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An Examination of California Home-based Early Childhood Educators' Self-Determination to Attain a Higher Education Degree

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An Examination of California Home-based Early Childhood Educators' Self-Determination to

Attain a Higher Education Degree

A Dissertation by

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Irvine, California

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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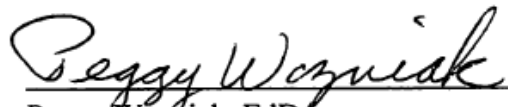
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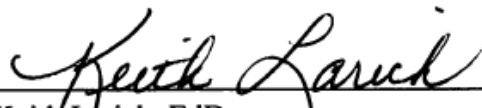
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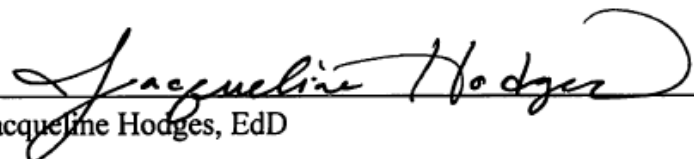
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ABSTRACT

An Examination of California Home-based Early Childhood Educators' Self-Determination to Attain a Higher Education Degree

by Shirley Collins

Purpose: The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine, identify, and describe the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs.

Methodology: This study utilized a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods approach to gain an understanding of the impact of self-determination on California licensed home-based early childhood educators' persistence and retention in college. Three hundred members of the San Diego County Family Child Care Association and/or the California Family Child Care Network were invited to participate in this study. Quantitative data were collected from 37 home-based early childhood educators who volunteered to complete an online survey. The qualitative data were obtained from seven home-based early childhood educators via semi-structured interviews.

Findings: The findings from this study revealed early childhood educators who attended college had high levels of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Additionally, the investigation revealed home-based educators with high levels of self-determination were intrinsically motivated, committed, and intentional about completing their college degree. Finally, these findings showed early childhood educators with self-determination were resolved to stay in college and persist until degree attainment.

Conclusions: Based on the findings from this study and the literature review, it was

concluded self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness

impacted persistence and retention of home-based educators who attended college. Also,

it was found self-determined early childhood educators were committed, intentional,

intrinsically motivated, and engaged, which aided in persistence and retention in higher

education until degree attainment.

Recommendations: Further research is recommended to examine the motivating factors

that impact early childhood educators' engagement and continuation in higher education

at various degree levels and with diverse populations. Additionally, it is recommended to

replicate this study comparing self-determination with other factors such as grit, student

engagement, and entrepreneurship.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (ECE) became a topic of national prominence as the demand for childcare outside the home increased over the years (Essa, 2012; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2013; Saracho, 2013). Enrollment of preschool age children in childcare programs rose from 55% in 2007 to 61% in 2012 (Child Trends, 2017). Researchers attributed this increase to cost of living changes, an upsurge in dual income families, an increase in single parents, and the non-availability of extended family to provide childcare (Essa, 2012). The childcare plight became a national issue as additional individuals entered the workforce and state and local governments experienced challenges meeting childcare needs.

The California Department of Education (CDE, 2017) reported over 450,000 children infant to 12 years of age were receiving childcare services. Millions of dollars in federal funds were used to support state-run programs such as Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-EL), Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and the Early Head Start-Childcare Partnership Grant (CDE, 2017). The state government wrestled with finding additional childcare spaces for families as programs sought to enhance the quality of childcare (Edge, 2017).

Comparable to the state government, local government at the county level also experienced challenges with increased demands for childcare services. Although the need for childcare steadily rises, the number of available early care programs is significantly dwindling (Kids Data, 2017). California childcare spaces were reduced by more than 18,000 between 2012 and 2014, as the state moved from 1,052,329 spaces for children to 1,034,145 (Table 1). Although center-based childcare spaces increased by

5,258, the home-based childcare spaces significantly decreased by 23,442 spaces between 2012 and 2014. Some childcare programs had available spaces, but left them unoccupied due to the lack of available qualified staff (Kids Data, 2017). Therefore, early childhood educators were desperately needed as well as childcare spaces.

