it’s just been really weird—not that weird, just different—trying to connect to others, especially younger dads.
As the only male participant in this study, Eric added, “That is a very interesting question, because I do feel like most of homeschooling assistance is geared toward the wife and towards the mother because, quite frankly, predominantly . . . homeschooling teachers are moms.”

The question of support availability may also be related to the second observation reported by the participants regarding gender roles and HTSE development. The participants inferred that there may be a difference in homeschooling personalities between the fathers that homeschool—perhaps a niche group of highly agentic, highly motivated dads—and the mothers who often homeschool out of their families’ default assumptions of their gender roles. Eric opined:

I am self-motivated if I need something. Now, am I more self-motivated? I don’t know. Maybe dads who are involved in homeschooling because they’re so few and far between are super-highly motivated and go-getters, and highly academic, themselves, and successful. I don’t know.

At the same time, Faith added, “I think that women, especially me anyway, tend to doubt ourselves, and if you’re a homeschool mom, you multiply that times two.” Moreover, Jean surmised, “I think it’s because that’s what society has told us. If you don’t have a college degree in education or a college degree then we’re told by society that we can’t teach our kids, we don’t know how.” Unfortunately, there was not sufficient data to ascertain the effects of gender on homeschooling personality nor HTSE development, nor was a full investigation of gender differences within the purview of the research.

*Curriculum Selection*

Because I designed this study on the premise that HTSE develops independently of a particular homeschool style—because there is not just one effective style of homeschooling—
curriculum selection was not an important aspect of this research. However, flexibility and ingenuity, as benefits of HTSE, were important indicators of HTSE development. Therefore, most of the participants identified a blend of resource selections as the core curriculum for their homeschools. Even when parents purchased comprehensive curriculum sets, most homeschooling teachers augmented instruction with other commercial products, homemade projects, or activities. Consequently, Eric’s selection and rigid adherence to the Abeka program represents an outlier when compared to the other families.

In his interviews, Eric indicated that for 5 years they have subscribed to the services of Abeka in Pensacola, Florida. He asserted, 

We certainly didn’t want to pick and choose, hunt and peck, you know, “Well, let’s try some of this, try a little bit of spelling here, and that company math, and that company science, and that company handwriting.” So, we wanted to go with a complete package. 

Through Abeka, the family receives lesson plans, instructional DVDs, and teacher services. Thus, this program is more closely related to a virtual school than most of the other homeschools represented by this study. However, the laws of Wisconsin define that those students enrolled in virtual schools operated by companies outside the state are considered homeschooled (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2021).

Given the unique program at the core of Eric’s homeschool, his rigidity in curriculum selection may result from his dependence upon the administration provided by the Abeka program. If so, Eric’s lack of flexibility may result from underdeveloped HTSE in this domain due to serving more as a virtual school facilitator than as a typical homeschool educator. His status as an outlier would then be consistent with his homeschool representing an exception to the other homeschool formats examined in this study. However, his rigidity could also represent
a factor of personality or gender norms—as discussed earlier. In any case, this outlier does not seem to contradict the findings of this study when one considers the multiple variables that could influence his behavior without detracting from the proposed theory.

**Duration of the Transition Stage**

While there is not a set timeline for the passing of stages, the transition stage seems to fit consistently within the first 1 to 4 years of homeschooling. For most parents, the first year was reported as the most turbulent. Steady growth marked the subsequent years, and, usually, by Years 4 to 5—if not sooner—parents had established their norm for homeschooling, at which point their HTSE development entered the stabilization and influence stage. Table 22 indicates how participants reported the timelines of their transitions.

**Table 22**

_**Reported Timelines of the Transition Stage**_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Outlier (*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Reported the start of her confidence after the first year and stabilization between Years 2 and 2.5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barb</td>
<td>Reported not feeling fully confident until her last child was a junior/senior and she could see “light at the end of the tunnel.”</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>Found her status quo and growing confidence by Year 3–4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>By Year 3 she learned to take breaks, which established her status quo for the stabilization and influence stage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>By Year 3 he developed their folder system, which established his status quo for the next stage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Felt her confidence stabilize during her children’s grade school years after the second grade.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen</td>
<td>Reported the stabilization of her confidence after the first 1 to 2 years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Outlier (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi</td>
<td>Reported that her first few years were the most fun.</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene</td>
<td>Reported her confidence after the first 2 years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>Reported growing confidence after the first year.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in the table, Barb and Heidi both represent outliers. Their answers are on either extreme of the expected timeline for the transition stage. Barb’s extended timeline likely resulted from how the question was presented during her interview. She was asked about the timeline for the development of her confidence after she answered that her satisfaction with and commitment to homeschooling was “100%.” However, the stabilization and influence stage does not represent a 100% level of benefits resulting for HTSE. It is possible, however, that Barb interpreted the question as asking at what point was she totally satisfied with homeschooling, which for her was at the point she realized every child was going to be successful—the end of her journey.

On the opposite extreme of the spectrum, Heidi’s answer indicates a non-existent transition period. She reports beginning homeschooling with satisfaction and “fun,” which was followed by challenges later in her homeschooling career. Heidi’s response likely resulted from the pseudo benefit of her overconfidence. As a second-generation homeschooler, she came to homeschooling with the belief that she had it figured out. Therefore, even though she reported having to change curricula after the first year, she did not appraise this as her transition stage and, as a result, she provided conflicting responses.

**Research Question Responses**

Through this grounded theory study, I answered three research questions that examined the perception of teacher self-efficacy (TSE) in the homeschooling community. The first
question filled the gap of research concerning how HTSE is perceived in the homeschooling community. The second question examined how HTSE develops in homeschooling parents. The third question revealed how parents perceive HTSE benefits their homeschooling.

**Research Question One**

How do homeschooling parents perceive HTSE? The participants perceived that TSE does exist in the homeschooling community as HTSE. HTSE informs how homeschooling teachers trust their knowledge and abilities to successfully educate their children as influenced by their experiences, their social networks, and their feelings. During the first focus group session, Diane explained:

I think it’s very real. I just think that our influences are different. . . . Overall, we still do things and are able to say we can do it. I mean, the nature of how we have faith in what we do is affected by a lot of different influences. It’s ourselves and how competent we are, but it’s also the support that we have around us—as you talked about in the outside influences stuff. So, I definitely think that it’s a real thing because our human nature is that we want to have confidence, and to belong, and to do what we do well.

**Research Question Two**

To what do homeschooling parents attribute the development of their HTSE? The parents in this study identified multiple ways in which source stream information flows together to develop HTSE. When parents appraise information from mastery experiences, social influences, and physical and emotional states, they adjust their self-referent beliefs to move up or down in the level of the HTSE. When I presented the lifecycle model in the second focus group as a synthesis of the participants’ response, Gwen replied, “I feel this is very realistic. As life changes, the different states, mastery, and multipliers pull you a little bit out of the center of that
circle to go toward either having a HTSE or down.” Furthermore, Jean added:

I just wanted to say that I could definitely see myself going through that model as you were describing everything. So, I thought it was really good. I know for us, personally, in our homeschool journey, at first I did feel pretty insecure about homeschooling, but my husband was homeschooled, so I knew a lot of people. I think that helped me a lot. And as the kids started learning how to read, that was such a positive boost for my own personal feeling of my efficacy—that I was doing a good job. And people around me saying things, also. So, I think that the model is really great.

**Research Question Three**

What do homeschooling parents perceive are the benefits of developing HTSE? The participants of this study perceived numerous benefits to developing HTSE. These benefits included—among others—flexibility, ingenuity, confidence, satisfaction, improved relationships, and successful outcomes. One might say that the aggregate benefit of HTSE development is that anyone can learn to homeschool and be successful. Irene responded to this summary by stating:

So, I liked your comment about how anyone can homeschool and how it can make a positive impact on any homeschool kids. I was just thinking again about how God can use anyone. He used the boy with the five loaves and [two] fish. He can take a little bit of wisdom and a little bit of ability to teach and multiply it. He can use us in teaching our kids and helping them become the people that he wants them to become.

**Summary**

As Figure 1 showed, each of the four main themes of this study fit together as the four stages of the proposed HTSE lifecycle model. Homeschooling parents begin to develop their HTSE in the initial stage, rapidly grow during the transition stage, mature and refine during the
stabilization and influence stage, and achieve veteran status in the outcome stage. This theoretical model is grounded in the data obtained from ten homeschooling families in Wisconsin and was reviewed and approved by the participants who were able to attend the focus groups \( n = 7, 70\% \). Moreover, the model provides a visual answer to the three research questions posed by this study: It explains how HTSE seems to exist as an expression of self-referent beliefs and agency that drives and equips homeschooling success; it demonstrates the developmental process of HTSE over four stages through multiple source streams of information; and it highlights the perceived benefits of HTSE for both teachers and students.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

As stated previously, the purpose of this systematic grounded theory is to define and explain the development of homeschool teacher self-efficacy (HTSE) and its significance for homeschooling parents in Wisconsin. The results of this study indicated that HTSE existed within the participants as their self-perceived belief in their abilities to effectively execute the tasks, responsibilities, and skills necessary to achieve their educational goals and overcome the challenges they face along the way. In this chapter, I will discuss my interpretations of the findings, the implications for policy and practice, the theoretical and methodological implications, the limitations and delimitations of the study, and my recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The deep, rich experiences shared by the participants of this study yielded insightful data that bring into focus what, heretofore, was the largely invisible nature of HTSE in the homeschooling community of Wisconsin. Consequently, I was able to generate a data-grounded theory to postulate how HTSE develops, operates, and benefits homeschooling families. This section contains a discussion of the thematic findings, implications, and limitations and delimitations of this study. Furthermore, I provide recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

As stated in the previous chapter, the concomitant research and analysis process that is unique to the grounded theory method allowed for a detailed examination of how HTSE develops, functions, and contributes to the homeschooling praxis of families in Wisconsin. The summary of the combined data finds expression in the selective, central theme that HTSE
operates within a lifecycle model (see Figure 1). The four primary axial codes represent the four theorized stages of the lifecycle, in which HTSE is born, matures, influences, and benefits homeschool teachers and students over the duration of their instructional journey and, in some cases, beyond.

The theory of the HTSE lifecycle model begins with the initial stage, in which parents experience an agentic trigger and impulse that moves them from traditional schooling into homeschooling. During this stage, HTSE is born out of self-referent beliefs based upon appraisal of transferred self-efficacy, pre-service mastery experiences, social influences, and initial physical and emotional states. The nature and strength of HTSE development in the initial stage can positively or negatively shape the entirety of a homeschooling career through directing parents to meaningful HTSE growth or exposing underlying homeschooling threats.

Once parents begin the process of homeschooling, they enter the transition stage of the HTSE lifecycle. In this stage, parents navigate the vulnerability of early, underdeveloped HTSE and the corresponding physical and emotional states as they explore homeschooling for the first time. During the transition stage, homeschooling families experiment to find what educational philosophies, styles, and curricula work best for their family. As parents experience early success, their HTSE begins to grow rapidly.

When homeschooling families settle into an established model, or routine, for homeschooling, HTSE development begins to stabilize. This is the stabilization and influence stage, in which parents spend the bulk of their homeschooling careers. During this period, homeschool teachers remain exposed to HTSE developing source streams and face the ongoing threats that attempt to derail potential growth. Parents in this stage also begin to exert influence over the homeschooling community as they mature and move toward veteran status or decay and
move toward exit. Moreover, homeschooling parents experience the greatest benefit of HTSE in the stabilization and influence stage.

At the end of the homeschooling journey, parents and children enter the outcome stage. Once a student graduates, both parent and child face important decisions. These veteran homeschoolers reflect upon their experience and outcomes and choose to either exit the lifecycle or perpetuate it by actively contributing to the next generation of homeschoolers. Parents who actively continue in the homeschooling community may serve as social influencers and sources of knowledge, wisdom, and resources. Children who actively continue become the homeschooling advocates and teachers of tomorrow. Those who decide not to actively continue in homeschooling remain a passive influence over the HTSE lifecycle by serving as a positive or negative example of homeschooling that informs the decisions of others.

By identifying where parents exist within the HTSE lifecycle through analyzing formative experiences and behaviors, one can potentially predict a homeschool teacher’s ultimate levels of satisfaction, commitment, and achievement and explain why parents without professional teacher training can match or surpass the efficacy of professionally-trained institutional peers. Furthermore, the HTSE lifecycle can identify potential struggles homeschool teachers may face along their journey and help them combat these challenges by intentionally focusing on meaningful HTSE development.

*Summary of Thematic Findings*

Throughout this study, thematic analysis helped to both organize the collected data and theoretically inform the interpretation of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Consequently, there are several thematic findings, or interpretations, that merit discussion in this section. First, the thematic analysis indicated that HTSE exists as a unique and perceptible self-efficacy construct
within the homeschooling community of Wisconsin. Second, homeschool teachers in Wisconsin are prepared to succeed as educators because HTSE development prepares homeschooling parents in a way that parallels professional teacher preparation. Third, HTSE levels serve as potential predictors of homeschooling parent satisfaction, commitment, and achievement.

An Identifiable Construct. The first interpretation of significance of this study presents itself in the recognition that HTSE does exist as a unique, perceptible, and identifiable social-cognitive efficacy construct within the sampled homeschooling community. Although informed by the transfer of self-efficacy developed through existing theoretical frameworks, such as general self-efficacy (GSE), parental self-efficacy (PSE), and teacher self-efficacy (TSE), HTSE represents a unique application of self-efficacy principles that is greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, the parents interviewed in this study identified their perception of HTSE as a unique development that differed from other domains of self-efficacy. For example, Heidi shared her anecdotal experiences with homeschoolers who relied too heavily on TSE over specific HTSE. She stated:

I have a couple friends that have educational degrees that homeschool. They’re the least confident homeschoolers I know because they’ve been through the whole system of public school themselves, college, and they’ve been taught when they went to get their degree that this is what you do. They are trying to make the public school fit into their homeschooling, which doesn’t necessarily work.

Likewise, relying too much on PSE also fails to achieve the end result of HTSE as a unique construct. Gwen observed that PSE positively influences a homeschooler’s ability to address educational challenges because of the parent/child relationship. She opined:
A lot of teachers talk about how hard it is to not be able to parent the children in instances where things are happening, and I feel like that’s such a huge blessing as a homeschooler—that we get to talk about these very important character-building things while they’re having a temper tantrum at the table because they forgot to capitalize something, or whatever. You can bring it back to the heart issues that are happening there, and that parenting stuff gets to happen with a mom and a child, whereas that doesn’t get to happen [in a school] because let’s just be real, it takes forever.

But at the same time, Gwen admitted that PSE did not replace HTSE in the case of her mother, who was an effective parent but not an effective homeschool educator. Gwen recalled:

My mom was not the kind of person who was very—I don’t know how to say it politely; I love my mom, she’s awesome, like a go-getter for that kind of stuff—she kind of didn’t know how to challenge me.

Consequently, while HTSE may begin with an assimilation of pre-existing self-efficacy constructs, it ultimately extends beyond these individual components to a distinctive construct that stands alone among other efficacy theories.

**Prepared to Succeed.** By theorizing the existence of HTSE as a unique construct that operates as a lifecycle model, one may potentially interpret the results of this study as an explanation for why parents without formal teacher training administrate successful home-based instructional programs. As Ray (2017) indicated, homeschool educators consistently outperform their professional peers from institutional settings. Therefore, just as TSE may explain the success of professional teachers (Bandura, 1997; Morris et al., 2017; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Tilhou, 2020; Zee & Koomen, 2016), HTSE likely explains the success of homeschool educators
who are informally prepared to succeed through a development process that parallels and exceeds the TSE development model.

*A Parallel Pre-Service Process.* Bandura (1977a, 1982, 1995, 1997, 2012) postulated that self-efficacy generally resulted through engagement in enactive mastery experiences, vicarious learning through the observation of social models, listening to social persuasion, and meaningfully appraising and regulating physical and emotional states. Thus, self-efficacy theory (SET) forms the undergirding theoretical framework of all self-efficacy constructs regardless of the domain of application. For example, several studies (George et al., 2018; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Mahler et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2017; Perera & John, 2020; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) have explored the relationship of SET to the development and benefits of TSE. Likewise, the results of this study promote the parallel development factors between TSE and HTSE based on the influence of human agency theory (HAT) and SET.

Bandura (1982, 1989, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2006b) posited that self-efficacy existed inherently as an agentic theory, which means that any self-efficacy construct depends upon human agency as a starting point to development. For professional teachers, the agentic motivation to become a teacher originates in the perception of teaching-related abilities, a desire to shape the future of students, and an interest in the profession (Nesje et al., 2017). Similarly, homeschool parents elect to conduct home-based instructional programs because of their own agentic triggers and impulses, which include a perception that they can be at least as successful as institutional schools in educating their children and a desire to shape the future of their children. Interestingly, longevity in teaching partially depends upon the strength of the agentic trigger. For example, during the first focus group, Diane indicated there may be times when “you’re growing very strongly in your HTSE that you feel you could do this forever, but you...
choose not to, based upon a reevaluation of your trigger and your impulse.” For both professional and homeschooling teachers, agentic motivational factors help determine how well an educator will withstand the initial pressures of teaching prior to the maturing of their corresponding self-efficacy construct (Nesje et al., 2017; Watt et al., 2017).

Once agency motivates a teacher to enter the profession of shaping young minds, the pre-service development of self-efficacy begins. For professional teachers, exposure to the four source streams during university coursework, classroom observation, and teaching practicums develops an initial sense of TSE that prepares pre-service teachers for entry into their teaching service (Iaochite & Costa Filho, 2020; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Paulick et al., 2016; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019; Senler, 2016; Sumarno, 2019; Theelen et al., 2019). Likewise, homeschool teachers have a parallel form of pre-service development during the initial stage of the HTSE lifecycle model. While there is not a formal structure or curriculum that guides the pre-service development of HTSE, these parents rely on self-efficacy source stream information to prepare themselves for teaching just as their professional counterparts do. For example, every participant in this study (n = 10, 100%) indicated their exposure to pre-service mastery experiences, such as working in child development centers, teaching religious education courses at their places of worship, coaching sporting teams, teaching skills to their children, training others in their vocation, or even formal classroom teaching. Homeschool educators also report the pre-service contributions of social influences (n = 7, 70%), the appraisal and transfer of self-efficacy from other domains (n = 6, 60%), and the ability of spirituality to help regulate physical and emotional states (n = 2, 20%).

While the pre-service self-efficacy development of homeschooling teachers may lack the formal structure and certifying oversight of the academy, the parallel development resulting from
comparable informal experiences should not be dismissed based solely on a lack of accreditation or formality. For example, participation in professional teacher preparation programs does not guarantee career success. Despite specific training in TSE through the four source streams, professional teachers still battle against dissatisfaction and high attrition rates. For example, the EdWeek Research Center surveyed 700 teachers and 300 school leaders in March 2021; they discovered that 54% of teachers reported a likelihood that they will leave teaching within the next 2 years (Loewus, 2021). The National Educators Association conducted a nationwide survey of 3,621 educators that confirmed this statistic at 55%, which indicated that, despite TSE development, teachers are burned out following the global COVID-19 pandemic, and their commitment to their profession is waning (Walker, 2022). This shows a bleak level of dissatisfaction that compounds an already high attrition rate of 5%–8% per year, with 44% of public or private school teachers leaving the profession within the first 5 years of entry (Goldhaber & Theobald, 2021; Ingersoll et al., 2018).

If the pre-service self-efficacy development of homeschooling teachers was inferior to that of the professional cohort, one would expect the homeschooling attrition rate to be worse than public and private school teachers. In discussing the results of the 1996 NHES in the context of part-time homeschooling, Isenberg (2007) opined that homeschooling parents have a high attrition rate, with 37% of homeschooling parents ceasing after the first year, and a cumulative attrition of 52% after 6 years. However, he provided no explanation for how these numbers were calculated or what variables contributed to these rates. Moreover, these figures do not seem to match the current homeschooling trends in Wisconsin. For example, Table 23 shows the annual change in home-based private educational program enrollment as reported by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for Outagamie County.
### Table 23

**Pre-Pandemic Enrollment Changes for Outagamie County School Districts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Total Public Enrollment</th>
<th>Total Private Enrollment</th>
<th>Total Home-Based Enrollment</th>
<th>Home-Based Grades 1–8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012–2013</td>
<td>33,944</td>
<td>5,234</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014–2015</td>
<td>35,261</td>
<td>5,042</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016–2017</td>
<td>35,482</td>
<td>4,942</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017–2018</td>
<td>35,516</td>
<td>5,001</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: This table contains an aggregate of data published by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and accessed through the WISEdash Public Portal at https://dpi.wi.gov/wishdash for the school districts in Outagamie County: Appleton Area School District, Freedom Area School District, Hortonville School District, Kaukauna Area School District, Kimberly Area School District, Little Chute Area Scholl District, Seymour Community School District, and Schiocton School District. The academic years were selected based on a desire to reflect trends that were not impacted by the rise of the global COVID-19 pandemic that started during the 2019–2020 academic year.*

Table 23 shows a 6-year snapshot of school enrollment for Outagamie County, Wisconsin. The only substantial downward trend in home-based enrollment occurred between the 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 academic years, in which enrollment in both home-based and private schools had a marked decrease. While it is impossible to extrapolate why this decrease occurred, it should be noted that the public-school enrollment only increased by seven students that year. This indicates that the large decrease in homeschooled students was likely not due to homeschooling attrition as these students did not end up transferring into the other schools in the
district. Instead, this decline is probably due to a large graduating class or people moving out of the county. The fact that the public school only experienced a gain of seven students and not a more significant decline may be due to the economic growth experienced in the Appleton Area School District resulting from the buildup of the urban/suburban economy that year (Johnson & Ljung, 2015).

If one looks at the data in Table 23 as a 6-year cohort of homeschoolers, there would be an expectation that a much larger decrease of homeschooling students should occur based on a 63% attrition of first-year homeschoolers. Instead, both the public and Grades 1–8 home-based enrollments increased by a similar 3%–4% growth rate. If after 6 years the total homeschooling rate lost a conservative estimate of 52% of parents, the data would show much fewer enrolled home-based students. While grade-level enrollment is not specific to counties or districts, an analysis of the statewide data provides further refutation of Isenberg’s (2007) overestimation of homeschooling attrition (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

*Wisconsin Home-Based Private Educational Program Enrollment Trends by Grade Cohort*
In this figure, the lowest drop in enrollment for the cohort occurs between the 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 academic year, which is the same year there was a significant drop in Outagamie County. Regardless of the reason for this decline in enrollment, at its lowest point it still failed to manifest the dramatic attrition that was predicted.

In contrast to the attrition of public and private school teachers, homeschooling parents tend to remain committed to homeschooling (Marks & Welsch, 2018). The statewide data demonstrates far less attrition than predicted by Isenberg (2007). Moreover, the HTSE lifecycle model theorized in this study postulates that the pre-service HTSE development of homeschool educators allows these parents to navigate the vulnerable initial states of the transitional stage better than their professional counterparts. Thus, the parallel between the pre-service development of homeschool educators and professional educators seems to depend on engagement with source stream information, not on the structure, oversight, and accreditation of a state-sanctioned teacher preparation program.

A Parallel In-Service Process. If HTSE development parallels TSE development in the pre-service stage, regardless of its lack of formality, then in-service experiences can also serve as an effective, parallel process of development. Common to both professional and homeschool teachers is the timeline for substantial development of self-efficacy; both efficacy constructs postulate that primary growth begins to stabilize within the first 3 to 5 years of teaching (Bandura, 1997; Mahler et al., 2017; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019). Moreover, both groups of educators face initial vulnerability during their first year or two in the classroom (Feng et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2018). Thus, customized approaches that are based upon source stream information will be best used for in-service training to develop both TSE and HTSE alike.
The interpretation of the results of this study establishes an axiom: Teachers are prepared to succeed by their previous success. Enactive mastery experiences that are well appraised by the in-service educator serve as a primary means of development for TSE and HTSE (Feng et al., 2019; Lotter et al., 2018; Maclellan, 2016). When homeschool teachers reflect on their contributions to their students’ successes, they dramatically increase their HTSE. For example, Faith described this process of development by stating, “You start seeing little fruits along the way.”

Part of developing HTSE through enactive mastery experiences includes growing in content knowledge mastery. This parallels the continuing education of in-service professional teachers, who develop their TSE through advanced degrees, in-service classes, or teacher conventions (Chao et al., 2017; Latouche & Gascoigne, 2019; Lotter et al., 2018; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016). Likewise, homeschooling parents have opportunities to engage in HSGs, homeschooling conventions, and ubiquitous online support resources to increase their content knowledge mastery and HTSE in a one-for-one parallel to professional teacher development.