Table 1

California Statistics of Childcare Spaces

Facility Type	2012	2014
Childcare Center	716,610	721,868
Family Childcare Home	335,719	312,277
Total	1,052,329	1,034,145

Note. Retrieved from Kids Data, 2017.

Meeting the demands of high-quality early care programs at the national, state, and local levels required teachers who completed degrees in ECE as trained teachers produced high-quality childcare programs (Espinosa, 2015). Higher education attrition rates at the national, state, and local level intensified this dilemma as a significant number of post-secondary students departed before degree attainment (Tinto, 2012). Some of these were from the ECE degree program as a "lack of course offerings with non-traditional hours and modes of delivery are reported as challenges in—keeping this group of students" (Couse & Recchia, 2015, p. 171). For over four decades, researchers pursued answers to student persistence in higher education and although progress was made, more research is needed (Tinto, 1975).

Researchers suspected a link between self-determination and student persistence and retention in academia (Hauser, 2014; Hunley, 2015; Tetreault, 2013). Edward Deci and Richard Ryan conducted numerous studies on self-determination theory (SDT) and

the effects of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on behavior outcomes (Deci &
Ryan, 1985, 2002; Gagné, 2015; Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Schwarz, 2002).
However, the question remained whether the innate human capacity of self-regulation
(autonomy), self-ability (competence), and self-connectedness (relatedness) caused
persistence and completion in tasks and endeavors.

Background

The background for the study provided an overview of national attrition in higher
education with a focus on academy attrition rates. Next, self-determination theory (SDT)
is examined with particular attention on the theoretical framework outlined by Deci and
Ryan (1985) as it pertained to intrinsic motivation and psychological need for
competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Flaste, 1996; Deci & Ryan, 1985;
Gagné, 2015; Ryan, 2012; Schwarz, 2002). Finally, the role of the psychological need
for autonomy, competence, and relatedness is explored as related to student persistence
and retention in higher education (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Gagné, 2015; Hauser, 2014;
Hunley, 2015; Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Tetreault, 2013; Tinto, 2012).

The academy attrition rates in the United States were alarmingly high with one-
third of students departing freshman year (Angelino, Williams, & Natvig, 2007; Baier,
Markman, & Pernice-Duca, 2016; Blecher, 2006; O'Keeffe, 2013). Attrition impacted
over 50% of students pursuing degrees in higher education (Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan,
2000; Hauser, 2014; Tinto, 1993, 2012). The office of higher education stated 46% of
students dropped out within the first year and an additional 25% in year two. Four-year
degree programs had a higher rate of dropouts and two- year programs experienced lower
rates (O'Keeffe, 2013; Tinto, 1975, 1987). The impact of attrition on higher education

was detrimental to the workforce as a large proportion of jobs required postsecondary education (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2003).

Theoretical Framework of Self-Determination

Deci and Ryan (1985) completed extensive studies on self-determination and discovered innate tendencies to integrate and regulate responses to self and others. Self-determination theory (SDT) served as a culmination of mini-theories: cognitive evaluation theory, focused on intrinsic motivation; organismic integration theory focused on external motivation; causality orientation theory focused on individual differences in tendencies; basic needs theory focused on health and well-being; goal content theory focused on intrinsic versus extrinsic aspirations; and relationship motivation theory focused on quality and consequences of relationships (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Additionally, self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness centered on intrinsic motivation (Deci & Flaste, 1996; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002).

According to Deci and Ryan (1985) the three self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness were natural psychological needs. Competence was the inward belief of being capable of controlling one's outcomes, autonomy was the freedom to choose, and relatedness was the need for connections and relationships (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Deci and Ryan's work explored intrinsic motivation on SDT and concentrated on regulating self and its responses to extrinsic experiences (Deci & Flaste, 1996; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Tetreault, 2013).