In-service HTSE development further parallels professional in-service teacher development through the social influences of mentors and peers—as both social persuasion and social models for vicarious learning through observation. As the homeschool educators in this study interacted with tutors, homeschool cooperatives, HSGs, field trips, and other activities, they engaged in co-teaching, teacher observation, and mentoring relationships that raised HTSE based upon their appraisal of the source stream information and encouraged the regulation of physical and emotional states. This developmental process directly mirrors the in-service development of professional teachers (Bandura, 1997; Feng et al., 2019; Gümüş & Bellibaş, 2021; Ma & Cavanagh, 2018; Perera et al., 2019).
An Exceptional Process. While HTSE development directly parallels several aspects of professional teacher development, there are some aspects of HTSE development that are exceptional from the parallel process. Homeschool teachers face unique circumstances that set them apart from their institutional peers. For example, homeschooling parents may be more keenly aware of their agentic triggers and impulses than other educators, they may experience enhanced risk/reward matrices, and they may encounter greater individualization that increases HTSE over TSE equivalents. Thus, homeschool educators are prepared to succeed in ways beyond traditional teachers, which may explain the statistical outperformance of homeschooled children over their public-schooled counterparts.

In terms of agency, both institutional and homeschool teachers enter their profession through the expression of human agency. However, homeschool educators face the added burden of agentically challenging the social normative institutional system; rather than entering a generally respected career as a school teacher, potential homeschooling parents must develop sufficient motivation to overcome the—sometimes substantial—social and organizational opposition to home-based private education. As Heidi reported, “My father-in-law initially was very against it.” This is where the strength and direction of the agentic trigger/impulse, as postulated in the HTSE lifecycle theory, comes into play. Potential homeschooling parents must often have a substantially strong agentic motive for homeschooling that provides greater stability in the face of opposition and stronger perseverance through the vulnerability of the transition stage. This likely explains why homeschool educators in Wisconsin have lower attrition, as indicated in Figure 3, than the 20% attrition of professional Wisconsin teachers within their first 3 years of experience (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.).
Another exceptional aspect of HTSE development comes from the theorized presence of HTSE multipliers that adjusts the risk/reward matrix for homeschooling parents. Obviously, professional teachers celebrate mastery experiences when their students demonstrate success, and they value meaningful, authentic feedback from sources of social persuasion, but changes to their TSE may not be as dramatic as homeschooling parents’ changes in their HTSE that result from the same type of experiences involving their own children and spouses. As indicated in the previous chapter, the participants in this study recognized the added significance of heightened appraisal resulting from their family bond \( n = 9, 90\% \) or their spousal support \( n = 9, 90\% \). Because of the intimate emotions that influence the psychological appraisal of homeschooling parents in their home context, they experience greater growth from equivalent events than teachers in the institutional context. However, parents also face greater risk of decreased HTSE and strife than their professional counterparts. While homeschoolers take these risks willingly, knowing that there are alternative safety nets in the event of failure, they nevertheless must face the consequences of failure more personally than a public-school teacher. For example, dissatisfied institutional teachers need not leave their profession if they appraise their specific context as the problem; instead, they can apply to teach at a different school that may offer increased pay, less stressful workloads, and more supportive administration. However, homeschooling parents are unable to change their contexts; if they struggle within their homeschool, they have no choice but to persevere or fail (Bell et al., 2016).

In addition to these factors, homeschooling parents also have the exceptional aspect of self-guiding their individualized path of development. While professional teachers are often subject to pre-selected curriculum in their training programs and administration-assigned inservice development opportunities, homeschool teachers select their own development
opportunities from among their families, friends, HSGs, or other sources. Not only does this allow homeschool educators to self-direct their development based on individual interests, the close sense of community among the family and friends of fellow homeschoolers often provides a rich environment for growth. Although the institutional community benefits from the practice of professional community (la Velle, 2020), this may pale in comparison to the shared lifestyle community of homeschoolers—as Barb stated, “Homeschool is life.”

**Predicting Satisfaction, Endurance, and Achievement.** Although additional study remains necessary, another initial implication of the theorized HTSE lifecycle model manifests itself in the potential to predict homeschooling parents’ satisfaction, endurance, and achievement based on their HTSE level, just as TSE does for professional educators (George et al., 2018; Mahler et al., 2018; Perera & John, 2020; Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019). The HTSE lifecycle model identifies what source stream information can positively or negatively impact HTSE development and what factors can multiply or threaten development. Consequently, by assessing these factors, one can reasonably predict how satisfied, enduring, and successful a homeschooling parent will be.

To assess how the participants of this study measured their own HTSE levels in comparison to their reported outcomes, each parent completed the HTSE survey and the perceived success survey in addition to their interviews. When they submitted their HTSE survey, I analyzed their qualitative responses for effective strategies, specific details, and consistency with their interview responses. I then assigned a corresponding HTSE level in response to each question, which was then combined as an average HTSE level in each of three categories—engagement, classroom management, and instructional strategies as indicated by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). The three categories were then combined to provide a total
HTSE score. This score can be compared to their reported satisfaction, endurance, and outcomes (see Table 24).

**Table 24**

*Analyzed Participant HTSE Level and Reported Satisfaction, Endurance, and Outcomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Total HTSE Level</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Endurance ( ^a )</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Moderate to High</td>
<td>“Very”</td>
<td>“We’ll do it the whole way through.”</td>
<td>“My 9-year-old has gotten very good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barb</td>
<td>Moderate to High</td>
<td>“100%”</td>
<td>“I’m doing this.”</td>
<td>“We accomplished all our goals!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>Moderate to High</td>
<td>“Could not be higher”</td>
<td>“That’s just the clincher on our determination to continue.”</td>
<td>“This is achieving the goals we’ve set.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>Low to Moderate</td>
<td>“Between a 3 and a 5”</td>
<td>“I wouldn’t trade anything in the world.”</td>
<td>“Above average in their grades.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Moderate to High</td>
<td>“Homeschooling is a gift.”</td>
<td>“I don’t anticipate that changing.”</td>
<td>“Both functioning at least a grade higher.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>“I’m glad I did it.”</td>
<td>“We were not going to give up.”</td>
<td>“Quite high grade point averages.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>“Low” ( ^b )</td>
<td>“High”</td>
<td>“Very successful.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi</td>
<td>Low to Moderate</td>
<td>“I believe in it just because there’s so many choices.”</td>
<td>“I reached out to the public school for my twins.”</td>
<td>“Able to get into the college of their choice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>“Highly satisfied”</td>
<td>“I will probably continue with it.”</td>
<td>“Advanced reading level.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>“100%”</td>
<td>“This is happening for sure.”</td>
<td>“Very successful.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( ^a \) This category includes factors of commitment and perseverance.
Her “low” rating is predicted by her personality incompatibility described under “threats.”

The information in Table 24 demonstrates the assigned level of HTSE correlated to the participants’ description of their satisfaction and endurance. Those with “moderate to high” or higher HTSE levels clearly reported very high satisfaction and endurance. The one exception to this pattern was Gwen, who as discussed previously, reported an impaired level of satisfaction. However, this conflict can be explained using the HTSE lifecycle model in that she suffers from a homeschooling threat of incompatibility. Those with “low to moderate” or “moderate” HTSE reported moderate levels of satisfaction and endurance. For example, Diane rated her satisfaction as moderate on a scale “between a 3 and a 5,” and Irene described her endurance using the word “probably.” An exception to this pattern was Jean, whose responses matched those of someone with higher HTSE, but was only rated as “moderate” HTSE. This can be explained by the fact that Jean’s HTSE level was artificially suppressed based on her struggling to find ways to instruct her child with special needs—as predicted by the HTSE lifecycle model. If Jean did not face the homeschooling challenge of special needs, her HTSE would likely be higher, which may explain her more positive outlook. Heidi’s responses demonstrated the product of low to low/moderate HTSE in that her satisfaction was based on the perception that homeschooling offers several choices, and her endurance resulted in her needing assistance from the public school—rather than trusting in her own abilities and taking the risk to instruct her own children.

When it comes to outcomes, Table 24 indicated and the HTSE lifecycle model predicted that, regardless of HTSE level, the outcomes of homeschooling are generally perceived as positive. Understandably, those with higher HTSE levels generally reported higher levels of student achievement. For example, in Table 19, Barb and Faith reported higher GPAs than Diane, who had had a lower analyzed HTSE level, and in Table 20, Barb and Jean’s reported
standardized test results were consistently stronger than Heidi’s reported mixed results. Nevertheless, both Diane’s reported GPA and Heidi’s reported standardized tests were better than the national averages of public-schooled students. Thus, so long as HTSE is high enough to keep a parent from leaving the homeschool community altogether, they will likely experience outcomes that match or surpass institutional equivalents based upon the responsive, individualized instruction provided by the homeschooling context. This is what prompted Barb to repeat the saying, “The worst day of homeschooling can be better than the best day of a public school.”

**Implications for Policy and Practice**

Given the results and interpretations of this study, there are several key implications for policy and practice. While homeschooling is legal in all 50 states, there remains a stigma against homeschooling that results from a lack of awareness of the equivalent development process that seems to exist between TSE and HTSE even in the absence of formal, accredited instruction (Dwyer & Peters, 2019; Hamlin, 2020; Henderson, 2021; Renzulli et al., 2020). Moreover, there are those in academia that publicly challenge the capabilities of homeschooling parents and advocate for stricter homeschooling laws (Bartholet, 2019; Sarajlic, 2019). However, the implications of this study support broad acceptance and trust of homeschooling parents through policy initiatives. Moreover, the implications of the HTSE lifecycle theory supports the adoption of practices that maximize homeschooling parents’ exposure to source stream information consistent with the proposed theory, while simultaneously equipping parents to overcome the challenges also predicted by the HTSE lifecycle model.
Implications for Policy

The first implication of this study that relates to policy manifests itself through encouraging school districts, universities, and employers to destigmatize homeschooling families. As discussed in the previous section, HTSE development in the homeschooling community exists as a testable, *in situ* equivalent to professional teacher development programs and accreditation—often with better results and lower costs—due to the organically supportive environment of the homeschooling community at large and the ingenuity and flexibility of individual parents and students. Consequently, neither homeschool teachers or students should be treated differently than their institutional counterparts when it comes to participation in district events, applying for college admission, or seeking employment.

Another implication for policy is to resist changes that seek to regulate the homeschooling community. Opponents of homeschooling may misrepresent the homeschooling community to encourage legal restrictions by taking advantage of the underrepresented voice of homeschoolers who cannot defend themselves given their absence from the community of scholarly research. For example, Bartholet (2019) relied, in part, on anecdotal reports of parents homeschooling their children to avoid mandatory reporters to make the audacious claim that “child abuse and neglect characterize a significant subset of homeschooling families” (p. 14). She premised her argument that homeschooling families represent a maltreatment problem because they exist in complete isolation, where no one can witness and report the abuse to child protective services. She then relied on this unsupported argument to encourage restrictive laws for the protection of children from their parents. However, this argument has an inherent bias; she opposed homeschooling, in part, because the parents are teaching their children values that do not align with her own social normative, conforming views on gender and equality. Bartholet
further claimed that the dangerous homeschooling families are religious ideologues, which she rebuked for their sectarian views of women that differ from her own. In so doing, Bartholet (2019) may be labeling well-intended homeschooling families dangerous because they teach their children views consist with those of traditional Islam, Judaism, and several Christian denominations—including the Southern Baptists.

Unfortunately, arguments like these may actually represent veiled attempts to stifle views that clash with the political and ideological views espoused by mainstream, institutional schools from which homeschooling families departed. For example, in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the public-school district recently made national news for conducting teacher equity training that indicated that parents do not have the right to know their children’s gender identities and that those parents who raise religious objections to LGBTQIA+ policies are a problem because of “the weaponization of religion against queer people” (Prior, 2022, n.p.). Thus, opponents of homeschooling that seek to regulate the content of homeschooling or insist on oversight or control may really be attempting to override the free agency of homeschooling families to force them back into compliance with social normative instruction.

Despite such attempts, the premise of these arguments is not consistent with the practices reported by participants of this study and those with whom the participants were familiar. Even in cases where isolation was a potential risk, such as in Caroline’s case, there still existed external interaction with society—going to the store, going on field trips, attending religious services. Unfortunately, Bartholet (2019) did not appear to mention that homeschoolers in religious contexts are still witnessed by their clergy, who in the majority of states are considered mandatory reporters—the same as professional teachers (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019).
Through this study, I do not assert that there are not some homeschooling educators who may be bad parents and ineffective teachers. Moreover, some of these may pose a threat to the safety of their children, although not because of teaching their children their ideological convictions. However, there are systems in place that currently safeguard these children—even though at times they may fail. Nevertheless, adding additional regulations could cause more harm to the homeschooling community than good, and it may not solve the problems lawmakers seek to address. After all, licensed public-school teachers can also pose a threat to students, and the system does not always work to protect the children. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* covered a story in 2017 in which New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio proposed a major policy reversal that allowed 800 teachers with disciplinary violations, legal charges, and poor performance back into the city’s public schools (Schneider, 2017). Although few scholarly studies examine this issue in the United States, a survey from the American Association of University Women conducted in 2000 indicated that 38% of surveyed students in Grades 8 through 11 reported being sexually harassed by teachers or school employees (Lipson, 2001). Therefore, such laws are not guaranteed to protect students at all.

While additional regulation may not guarantee the safety of students, it can unintentionally stifle the ingenuity and flexibility that makes homeschooling one of the most successful forms of instruction. As the HTSE lifecycle model demonstrated, the ongoing agentic control of parents over their children’s education is a vital benefit of HTSE development that facilitates the ingenuity and initiative of effective homeschool teachers. Given the agentic nature of homeschooling parents, many homeschooling families seek out places where they can freely exercise their creativity. Gwen stated of additional regulation:
I think that the standards that they have in different states are probably more of a hindrance than they are a help. We personally look at what the standards are before we move—in terms of if it’s a state we only have to tell them that we’re homeschooling. Like here, we have to tell them we’re homeschooling, teach certain things, and do it for a certain amount of hours, which is not a big deal. But we haven’t moved to Tennessee because I don’t want someone overseeing what I have to do, because I feel like I have higher standards than what they do and it would literally just be distracting to me and bothersome. I feel like it would be more of a hinderance to us than a help.

In addition to Gwen, Eric commented:

I firmly believe that God has blessed our family and our state by allowing homeschooling to be legal. . . . I am so thankful for the Homeschool Legal Defense Association or other paralegal organizations that legally protect the rights of homeschooling families. I think that is huge, and I’m just glad for that peace of mind.

Because the HTSE lifecycle model begins with and thrives through agency, in which parents can freely exercise their creativity in response to their children’s needs, lawmakers need to support and respect the liberties of homeschooling families. While safety is important, added legislation cannot guarantee this outcome. Instead, lawmakers should encourage families to follow the HTSE lifecycle theory, trusting that it develops homeschool teachers equivalent to public-school teachers, and allow the current systems to operate as intended.

**Implications for Practice**

Beyond policy recommendations, the results of this study also have profound implications for practice. Within the context of this study, the homeschooling parents who attended the focus groups (\( n = 7, 70\% \)) unanimously agreed that the HTSE lifecycle model
successfully represented their homeschooling experience, while accommodating differences in gender, race/ethnicity, religious views, socioeconomic status, age, location, and style. While this model appears to be accurate for the homeschooling families in Wisconsin, the theory of HTSE development, operation, and perceived benefits may also apply to the broader homeschooling community throughout the United States, and perhaps globally. One of the advantages of this theory is that it explains an overarching experience of HTSE in variable settings without attempting to define specific qualifications, experiences, or teaching styles. In other words, while there is no one-size-fits-all approach to homeschooling, there does appear to be a right way to develop HTSE to homeschool effectively in the style one chooses.

Because the results of this study seem to indicate a consistent pattern of HTSE development, use, and outcomes, one of the first implications for practice is that homeschooling advocacy organizations, HSGs, and homeschooling parents should ensure broad understanding and appreciation of HTSE within the broader homeschooling community. By educating current and future homeschooling educators about the proposed HTSE lifecycle model, parents can act intentionally to guide their development through seeking out mastery experiences and sources of social influence, reflexively guiding their metacognition to regulate their physical and emotional states, and mindfully avoiding the pitfalls of homeschooling threats. Eric addressed the ability to conduct beneficial self-reassessment by having an intentional knowledge of the process. He expressed:

I love your picture, how you talked about the strengths and just how you’re able to reassess yourself. One of the things I think you’ve done an excellent job with is giving us all the opportunity to say, “Where do I plug into this diagram?”
By understanding the big picture model of HTSE development, parents are equipped to practice reflexivity and regulation, which serves as important aspects of HTSE development through appraisal and modification of self-referent beliefs (Bandura, 1977a; Lotter et al., 2018; Maclellan, 2016).

Given the potential significance of disseminating the HTSE lifecycle model to current and future homeschoolers, another implication for practice manifests itself in the need for HSGs to actively support potential homeschooling families prior to their crossing the threshold into active homeschooling. In an effort to maintain member privacy and safeguard against malicious homeschooling opponents, many HSGs require membership candidates to show proof of active homeschooling before parents are allowed to join the organization. While this allows the group a sense of security and provides social influence for its members in their transitional stage, the practice excludes parents in their initial stage from experiencing the much-needed pre-service HTSE development and support that serves as the agentic impulse that will carry them through the difficult transition stage. Instead, HSGs should assume the risk, and open their doors to prospective homeschoolers seeking information and early mentorship opportunities.

In addition to providing early access to potential homeschoolers, HSGs can further serve the interests of the homeschooling community by adopting practices that directly facilitate parents’ journeys through the HTSE lifecycle. HSGs can offer courses that nurture HTSE development thorough intentional source stream exposure, help parents avoid the dangers of homeschooling threats through classes and exercises, and establish a community of accountability that fosters successful progress through the model. In so doing, HSGs can broaden their positive contribution to homeschooling success and reduce the number of parents who
unnecessarily exit the homeschooling community due to strife, low-HTSE, or other avoidable factors.

**Theoretical and Empirical Implications**

Although the purpose of this study was to develop a unique theory that was grounded in the data, the vastly differing nature of the homeschooling community merited a study design in which pre-existing theoretical frameworks guided the initial exploration of the topic. Therefore, this study organically expanded upon TSE—a fusion of social cognitive theory’s HAT and SET—as a representation of educational self-efficacy within the homeschooling context. This study revealed that HTSE, like TSE, begins with an agentic process (Bandura, 1982, 1989, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2006; Dennison et al., 2020). However, this study expanded upon the understanding of how agency works as a motivational factor for the decision to homeschool. The participants of this study defined the theoretical nature of homeschooling agency as a singular/cumulative, strong/weak, primary/secondary agentic trigger and impulse that propels parents to renounce the social normative experience, in the face of opposition, to satisfy their agentic need. This construct provides a theoretical synthesis of the homeschooling motivations as defined by Baidi (2019), Heuer and Donovan (2017), Puga (2019), Ray (2021), and Tan (2020).

Beyond the role of agency, this study also included a description of how HTSE develops in accordance with the primary source streams of SET. Primarily, HTSE develops when homeschooling parents have enactive mastery experiences; learn from social influences, such as social persuasion or vicariously through the observation of social models; or when they learn to regulate their physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1977a). An additional theoretical implication of this study is that HTSE has multipliers, such as family bonds, spousal support, and low-stakes risk taking, that change the impact of source stream information. Other self-efficacy
constructs do not account for factors that influence appraisal as dramatically as HTSE multipliers. Nevertheless, the operation of HTSE multipliers on appraisal seems to comport with studies in appraisal theory, in which differences in personality can account for varying appraisals from person to person (Lazarus & Smith, 1988). However, the fact that this study demonstrated a stronger influence of external multipliers over internal appraisal based on personality may represent a contradiction of studies that apply appraisal theory. For example, Di Blas et al. (2017) observed that personality traits, such as introversion and extroversion, moderated self-efficacy development, but this was not studied in relation to external relationships that interact with individual, internal personalities. Further study is necessary to explore the impact of external relationships on self-efficacy appraisal.

In addition, this study contained a new, data-grounded theory to explain the development, nature, and perceived benefits of HTSE within the homeschooling community. While HAT, SET, and TSE help to provide an initial foundation for HTSE, they do not fully explain the nature of HTSE. Instead, a new theory was necessary to synthesize the pre-existing theories and expound on them using the shared experiences of homeschoolers in Wisconsin. The resulting HTSE lifecycle model advances educational theory by explaining the success of homeschool educators despite the absence of professional training.

Empirically, the data from this study expand the field of homeschooling research. The participants contributed information that affirms and expands the empirical knowledge of the homeschooling community as presented by Firmin et al. (2019), Pannone (2017a), Ray (2021), and Tilhou (2020). Through interviews, surveys, artifacts, and focus groups, the participants contributed to the empirical understanding of the presence of HTSE within four stages of operation: initial, transition, stabilization and influence, and outcome. The data provide a better
picture of the homeschooling community by giving a voice to its members and informing future understanding of the homeschooling community.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

While there are many implications resulting from this study, it is important to note that the study was not without limitations and delimitations. As I will discuss below, the unique nature of the homeschooling community complicated the process of finding a large and diverse participant sample and avoiding reporting bias from within the sample. Moreover, the continued restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic forced the majority of data collection to occur digitally, which presented additional challenges. Furthermore, as the principal investigator, I made several choices to define the boundaries of this study: I chose not to include homeschool teachers with formal professional training, I limited the study to Wisconsin, and I deliberately avoided pursuing issues of gender.

**Limitations**

The participant sample represents the first major limitation of this study. The sample created problems in two ways. First, the private nature of the homeschooling community makes finding a sample pool very difficult. I encountered several instances of resistance and distrust from those within the homeschooling community who rejected my invitation to participate in the study. For example, the Wisconsin Homeschool Parents Association chose not to share recruitment information with their members for privacy reasons. In an email, they expressed, “The exercise of inherent parental rights is highly personal, individualized, and private. . . . Protecting the privacy of homeschooling families has always been part of the mission of WHPA” (WHPA Board of Directors, personal communication, October 7, 2021). Once potential participants started to trust the process, the second challenge was finding a large enough sample
size that also represented the diversity of the homeschooling community. Upon completion, the sample for this study included 10 homeschooling parents that represented several facets of the diversity of Wisconsin homeschoolers.

An additional limitation of the sample pool came from the possibility of confirmation bias. Clearly, those who participated in this study were those who had successfully made it through the most difficult stages of homeschooling and were favorable to the practice. These parents were potentially predisposed to sharing information that directly affirmed their belief in homeschooling. While this was out of my control as the researcher, I feel it is important to note that the rigor of the data collection methods solicited both positive and negative aspects of homeschooling from the participants. This level of transparency seems to cut through any potential confirmation bias to generate an authentic picture of the HTSE phenomenon.

Beyond the limitations of the sample, public safety also led to uncontrollable interruptions. During the bulk of this study, Wisconsin experienced high transmission rates of COVID-19. Therefore, travel throughout the state for face-to-face interviews was ill advised. Consequently, all but the last interview were conducted through WebEx software. However, this created several technical issues. First, low bandwidth and technical difficulties forced some interviews to be conducted with audio only. In other instances, the signal was so bad that the participant’s speech was garbled. In these cases, questions were repeated and responses were confirmed through participant post hoc approval of the interview transcript.

**Delimitations**

Although there were some factors outside my control, other decisions were made deliberately to limit the scope of this investigation. First, to ensure that this study examined HTSE without the contaminating presence of TSE, I chose to only study parents who had not
previously participated in a formal teacher preparation program. I felt this decision allowed me to capture the clearest understanding of HTSE by itself. Moreover, I limited it to homeschoolers in Wisconsin to avoid confusion over various descriptions of homeschooling. This decision allowed me to study parents who were engaged in a traditional form of instruction—as opposed to virtual schooling, cooperative teaching, or other less involved methods.

Beyond the inclusion and exclusion criteria, I decided to limit this study by not pursuing tangents that questioned the role of gender in HTSE development and homeschooling. Although a grounded theory study is intended to follow the data where it leads, when this topic came up, I decided it was too broad to address in this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The role of gender in homeschooling represents a study topic in and of itself. Exploring such a tangent would detract from the expressed purpose of this study to examine HTSE as a general construct that could apply equally to both men and women.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The implications, limitations, and delimitations of this research study demand further research of this topic in the future. For example, additional studies are needed to test the theory that HTSE exists in the homeschooling community and develops, operates, and benefits parents in accordance with the proposed HTSE lifecycle model. Future case studies and quantitative studies can further test this hypothesis in other settings around the nation and world. For instance, does this theory hold true in settings with differing homeschooling laws and definitions for homeschooling practice? Moreover, to address the limitations of this study, additional research should also sample larger and more diverse populations.