History of Higher Education

America's higher education system dated back to the Colonial period with the start of Harvard University in the early 1600s (Rudolph, 1962; Thelin, 2011). The first education establishments started to prepare ministers and expanded to include other programs such as liberal arts and medicine (Thelin, 2011). The 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act provided higher education a diverse student populace as it made way for women attendees while simultaneously introducing science and engineering curricula (Rudolph, 1962; Thelin, 2011).

Student profiles represented diversity during the 20th and 21st centuries in response to the GI Bill, civil rights activities, and affirmative action, all of which brought about inclusion of students with lower socioeconomic status from varied ethnic backgrounds (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 2016; Rudolph, 1962; Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2011; Thelin, 2011). After a century of stagnant collegiate culture, a population shift occurred in the 1970s when the number of younger students entered higher education grew (Schuh et al., 2011; Thelin, 2011). By the late 1970s, regulatory concerns about attrition rates were prevalent as freshman dropout increased (Schuh et al., 2011; Thelin, 2011; Tinto, 2012). Dropout rates occurred in all fields of study including those centered on child and family studies (Altbach et al., 2016).

Early childhood education. Early care and education started at the turn of the century as the nursery school movement launched during the depression. At that time, child saving institutions provided children with nutritional meals and safe play environments (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2011). During the 1930s, the nation recognized early care was more than custodial care and rather a place of instruction (Lascarides & Hinitz,

2011; Reavis & Mahoney, 1940). The federal government believed in the importance of

instructional programs and consequently began investing in them. The number of early

care and education programs increased from 13 nursery schools to over 3000 nursery

schools by 1936 (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2011; Reavis & Mahoney, 1940; Reavis &

Shanner, 1937).

The federal government's advocacy and support of free early care and education

programs for young children continued. In response, the Head Start program was

established in 1965. Head Start primarily provided educational opportunities for

preschoolers of impoverished families (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2011; Rose, 2007, 2009;

Rossi, 1993). Since the 1960s, early care and education was of national attention and

policies were established to address childcare needs. Research showed high-quality early

education and care programs were congruent with programs employing trained and

educated teachers (Ackerman, 2005; Burchinal et al., 2009; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009;

Espinosa, 2010, 2015).

Early childhood educators. Studies showed teachers with higher education

provided high-quality programs for children (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Espinosa,

2010, 2015). Although research did not provide a list of designated classes ECE teachers

required, data showed knowledge related to curriculum, developing the child, diversity,

assessments, and working with families and peers were essential (Burchinal et al., 2009;

Espinosa, 2010, 2015). A majority of two- and four-year colleges offered ECE classes,

which validated the significance of degrees for those who served as early care educators.

The importance of the early childhood educator should not be underestimated as high-

quality ECE programs equalized the educational opportunities for less fortunate children,

enriched learning, and increased academic achievement and outcomes (Ackerman, 2005; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Espinosa, 2015; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2011). Early childhood educators differed from a babysitter or typical child caregiver as they possessed education and experience needed to provide developmental and educational support for children in their care (Hardwood & Tukonic, 2016). Early childhood educators, including those in home-based settings, were vital contributors to high-quality early care for children, and therefore, it is critical they persist in personal higher education pursuits (Schaack, Le, & Messan Setodji, 2017).

Persistence in Higher Education and Self-Determination

Humans have an innate desire to control events, behaviors, and outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Carnevale & Desrochers, 2003; Deci & Flaste, 1996; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gagné, 2015; Schwarz, 2002). The power to transform one's environment occurred through persistence (Bandura, 1997). Higher education used persistence as the rate students continued toward degree completion (Tinto, 2012). Tinto (2012) explained student progression toward degree completion was described as persistence from the student view and as retention from the institutional view. Tinto (2012) suggested:

> Persistence and completion refer to the rate at which students who begin higher education at a given point in time continue in higher education and eventually complete their degree, regardless of where they do so. Retention and graduation refer to the rate at which an institution retains and graduates students who first enter the institution as freshman at a given point in time. (p. 127)

Dedicated scholars continued to explore student educational perseverance from both persistence and retention viewpoints with hopes of uncovering the motivational factors leading to degree attainment (Hunley, 2015; Ogren, 2003; Terrell, Snyder, Dringus, & Maddrey, 2012).