By studying this topic in broader and more diverse settings, future researchers can gain a better understanding of how cultural differences impact HTSE development. This may also
include exploring the issue of gender roles that were not addressed in the current study. Do male teachers have fewer homeschooling resources available to them, and if so, how does this impact their HTSE development? Are women more susceptible to homeschooling threats based on the weight of social stereotypes and organizational suppression? Future research can provide answers to these important questions.

Additionally, more study is needed to explore the potential difference in HTSE development between the current target population and homeschoolers who have professional teacher training. Does the pre-existing presence of TSE help or hinder the HTSE development process? Similarly, other researchers should examine the differences between professional teachers, homeschool educators who taught previously, and homeschool educators who have no prior teaching experience. This will help demonstrate if HTSE remains constant across differing levels of qualification and experience.

Because this is a new theory, additional studies are needed to confirm these findings and explore what other factors contribute to homeschooling success or failure beyond HTSE levels. For example, researchers should replicate this study in other states that may have different laws than Wisconsin. Furthermore, future studies could compare data from multiple states to observe HTSE in a broader context that is independent from individual state laws and definitions of homeschooling. These studies could also examine if strong HTSE guarantees success or does students’ agency overpower the agentic HTSE of their parents? Also, does the type of schooling conducted also impact educational outcomes in addition to HTSE development? Future study can help better define the boundaries and limitations of the HTSE theory as an influence in the homeschooling community.
Conclusion

The purpose of this systematic grounded theory study was to define and explain the development and significance of HTSE among homeschooling parents in Wisconsin. By conducting and analyzing interviews, collecting surveys, examining artifacts, and hosting focus groups, I developed a data-grounded theory that attempts to explain how HTSE develops, operates, and benefits homeschooling parents in Wisconsin based on a four-stage lifecycle model: initial, transition, stabilization and influence, and outcome. The HTSE lifecycle model expands the theoretical frameworks of HAT, SET, and TSE to create a new theory that provides synthesis and explanation of the extant research of the homeschooling community.

Through the theoretical model of the HTSE lifecycle, one can explain how homeschooling educators without formal teacher preparation are prepared to succeed in their home-based instructional programs. As the homeschooling community adopts policies and practices aligned with the HTSE lifecycle model, parents can further predict satisfaction, endurance, and success in homeschooling through deliberate and intentional interaction with source stream information. This may have a profound impact on the homeschooling community and provide a substantive, empirical response to critics that confirms the validity of homeschooling as viable and effective school choice.
References


https://doi.org/10.1177/002248718403500507


https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2019.1617576


https://doi.org/10.1080/10901027.2015.1100148


https://responsiblehomeschooling.org/research/summaries/homeschool-demographics/


https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904806296856


https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2021.1892639


https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2019.1591560


https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2016.1172501


https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/ndecore/xplore/hsts


Schultz, T. (2020, May 14). *National poll: 40% of families more likely to homeschool after lockdowns end.* American Federation for Children.


https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/406/205/#tab-opinion-1949691


https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/wisconsin-population


Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 27, 2021

Joshua Andrew
Gail Collins


Dear Joshua Andrew, Gail Collins,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [redacted].

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office
Appendix B: Recruitment Letters

Initial Letter

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. The purpose of my research is to develop a theory defining the nature, development, and perceived benefits of homeschool teacher self-efficacy, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, be active homeschooling parents as defined by Wisconsin Statute, have not participated in a Wisconsin teacher preparation program or its equivalent, and they must have homeschooled for at least three years. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in a recorded interview that may last from 1–2 hours, affirm the content of their interview transcripts, participate in focus groups lasting up to one hour, complete two electronic surveys, and provide artifacts or documents demonstrating successful educational experiences within the homeschooling context. It should take approximately 5–8 hours to complete all the procedures listed during the duration of this study. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please complete the 20-question survey by clicking here: [link]. If you have questions about this process or wish to complete this survey in an alternative format, please contact me at [email].

A consent document will be sent to you by email after completing the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Joshua D. Andrew, M.Div.
Doctoral Candidate

Follow-Up Letter

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. Last week, an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to complete the online survey if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is [Date].
Participants must be 18 years of age or older, be active homeschooling parents as defined by Wisconsin Statute, have not participated in a Wisconsin teacher preparation program or its equivalent, and they must have homeschooled for a least three years. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in a recorded interview that may last from 1–2 hours, affirm the content of their interview transcripts, participate in focus groups lasting up to one hour, complete two electronic surveys, and provide artifacts or documents demonstrating successful educational experiences within the homeschooling context. It should take approximately 5–8 hours to complete all the procedures listed during the duration of this study. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please complete the 20-question survey by clicking here: [hyperlink to be provided to a digital survey]. If you have questions about this process or wish to complete this survey in an alternative format, please contact me at [email protected].

A consent document will be sent to you by email after completing the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Joshua D. Andrew, M.Div.
Doctoral Candidate

[Email address]
Appendix C: Screening Survey

These questions are for the purpose of selecting a qualified and diversified group of participants. You may choose not to answer any of these questions, and doing so will not impact your potential participation in this study.

1. Please provide your name:
2. Please provide your contact information:
3. Please select an age category:
   a. 18–20
   b. 21–30
   c. 31–40
   d. 41–50
   e. 51–60
   f. 61–70
   g. Over 70
4. Please indicate your sex:
   a. Male
   b. Female
5. What is your marital status?
6. How would you define your race/ethnicity?
7. What is your highest level of education completed, and what, if any degrees were you awarded?
8. Were you ever awarded a state license to teach?
9. Please select your approximate annual household income range:
   a. Less than $20,000
   b. $20,000 to $44,999
   c. $45,000 to $139,999
   d. $140,000 to $149,999
   e. $150,000 to $199,999
   f. Over $200,000
10. Please describe your community size:
    a. Rural (less than 5,000 people)
    b. Town (More than 5,000 people)
    c. City (More than 50,000 people)
11. How many people, including yourself, are in your household?
12. How many children do you currently homeschool?
13. What are the ages of the children you currently homeschool?
14. What are the grade levels of the children you currently homeschool?
15. How long have/did you homeschool(ed)?
16. If you do not currently homeschool, for what grades did you homeschool?
17. If you do not currently homeschool, how many children did you homeschool?
18. With whom else, if anyone, do you share teaching responsibilities?
19. Did you submit an annual PI-1206 to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction?
20. Do you conform to the Wisconsin State Statutes §§115.001(3g) and 118.165 (1) definition of a “Home-Based Private Education Program,” which means a program of
educational instruction provided to a child—no more than one family unit—by the child’s parent or guardian, or by a person designated by the parent or guardian, that provides 875 hours of sequentially progressive instruction each school year in the subjects of reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science and health?
Appendix D: Acceptance Status Letters

Inclusion Letter

Dear [Recipient],

Thank you for completing your survey and indicating your willingness to participate in this research study examining the nature, development, and perceived benefits of homeschool teacher self-efficacy. I am pleased to inform you that you meet the criteria for participation. Please complete the attached consent form. You may email a scan of the signed consent form or contact me to make alternate arrangements for returning this form. Within a week after I have received your signed consent form, I will contact you to schedule an interview. This recorded interview will last approximately 1–2 hours.

Once your interview is completed, you will receive a copy of the interview transcript for your review and approval. You will also receive an e-mail link to two additional surveys. Please review the transcript and complete these surveys within one week of receiving them. The second survey will ask you to provide a document or artifact that demonstrates successful educational experiences within your homeschool context. For example, you may consider providing test scores, report cards, final grades, standardized test scores such as the ACT, portfolios, or other artifacts that you feel demonstrate student achievement and completion of learning goals. This item, or items, can be digitally scanned and attached to the survey or you can contact me to make other arrangements. Sometime after your interview and surveys, you will receive an invitation to participate in a focus group with other homeschooling parents to provide further clarification, insight, and direction to the study.

Your participation in this study provides invaluable contributions to this research and the homeschool community at large. Thank you for committing your time to this journey of discovery. If you should have any questions or need to contact me for any reason, please use this email address or call [redacted].

Sincerely,

Joshua D. Andrew, M.Div.
Doctoral Candidate
[redacted]

Exclusion Letter

Dear [Recipient],

Thank you for completing your survey and indicating your willingness to participate in this research study examining the nature, development, and perceived benefits of homeschool teacher self-efficacy. However, your ongoing participation is not necessary at this time. This may be because the information you provided does not meet the current needs of the study or because
enough participants have already responded. Should this change in the near future, I will contact you to reassess your continued willingness to participate at that time.

Regardless of the potential for future participation, I appreciate your desire to contribute to the homeschooling community. I wish you the best in your ongoing homeschool endeavors. Should you have any follow-up questions, please feel free to contact me via email or at [redacted].

Sincerely,

Joshua D. Andrew, M.Div.
Doctoral Candidate
Appendix E: Consent Form

Consent Form

**Title of the Project:** Prepared to Succeed: A Systematic Grounded Theory Examining the Nature, Development, and Perceived Benefits of Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy in Wisconsin

**Principal Investigator:** Joshua D. Andrew, M.Div., Liberty University School of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invitation to be Part of a Research Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, you must be an active homeschooling parent as defined by Wisconsin Statute, and you must have homeschooled for at least three years. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the study about and why is it being done?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of this systematic grounded theory study is to understand the nature, development, and benefit of teacher self-efficacy among homeschooling parents. For this study, teacher self-efficacy is defined as the belief of teachers in their abilities to effectively execute the tasks, responsibilities, and skills to obtain educational goals and overcome challenges. Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy theory guides this study as it describes the development of self-efficacy through the process of enactive mastery experiences, vicarious learning through social modeling, social persuasion, and the regulation of emotional and physical states.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will happen if you take part in this study?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Participate in a recorded interview lasting 60–90 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Review the transcript of your interview, provide any necessary feedback concerning this information, and affirm your agreement with the accuracy of the content, which could take approximately 30–60 minutes, but will vary based on reading speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Complete two online surveys concerning Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy and perceived educational success, which will take approximately 60 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Review a summary of the current research findings that I will provide in advance of each focus group meeting, which will take approximately 30 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Participate in one or more recorded focus group with fellow participants, each lasting approximately 60 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide documents or artifacts that demonstrate successful academic achievement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How could you or others benefit from this study?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, you may benefit from the exchange of information by taking part in a collaborative conversation with other homeschooling parents during the focus group session(s). Benefits to society include the discovery of knowledge that could help improve the development of homeschool teachers and the resulting quality of instruction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What risks might you experience from being in this study?
The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?
The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject, as all personal identifiable information will be protected by the use of pseudonyms and codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and a professional, secure transcription service will have access to the raw data. Data (including interview transcripts, demographic surveys, and recordings) will be stored on a password-protected, encrypted computer hard drive. This confidential data may be used in future studies or presentations, but not in a way that would identify a subject. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Is study participation voluntary?
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?
If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?
The researcher conducting this study is Joshua D. Andrew. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [email protected] or [phone number]. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, Dr. Gail Collins, at [email protected].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [email protected]

Your Consent
By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.
I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to record audio/video of me as part of my participation in this study.

________________________________________
Printed Subject Name

________________________________________
Signature & Date
Appendix F: Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your homeschool setting? (RQ1)
2. What resources or curriculum do you use in your homeschool setting? (RQ1)
3. What philosophy or principles guide your homeschool setting? (RQ2)
4. Describe a typical day/week in your homeschool setting? (RQ1)
5. What factors contributed to your decision to homeschool? (RQ2)
6. How would you describe your confidence in your knowledge and ability to achieve your desired educational outcomes as a homeschool teacher? (RQ1)
7. What prepared you to be a homeschool teacher? (RQ2)
8. What has been your experience, if any, trying to solve difficult homeschooling problems? (RQ1)
9. What has been your experience, if any, dealing with opposition to homeschooling? (RQ1)
10. How would you define your ability to stick to your plans and accomplish your goals? (RQ1)
11. How would you describe your emotional and physical response when facing homeschooling difficulties? (RQ1)
12. What personal experiences—both success and failures—prepared you for teaching prior to homeschooling? (RQ2)
13. What other educational experiences did you have prior to, or during, your time as a homeschool teacher? (RQ2)
14. What, if any, formal or informal teaching experiences did you have prior to homeschooling? (RQ2)
15. How did the experiences, or lack thereof, from the prior question influence what you do as a homeschool teacher? (RQ2)
16. What experiences, if any, did you have selecting, designing, or preparing lessons or curriculum prior to homeschooling? (RQ2)

17. What do you currently do to select, design, or prepare curriculum for your homeschool? (RQ2)

18. How confident are you in your ability, knowledge, and experiences to prepare you to face the present and future challenges of homeschooling and why? (RQ2)

19. What were your most successful teaching experiences during homeschooling, and how have these affected you? (RQ2)

20. What were your least successful teaching experiences during homeschooling, and how have these affected you? (RQ2)

21. How would you describe your experiences, if any, observing other teachers—traditional or homeschool? (RQ2)

22. Have these experiences, or lack thereof, influenced your homeschooling techniques, and how? (RQ2)

23. Who have been the most important people, mentors, or groups in your life who have helped mold your identity as a homeschool teacher, and how have they done so? (RQ2)

24. What positive or negative homeschool settings have you personally witnessed, and how have these experiences shaped your homeschooling teaching? (RQ2)

25. What sources of feedback do you have, if any, concerning your homeschooling abilities, and how have these sources influenced you, if at all? (RQ2)

26. How have you participated, if at all, in homeschooling support groups? (RQ2)

27. (If applicable) How have homeschool support groups impacted your homeschooling process, if at all? (RQ2)
28. What other sources of verbal encouragement, advice, or support do you have for homeschooling, if any, and how have these sources influenced you, if at all? (RQ2)

29. How would you describe the need, if there is one, for homeschooling teachers to have sources of positive feedback, support, or encouragement, and why? (RQ2)

30. What thoughts and feelings did you have while deciding to homeschool, and how did these affect your final decision to homeschool? (RQ2)

31. What thoughts and feelings did you have as you proceeded to homeschool, and how did these affect your decision to continue homeschooling? (RQ2)

32. What strategies, if any, did you or do you use to overcome any intrusive thoughts, anxious emotions, or physical symptoms that challenged your decision to start and continue homeschooling? (RQ2)

33. How would you describe your satisfaction with, and commitment to continue, homeschooling? (RQ1)

34. What else would you like me to know about your preparation and experience as a homeschool teacher? (RQ1, RQ2, or RQ3)

35. What else would you like to address? (RQ1, RQ2, or RQ3)

Questions 8–11 of this survey are from the General Self-Efficacy Scale published by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). The survey was shortened and modified to meet the particular requirements of this research context and used with the permission of Dr. Ralf Schwarzer. For more information, please see the following letter of permission from Freie Universität Berlin.
Permission granted

to use the General Self-Efficacy Scale for non-commercial research and
development purposes. The scale may be shortened and/or modified to meet the
particular requirements of the research context.

http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/selfscal.htm

You may print an unlimited number of copies on paper for distribution to research
participants. Or the scale may be used in online survey research if the user group
is limited to certified users who enter the website with a password.

There is no permission to publish the scale in the Internet, or to print it in
publications (except 1 sample item).

The source needs to be cited, the URL mentioned above as well as the book
publication:

S. Wright, & M. Johnston, Measures in health psychology: A user’s portfolio. Casual and
central beliefs (pp.35-37). Windsor, UK: NFER-NELSON.

Professor Dr. Ralf Schwarzer
Appendix G: Homeschool Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey

1. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to get through to your student(s) in times of personal difficulty? (RQ1)

2. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to help your student(s) think critically? (RQ1)

3. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to control disruptive behavior from your student(s)? (RQ1)

4. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to motivate your student(s) who may demonstrate low interest in school work? (RQ1)

5. How would you describe what you do, if anything, to make your behavioral expectations clear to your student(s)? (RQ1)

6. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to help your student(s) believe they can do well in school work? (RQ1)

7. How would you describe your experiences, if any, in answering difficult questions from your student(s)? (RQ1)

8. How would you describe your experiences, if any, in using routines in your homeschool environment? (RQ1)

9. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to help your student(s) value learning? (RQ1)

10. How would you describe your experiences, if any, in gauging your student(s)’s comprehension of what you have taught? (RQ1)

11. How would you describe your experiences, if any, in trying to craft good questions to foster your student(s)’s learning? (RQ1)
12. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to foster creativity in your student(s)? (RQ1)

13. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to ensure your child(ren) follow(s) your learning rules? (RQ1)

14. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to improve the understanding of your student(s) who is(are) struggling or failing? (RQ1)

15. How would you describe your experiences, if any, trying to calm your student(s) who may be disruptive while you are trying to teach, and what are some examples? (RQ1)

16. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to manage a group of students? (RQ1)

17. How would you describe your experiences, if any, in adjusting your lessons to properly fit the needs of your individual student(s)? (RQ1)

18. How would you describe you experiences, if any, providing alternative explanations or examples when your student(s) express(es) confusion on a topic or lesson? (RQ1)

19. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to respond to situations where your child(ren) may show defiance? (RQ1)

20. Describe what, if anything, you could do to assist other homeschooling parents help their children do well in homeschooling? (RQ1)

21. What are the strategies, if any, you feel you could adequately implement to provide appropriate challenges for the capabilities of your student(s)? (RQ1)

This scale was altered from the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale for the purpose of this qualitative study and used as modified with the permission of Dr. Megan Tschannen-Moran. A copy of the email and letter of permission are included below.
Permission to use the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

[External] Permission Letter

Frances Furlong

Wed 6/2/2021 3:19 PM

To: Andrew, Joshua D <jdandrew@liberty.edu>

Cc: Frances Furlong

2 attachments (1 MB)
Andrew_Joshua_2021_June_2_TSES.pdf; MTMGuest Instructions_2019_v5.pdf;

[ EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content. ]

Joshua,

I have attached a letter of permission from Dr. Tschannen-Moran, as well as directions for accessing the materials on her password-protected website.

Dr. Tschannen-Moran has also informed me that you have permission to adapt the TSES for your research purposes.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Regards,

Frances

Frances C. Furlong
Ph.D Student
William & Mary School of Education
June 2, 2021

Joshua,

You have my permission to use the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (formerly called the Ohio State Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale), which I developed with Anita Woolfolk Hoy, in your research.

You can find a copy of the measure and scoring directions on my web site at http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch.

Please use the following as the proper citation:


I will also attach directions you can follow to access my password protected web site, where you can find the supporting references for this measure as well as other articles I have written on this and related topics.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran
William & Mary School of Education
Appendix H: Perceived Success Survey

1. What goals do you have for your student(s) through homeschooling? (RQ3)
2. How has your teaching facilitated the accomplishment of these goals? (RQ1)
3. What methods have you used to measure achievement in your homeschool? (RQ3)
4. How would you characterize the academic success of your student(s)? (RQ3)
5. What artifacts/documents can you provide to demonstrate this success? (RQ3)
6. How do these artifacts/documents demonstrate academic success? (RQ3)
Appendix I: Focus Group Questions

1. After completing the interviews, surveys, and reviewing the current synthesis presented today, how do you feel about the accuracy of the current model as compared to your experiences? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)

2. What, if anything, do you feel needs to change in the current model? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)

3. What, if anything, needs to be explored further through the interview process and the next focus group? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)

4. Based on your experience and your participation in this study thus far, what are your perceptions of the nature of HTSE as a construct within the homeschooling community? (RQ1)

5. Based on your experience and your participation in this study thus far, what are your perceptions of the development of HTSE as a construct within the homeschooling community? (RQ2)

6. Based on your experience and your participation in this study thus far, what are your perceptions of the benefits of HTSE as a construct within the homeschooling community? (RQ3)

7. What else, if anything, should we discuss today as relevant to this study?
Appendix J: Research and Reflexivity Journal

May 28, 2021: Corbin and Strauss stated that it is important to start a journal early in the study process in order to start bracketing out bias. This serves as good advice, especially since I am approaching this study with significant bias at the onset. First, I am approaching this study with a bias that HTSE will develop along a pattern similar to that of Bandura’s SET and include elements of HAT and TSE. In a grounded theory, I could have started with a blank slate and simply asked, “what makes an effective homeschool?” But, the enigmatic and diverse nature of the homeschooling community makes this too vague an initial research question. Personal experience tells me that there is no consistent pattern for motive, method, or philosophy that results in a successful homeschool. In other words, success can come from any combination of these if the right elements are present. Consequently, I narrowed the initial focus of this study to themes of Bandura’s SET to explore homeschool parents’ perspectives on why they believe they are prepared to succeed (self-efficacy). For this same reason, I elected to use Corbin and Strauss over Charmaz for the grounded theory study. Corbin and Strauss allow for the use of an initial framework in grounded theory so long as a researcher remains open to following the data where it leads. Consequently, I’ve established research questions and interview protocols designed to first explore this topic. However, I remain committed to following the data. Thus, I’ve also established checks within the methodology to allow for member checking. In the focus groups, I will ask participants to nitpick my findings to ensure they represent their perceptions of their reality, not my own bias. I am confident that these procedures will help to bracket my bias out of this study.

June 17, 2021: At its onset, this study relies heavily on Bandura’s theories as an initial framework. For this reason, I chose the Corbin and Strauss approach to grounded theory over Charmaz. However, in order to ensure my methodology will still lead to a true grounded theory study—regardless of the initial framework—my committee chair asked for a review of my proposal from Dr. Spaulding at Liberty University. Her response indicated that I made a good case for the study design. Therefore, I will continue to follow the Corbin and Strauss approach and look to Bandura as a starting point for this investigation, remaining open to following the leading of the data.

September 27, 2021: Today I received IRB approval for my study. I proceeded to send out my recruitment materials to potential participants through my connection with the Fellowship of Christian Home Educators in the Eau Claire, Wisconsin area. I also contacted the Wisconsin Homeschool Parents Association, HomeStars, Chippewa Valley Homeschool Forum, and Homeschoolers of Western Wisconsin, to have them send my recruitment material to the group’s membership.
September 28, 2021: I sent additional recruitment materials to the administrator of Wisconsin Homeschool Support to send to the membership as potential participants.

September 29, 2021: Some of the parent groups to which I reached out have decided not to allow me to send my letters to their membership groups. I will have to hope that the people to whom I do have permission to send my letters generate enough participants through snowball sampling. I will also continue to personally contact the leadership of homeschooling support groups in the state to explore their willingness to allow me to contact their membership. In order to generate a greater potential sample size, I will begin by contacting active groups in large cities and work my way out to rural locations.

Today I reached out to the leadership of FISH Home Education Network in Madison, Wisconsin. Furthermore, my connection to the Chippewa Valley Homeschool Forum allowed me to send out my recruitment letters to the membership of the forum. This forum represents over 150 families in Western Wisconsin. I also reached out to the leadership of Milwaukee Area Home Learners to request access to their membership information. Additionally, I contacted Racine Area Homeschoolers, Inc., Wausau Area Home Educators, and Holy Family Homeschoolers of Madison. The contacting of these groups represents my desire to fairly sample people from all ideological sides of the homeschool community.

October 4, 2021: Some potential participants have started asking follow-up questions that require me to clarify my inclusion/exclusion criteria. For example, I have to determine whether or not the setting of Wisconsin is satisfied if the participant homeschooled in Wisconsin, but no longer lives in the state. Inversely, can someone participate in the study if they currently live in Wisconsin, but their 3-year requirement occurred in another state? To answer these questions, I have attempted to err on the side of inclusion providing the following guidance:

1. Potential participants residing in Wisconsin may be included in the study if their out of state homeschooling substantially conformed to Wisconsin’s legal description of the homeschooling process.
2. Potential participants residing outside of Wisconsin may be included in the study if while living in Wisconsin, they completed their required 3-years of homeschooling, and that the information they share reflect their experiences while homeschooling according to Wisconsin’s legal description of the homeschooling process.

Additionally, a potential participant raised the question as to what level of participation in a professional teacher preparation program merits...
exclusion from the study. Should a potential participant be excluded if they only took one or two teaching courses prior to changing majors in college? At the heart of this exclusion criteria rests the desire to separate people whose college or training experiences provided professional self-efficacy development designed for teachers. These experiences would include training in curriculum and instruction design, classroom management strategies, and experiences in observing teachers or student teaching practicums. Therefore, if a potential candidate participated in a limited capacity that did not provide training specific to teacher self-efficacy they could potentially still participate. However, the majority of potential participants with some exposure to teacher preparation program will have likely encountered the aforementioned training and will be excluded from the study. For this fact, I excluded the first potential participant who completed the screening survey. The applicant stated that her degree was non-teaching, but that she had completed all the teacher courses except for student teaching. Clearly, this level of participation would have provided training that would develop professional TSE. Consequently, her information would not fairly represent the informal development of HTSE.

October 9, 2021: I have received screening surveys from qualified potential participants. I reached out to include these people by ensuring the return of their consent forms and scheduling interviews. Because of the location of the participants and the current high risk of COVID-19 in Eau Claire county, I am encouraging the use of WebEx video conferencing. This decision preserves the safety of those involved, but also presents several additional benefits. These benefits include reliable recording of the meetings and an automatic transcription of the interview. I am able to use the WebEx features because of my affiliation with Liberty University. The IT department graciously granted me an access to their accounts for faculty/staff.

October 22, 2021: While conducting an interview with Participant C, the question of inclusion criteria came up based upon her potential exposure to teacher preparation classes in college. She has a master’s degree that included teaching preparation, but it was for a collegiate level of instruction, which means this was not the pedagogical training and classroom management training that was an exclusion criterion for this study. I’ve elected to keep her in the study based upon this revelation—knowing that her teacher training for younger levels was offered through her program, but not something that she actually pursued.

October 27, 2021: Homeschool Legal Defense Association decided to send my recruitment information to their members in the state of Wisconsin. This generated a significant increase in interest among prospective participants. Also, those
interested have forwarded the information from HSLDA to their local homeschooling organizations as a form of snowball sampling. Despite being a member of the homeschooling community, I find that generating trust and recruiting potential participants represents a daunting task. I am very surprised by the guarded reluctance and outright resistance I have encountered in the homeschooling community to this study.

November 2, 2021: As I am open coding some of the initial interview responses, it is clear that some of the responses readily fit together. Therefore, I am choosing to reuse some of the *in vivo* codes from one of the question responses to others that define the same principle. While, in essence, this may be seen as jumping quickly to axial coding, I still consider it open coding where there is obvious continuity within the same participant’s responses.

November 4, 2021: I may need to take more precautions concerning remote, digital interviews. Today, one participant participated in the interview while driving home from work. Obviously, I’m concerned about the safety of conducting a thoughtful interview while simultaneously driving—even if “hands free.”

November 19, 2021 to December 10, 2021: I contracted COVID-19, which left me extremely fatigued and physically compromised. I’ve lost about 3 weeks of productivity. This places me behind my schedule in both data collection and analysis. Unfortunately, this also interfered with my plan to conduct my first focus group. I’ve had to push back the focus group, but still conduct scheduled interviews based on prior arrangements. Therefore, instead of conducting the focus group after the fifth interview, and informing the following interviews, it will be conducted after the eighth interview and inform the remaining interviews in the study. This will then be followed by a second focus group.

December 16, 2021: The busyness of the Christmas season has interrupted too many schedules. Therefore, I decided to postpone the first focus group again, from December 17 until January 7. This will place the focus group after the holidays and also give me ample time to continue data analysis while collection is suspended until after the focus group. I have two more participants waiting to conduct their interviews, but they have agreed to wait until after this time so that the focus group can inform the ongoing data collection process through constant comparison.

January 3, 2022: With the holidays, family illnesses, and emergencies all occurring simultaneously, this season has also set me back in my data analysis. The amount of data generated from each participant is staggering and requires substantial time to properly analyze and annotate. This has slowed the process considerably from my expectations. That being said, while my formal notation process is behind schedule, I still feel confident in the presence of constant comparative analysis in this study as an element of
the grounded theory design. If nothing else, my initial field notes and memory of each interview allows for an ongoing back and forth between data collection, analysis, and revised data collection. Through this process, I have adjusted some of the questions I ask in the interview to explore new themes. This is the spirit behind the grounded theory design, even if the deeper analysis cycle does not sync as harmoniously as I projected in my proposal.

January 6, 2022: As I analyze some of the survey data, I realize that some of the participants did not answer all of their questions. Because they provided no rationale for their election to not answer the question, I have to decide whether or not the absence of data contributes important information ad silencio. For example, if they refused to answer a question about what strategies they have, does that mean they do not have any strategies in that area or does it mean they did not want to discuss it? Given the context of transparency and the nature of answers provided in other questions, I’m inclined to believe the former, but I must proceed with caution. After all, this could just be a computer glitch that omitted the response.

January 7, 2022: I conducted my first focus group today. Four out of five participants had RSVP’d, one cancelled at the last minute, and one was a no show. However, I decided to proceed with the remaining two participants. I presented the working copy of the visual representation of the HTSE lifecycle model that I have developed out of the initial data analysis and synthesis. I received feedback from the participants and further data that I can analyze to include on the next iteration of data collection.

January 21, 2022: After today’s interview, I realized that I continue to hear the same stories and information from my participants. If after data analysis, the next interview also follows this pattern, then I may indicate I have achieved saturation sooner than anticipated.

January 24, 2022: Although I anticipated conducting 15–30 interviews for this grounded theory study, after conducting 10 interviews, it seems I have already achieved thematic saturation. The person I interviewed today had insightful comments that supported existing themes, but did not provide anything that was unexpected or new to the study. Ongoing data analysis will later confirm this conclusion.

February 18, 2022: In preparing for the second focus group, I reviewed my axial codes. As these codes have grown and developed more fully, it was clear that I needed to reorder some of the sub-codes and place them under more appropriate primary axial codes. For example, I had originally placed “unbound academic mobility” as an HTSE outcome because I felt it was part what people achieved as an outcome. After further review, this fits more appropriately under “HTSE benefits.” Because the lived academic
mobility of homeschooling students, while impacting their outcomes, is a daily experienced benefit of HTSE’s flexibility. A more detailed description of the changes will be listed in my audit trail.

February 18, 2022: Today was my second focus group. Five participants participated in the discussion, which provided confirmation of my initial proposed theory. Moreover, all the points raised by the group members were addressed by the current data. This supports my conclusion that I have achieved thematic saturation sooner than I have expected. However, I will confirm this as I complete more thorough data analysis and review.
Appendix K: Audit Trail

September 27, 2021: The IRB approved the research proposal. Therefore, I sent recruitment materials via email to potential participants through my previous affiliation and contact with the leaders of the Fellowship of Christian Home Educators. I also reached out to Wisconsin Homeschool Parents Association, Home Stars, Chippewa Valley Homeschool Forum, and Homeschoolers of Western Wisconsin.

September 28, 2021: I sent additional recruitment letters to the administrator of Wisconsin Homeschool Support for permission to contact their membership for potential participants.

September 29, 2021: Despite previous indication of support, some of the HSGs declined to provide contact information for their members or to forward my recruitment material. Therefore, I will continue to contact other HSGs in an attempt to gain access to potential participants. Today, I sent emails to:

1. FISH Home Education Network, Madison, WI
2. Milwaukee Area Home Learners, Milwaukee, Wi
3. Wausau Area Home Educators, Wausau, WI
4. Holy Family Homeschoolers, Madison, WI

I was granted permission to send my recruitment letters to the membership of the Chippewa Valley Homeschool Forum via their online portal. This portal represents 150 families in Western Wisconsin.

October 4, 2021: In response to questions from potential participants, I clarified the inclusion/exclusion criteria for the study (see Appendix J). The criteria is amended as follows:

1. Potential participants residing in Wisconsin may be included in the study if their qualifying minimum homeschooling experience substantially conformed to Wisconsin’s legal description of homeschooling when conducted out-of-state.
2. Potential participants residing outside of Wisconsin may be included in the study if they completed their required 3-years of homeschooling while living in Wisconsin and they share information relating to homeschooling experiences that conform to Wisconsin’s legal description of homeschooling.
3. Potential participants may be included in the study despite having some prior teacher training if such training did not include training in curriculum and instruction design, classroom management strategies, and experiences in observing teachers or participating in student teaching practicums. This applies in situations where people may have
changed their majors in college or had one or two classes that fulfilled the requirements of their major and that of teacher preparation.

October 4, 2021: One potential participant was excluded from the study for having studyexcluding experience in teacher education courses.

October 7, 2021: Wisconsin Homeschool Parents Association refused to grant access to their membership for the sake of recruiting for this study as they felt it was not aligned to their mission.

October 8, 2021: The first three qualified participants completed screening surveys. I sent follow-up emails and requests for signed consent forms.

October 9, 2021: As I receive screening surveys from qualified participants, I have coordinated with them to conduct individual interviews. Because Wisconsin currently presents a high-risk of COVID-19 transmission, I have coordinated with Liberty University to use WebEx video conferencing software in lieu of face-to-face, in-person meetings.

October 12, 2021: I contacted CIRCLE homeschooling group, Raising our Tribe, and a Menomonee area HSG, for potential recruitment contacts.

October 13, 2021: Although I allowed the first participant to schedule an interview time for her convenience, I stated that we would not be able to proceed with her signed consent form. However, she did not submit her consent form prior to her scheduled interview today. Moreover, she no longer responds to email or telephone calls. I conclude she no longer wishes to participate in the study.

October 15, 2021: Another potential participant completed the online screening survey. I sent a follow-up inclusion letter via email.

October 17, 2021: Another potential participant completed the online screening survey. I sent a follow-up inclusion letter via email.

October 18, 2021: I conducted an online, video interview with Participant A today. I utilized the interview protocol as a semi-structured guide and asked follow-up questions as I deemed appropriate. WebEx provided a recording and transcription of the interview, which I edited for accuracy and formatting. This file was emailed to the participant for verification.

Throughout the interview, I annotated field notes based on my initial impressions. These notes were digitally annotated as new comments to the transcript using Microsoft Word. Moreover, individual comments were added to a master analysis log using Microsoft Excel.
In addition to field notes, I began to analyze the interview data by making notes on each new idea that was mentioned in each interview question response. These ideas were open coded using *in vivo* codes.

October 20, 2021: I conducted another online interview with Participant B. I followed the same interview protocols as I did for interview A. However, as I begin analyzing the data, I am not constantly comparing the data between each interview and my own field notes. At this point, I can start to group similar *in vivo* codes from the two participants into axial groups and themes. This information will also help shape future interviews.

October 22, 2021: I conducted my third interview today. During the course of her interview she mentioned prior training, but her description fell within the revised inclusion criteria. I continued data analysis as described above.

October 26, 2021: I received the first completed HTSE survey from Participant A. This document will be analyzed and compared with the data from the interviews.

October 27, 2021: HSLDA conducted a review of my study materials and sent a link to my recruitment materials to their membership in the state of Wisconsin.

October 27, 2021: Another potential participant completed the online screening survey. I sent a follow-up inclusion letter via email.

October 28, 2021: Another potential participant completed the online screening survey. I sent a follow-up inclusion letter via email.

November 1, 2021: Another potential participant completed the online screening survey. I sent a follow-up inclusion letter via email.

November 2, 2021: Another potential participant completed the online screening survey. I sent a follow-up inclusion letter via email.

As open coding continues, I have decided to use the same *in vivo* codes within the same interview if the information is repeated in different questions. This may blend open and axial coding, but it is within the constant comparative spirit of the grounded theory method.

I also conducted another interview today that followed the aforementioned procedure.

Moreover, I received the completed HTSE survey from Participant B. This document will be analyzed and compared with the data from the interviews. I also received the completed Perceived Success Survey from Participants A and B.
November 4, 2021: I conducted another interview today and continue to compare the data. However, it is now time to schedule the first focus group.

November 5, 2021: I received the completed HTSE survey from Participant C. This document will be analyzed and compared with the data from the interviews.

November 8, 2021: I received the completed HTSE survey from Participant D. This document will be analyzed and compared with the data from the interviews. I also received the completed Perceived Success Survey from Participant D.

November 10, 2021: Another potential participant completed the online screening survey. I sent a follow-up inclusion letter via email.

November 12, 2021: Due to unforeseen, external conflicts, I was not able to conduct the first focus group when I wanted. However, I do not wish to cancel the other interviews that participants scheduled. Therefore, I will have to reschedule the first focus group for after the first interviews of the second cohort. The information from the first focus group was meant to help direct the interviews for the second round of interviews (5–10). However, at least the information from the first round of interviews will still guide the second through the ongoing constant comparative method of analysis.

November 15, 2021: I received the completed Perceived Success Survey from Participant C.

November 16, 2021: I conducted another interview.

November 17, 2021: I received the completed HTSE survey from Participant E. This document will be analyzed and compared with the data from the interviews.

November 19, 2021: I contracted COVID-19. I am subsequently locked down and starting to feel weak and sick. This will further compound my ability to coordinate for the first focus groups. However, I already have the next two interviews planned out around when I anticipated the focus group would be. Hopefully this will clear before it becomes an issue.

November 19, 2021: I conducted another interview.

November 24, 2021: I received the completed Perceived Success Survey from participant E.

November, 30, 2021: I conducted another interview.

December 1, 2021: Another potential participant completed the online screening survey. I sent a follow-up inclusion letter via email.
December 2, 2021: I received the completed HTSE survey from Participant F. This document will be analyzed and compared with the data from the interviews. I also received the completed Perceived Success Survey from Participant F.

December 10, 2021: I am finally starting to recover from COVID-19. It had profound personal impact (see Appendix J). Due to the health limitations, my focus group was delayed through the previous two interviews. Although I was physically compromised, I believe the past two interviews remained professional and provided valid contributions to the study. I chose not to cancel them out of respect to the participants’ busy schedules surrounding the holidays.

December 15, 2021: I received the completed Perceived Success Survey from Participant H.

December 22, 2021: I received the completed HTSE survey from Participant H. This document will be analyzed and compared with the data from the interviews.

January 2, 2022: I received the completed HTSE survey from Participant G. This document will be analyzed and compared with the data from the interviews.

January 6, 2022: In preparation for the first focus group, I am finishing up my analysis of the first cycle of data collection. However, some of the surveys are incomplete. I will have to decide how to process this within the analysis (see Appendix J).

January 7, 2022: Today I conducted Focus Group 1. Given the ongoing risk of COVID-19, this was also a virtual event through WebEx. While four of the five participants indicated they would come, one canceled at the last minute and one did not show. I presented my preliminary findings to the remaining two participants. They provided valuable feedback.

January 11, 2022: I received the completed Perceived Success Survey from Participant G.

January 21, 2022: I conducted another interview. In light of the focus group feedback and the current interviews, it would appear I am close to thematic saturation, as people are no longer presenting new information.

January 24, 2022: I completed what appears to be the last needed interview. Although I anticipated needing more interviews, the current interviews are no longer presenting new information to the study and have filled in the apparent themes from data analysis.

February 2, 2022: I received the completed HTSE survey from Participant I. This document will be analyzed and compared with the data from the interviews.
February 10, 2022: I received the completed HTSE survey from Participant J. This document will be analyzed and compared with the data from the interviews.

February 16, 2022: I received the completed Perceived Success Survey from Participant I.

February 18, 2022: Today was the second focus group. I presented my findings and the participants affirmed their agreement with the results. This was a digital event in which five participants participated. I also received the completed Perceived Success Survey from Participant J.
Appendix L: List of Axial Code Themes and Subthemes

I. Initial Stage:
   I.1. Agency:
      I.1.i. Agentic Triggers:
         I.1.i.1. Betterment
         I.1.i.2. Ideological Convictions
         I.1.i.3. Familial Motivations
         I.1.i.4. Environmental Factors
         I.1.i.5. Additional Influences
      I.1.ii. Agentic Impulse:
         I.1.ii.1. Cumulative Effect
         I.1.ii.2. External Factors
         I.1.ii.3. Low Risk Initiative
      I.1.iii. Agentic Response:
         I.1.iii.1. Commitment
         I.1.iii.2. Non-Conformity
         I.1.iii.3. Alternative Objectives & Measures
         I.1.iii.4. Reevaluation/Renewal/Exit
   I.2. Pre-Service HTSE Development:
      I.2.i Transferred Self-Efficacy
      I.2.ii. Pre-Service Mastery Experiences
      I.2.iii. Pre-Service Social Influences
      I.2.iv. Divine Intervention
   I.3. Pre-Service HTSE Benefits:
      I.3.i. Teachers
      I.3.ii. Students

II. Transition Stage:
   II.1. Introductory Instruction
   II.2. Navigating Initial States
   II.3. Early In-Service HTSE Development:
      II.3.i. Early Mastery Experiences
      II.3.ii. Early Social Influences
      II.3.iii. Early HTSE Benefits

III. Stabilization & Influence Stage:
   III.1. HTSE Development:
      III.1.i. Mastery Experiences
         III.1.i.1 Content Knowledge Mastery:
         III.1.i.1. Internal
         III.1.i.2. External
         III.1.i.3. Comparative
      III.1.ii. Social Influences:
         III.1.ii.1. Social Persuasion
         III.1.ii.2. Social Models
III.1.ii.3. Homeschool Support Groups

III.1.iii. Physical & Emotional States:
   III.1.iii.1. Ideological Convictions
   III.1.iii.2. Regulation
   III.1.iii.3. Stability

III.1.iv. Technological Resources:
   III.1.iv.1. Mastery Experiences
   III.1.iv.2. Social Influence
   III.1.iv.3. Physical and Emotional States

III.1.v. Additional Contributing Factors:
   III.1.v.1. Interdependence of Source Streams
   III.1.v.2. Divine Intervention
   III.1.v.3. Appraisal:
      III.1.v.3.A. Positive
      III.1.v.3.B. Negative
      III.1.v.3.C. Conflicting

III.1.vi. HTSE Multipliers:
   III.1.vi.1. Family Bond
   III.1.vi.2. Spousal Support
   III.1.vi.3. Low-Stakes Risk Taking

III.2. HTSE Benefits:
   III.2.i. Agentic Control:
      III.2.i.1. Flexibility
      III.2.i.2. Ingenuity
      III.2.i.3. Resourcefulness
      III.2.i.4. Organization
      III.2.i.5. Self-Sacrifice

   III.2.ii. Confidence

   III.2.iii. Improved Relationship:
      III.2.iii.1. Personalized Instruction
      III.2.iii.2. Improved Behavior

   III.2.iv. Perseverance

   III.2.v. Satisfaction

   III.2.vi. Balance:
      III.2.vi.1. External Commitments
      III.2.vi.2. Instructional Balance
      III.2.vi.3. Well-being

   III.2.vii. Replication of Self-Efficacy:
      III.2.vii.1. Student Mastery Experiences
      III.2.vii.2. Parental Social Influence

   III.2.viii. Positive Outlook
   III.2.ix. Stability
   III.2.x. Influence
   III.2.xi. Self-Awareness

   III.2.xii. Unbound Academic Mobility:
      III.2.xii.1. Daily Schedules
III.2.xii.2. Grade level
III.2.xii.3. Graduation

III.3. Homeschooling Threats:
   III.3.i. Opposition:
      III.3.i.1. Primary Opposition:
         III.3.i.1.A. External Opposition
         III.3.i.1.B. Institutional Opposition
         III.3.i.1.C. Internal Opposition
      III.3.i.2. Secondary Opposition:
         III.3.i.2.A. External Opposition
         III.3.i.2.B. Institutional Opposition
      III.3.i.3. Environmental Limitations
   III.3.ii. Homeschooling Incompatibilities:
      III.3.ii.1. Maladaptive Cognitions
      III.3.ii.2. Low HTSE
      III.3.ii.3. Burn-out
      III.3.ii.4. Special Needs Challenges
   III.3.iii. Pseudo Benefits:
      III.3.iii.1. Over Confidence
      III.3.iii.2. Isolation
      III.3.iii.3. Digital Isolation or Over-reliance:

IV. Outcome Stage:
   IV.1. Perceived Success
      IV.1.i. Improved Academic Achievement
      IV.1.ii. Alternative Outcomes Achievement
      IV.1.iii. Social Contribution
      IV.1.iv. Prepared to Succeed
   IV.2. Comparative Success
   IV.3. Veteran Status:
      IV.3.i. Teachers Active Continuation
      IV.3.ii. Teachers Passive Continuation
      IV.3.iii. Student Active Continuation
      IV.3.iv. Student Passive Continuation
Appendix M: Informal Peer Review Feedback

Peer Review from Dr. Bridgette Whitlow-Spurlock, May 6, 2022:

Thank you for the opportunity to audit your findings. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading your dissertation. Below you will find suggestions, notes, and an overall review.

Please allow me to provide my homeschool experience and expertise in this field in relation to your study. When I began homeschooling, I had an AAS in Criminal Justice. I returned to college when my oldest was seven years old. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education in 2014, a Master of Education with a Graduate Certificate in Gifted Education in 2015, an Education Specialist in 2016, a Doctor of Education in 2019, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Advanced Educational Studies in 2022. I have conducted two studies among homeschooling populations: one grounded theory and one phenomenological study. I have also served on one dissertation committee and consulted with students exploring digital sampling methods and areas of interest in homeschooling, twice-exceptionalities, and nature in education. As a homeschooling parent, I have been homeschooling "since the beginning." My oldest child is finishing his 10th-grade year. I have been involved in homeschooling as a cooperative teacher in three states, served as a board member for a military homeschool organization until it dissolved, and worked as an advocate with the government affairs team for a state's homeschool organization.

Suggestions

On page 18, you stated, "this year, the estimated population of homeschooling families is between 4.0-5.0 million students (Ray, 2020, 2021)." The references indicated two different years, and the current year is later than those noted. I suggest offering clarity in this area. Did Ray predict in 2020/2021 that the increase would occur in 2022 or after pandemic restrictions ended? Was the estimated increase specific to those years?

You mentioned deschooling in the transition stage. It is not expounded upon within the context of homeschooling. It has been my experience that those outside the homeschool community see deschooling as no school rather than a transition period, and it can be confused with unschooling. In my latest study, deschooling was not found as usually defined within the homeschool community. Questions of deschooling arose during the defense of my Ph.D. dissertation defense.

In your results, one area that I did not understand initially but gained an understanding of as I read the stages was Figure 1. A brief summary explaining how the stages flow in the visual may clarify the figure.

Notes

Study demographics

Gender: The gender demographics of the sample (90% female and 10% male) is representative of the homeschooling demographics for fathers but elevated slightly for mothers as reported by NHES, in which 78% are mothers, 13% are fathers, 3% are other relative, 4% other person, and 2% virtually instructed. Due to the study's parameters and the laws of Wisconsin, not all of these categories may apply to this study. The sample size is congruent with the national and international literature on homeschooling being primarily conducted by mothers.

Race/Ethnicity: Racially, the demographics were heterogeneous. Ethnically, the demographics were representative of the population of Wisconsin.
Education and Income: The education and income levels represented were diverse. Parents' education levels are representative of the 2016 homeschool data for parent education levels. Income levels listed by the NHES were poor/non-poor; thus, I cannot draw a direct analysis of this aspect other than in this study, the levels were diverse.

Participants: The participant section is well-written and utilizes thick, rich descriptions with quotes from participants. Each description provided an understanding of the participant's choice to homeschool and their confidence levels.

Results
- Provided quantitative details for memos and coding.
- Included frequency numbers for codes that provide increased trustworthiness as frequency would increase fidelity in a quantitative study.
- The agentic triggers are aligned with the reasons/rationale for homeschooling found in research. This could be addressed in Chapter Five.
- ~100 pages provide details of the theory with tables and figures for support.
- Tables and figures provide definitions, quotes, and frequency.

Overall Review
Homeschool research has limited theories to explain the how and why questions of the homeschool environment. Chaplain Andrew addressed the concept of TSE among homeschooling families. The participants are representative of the homeschool population of Wisconsin, gender differences among the primary homeschooling parents, and diverse education and income levels. The application of TSE among homeschooling parents expands the homeschooling literature and addresses a paucity in the literature. HTSE is divided into four stages, with details outlining the factors that influence each stage. Chaplain Andrews uses tables with definitions, quotes, and frequencies to provide visual summary support for the details given in each section and subsection. The use of frequency lends to the trustworthiness of this study.

Thank you,

Bridgette Whitlow-Spurlock, Ed.D., Ph.D.

Peer Review from Dr. Jen Rathmell, May 15, 2022:

You have done an excellent job organizing and thinking through both methodology and relaying your results and findings. I appreciate the tables of findings and how they give a nice overview of what you further explain in their sections below. Your line of reasoning is clear and present throughout. I particularly resonate with your themes and ideas regarding self-efficacy and agency. As I looked at the data from a bird’s eye view - I felt like homeschool teachers follow a similar curve to many talents that we acquire and grow into. This path is mirrored in my classroom in many ways regarding my pedagogical self-efficacy. I shudder at times, thinking of my classroom 8 years ago. My own methods have changed and grown along with how students engage in the learning process. It's quite an organic process and I can see that playing out in the process as you write the stories of these homeschool teachers.

As a counselor and psychology teacher, I will say I was surprised to see appraisal used so often and no mention of Lazarus and his theory regarding this. It might be something to add, if you feel that your areas of theoretical framework pertain to this - Lazarus' appraisal theory is
something I use quite often in my work and I know the primary and secondary appraisals are interesting to note. It's just a small thing, but it's something I thought of throughout.

Blessings on your continued work!

Jen