The gap in research related to higher education persistence and retention. Researchers who studied higher education persistence and retention ultimately agreed with all or portions of Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT. Hauser (2014) conducted a longitudinal study examining factors predicting student retention in agriculture majors. Findings showed SDT was useful in predicting student retention. Hauser (2014) claimed self-determination attributes of competence and autonomy impacted persistence, which provided partial agreement of Deci and Ryan's theory regarding self-determination on human behavior.

Hunley (2015) explored factors contributing to persistence in first generation Appalachian college students. According to Hunley (2015), family, culture, social, and academic experiences affected persistence. Hunley's study revealed SDT attributes of connectedness impacted student persistence. Additionally, findings showed no association existed between autonomy and competence.

Tetreault (2013) examined the relationship between "first-time, full-time students' self-determination to attain a college degree and retention from the first to second year" (p. 11). Tetreault (2013) found SDT attribute of relatedness impacted student retention from the first to the second year, confirming Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2002) findings.

Statement of the Research Problem

Student persistence and retention are current problems colleges and universities face. Although nationwide, more students today access higher education compared to those in 1990s, degree completion rates did not significantly change (Tinto, 2012). Researchers conducted a longitudinal study from 2004-2009 on beginning postsecondary students to determine the rate individuals completed degrees, transferred, or left academies without degree attainment (Radford, Berkner, Wheeless, & Shepherd, 2010). Even though higher education was associated with a greater economic status and reduced unemployment rates, studies showed only 63% of students entering four-year colleges earned a bachelor's degree (Engle, 2007; Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004; Radford et al., 2010; Tinto, 2012). This is not just a national dilemma as state higher education institutions experience similar dropout rates and struggle to support student persistence.

This study focused on California, which has education departure rates comparable to those at a national level. According to the California Post-Secondary Education Commission (2007), California is lagging behind in producing enough bachelor degree completers, leaving a gap in teachers to meet the state's job demands. The dilemma of individuals dropping out of higher education created a dearth of early childhood teachers with the training needed to produce high-quality childcare programs (Espinosa, 2015). Research related to student persistence in higher education would benefit the ECE workforce as high-quality childcare programs depend upon expert teachers, and the college institution as they address retention (Archibald & Feldman, 2008; Espinosa, 2015).

The ability of higher education students to continue until degree attainment required self-determination and persistence. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), self-determination was the capacity to decide and make choices about one's actions. Researchers believed self-determination was innate and came from a psychological need for autonomy (self-regulation), competence (ability), and relatedness (connectedness), which were leading causes of student persistence in higher education (Chen & Jang, 2010; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Hauser, 2014; Hunley, 2015; Tetreault, 2013).

Following Deci and Ryan's 1985 study of persistence, additional research was conducted using the theoretical SDT framework as it related to higher education (Hauser, 2014; Hunley, 2015; Tetreault, 2013). However, thus far no research examined the impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on early childhood educators' persistence in higher education.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine, identify, and describe the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs describe their personal self-determination?

2. What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?

3. What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?

Significance of the Problem

Higher education student resolve to continue with college until completing a degree is a national problem impacting the student, institution, and workforce (Engle, 2007; O'Keeffe, 2013; Lotkowski et al., 2004; Schuetz, 2005; Tinto, 2012). The average student departed before the second year of studies, with a significant proportion of students taking up to six years to complete an associate degree and over 34% of students quit before degree attainment (Tinto, 2012). Colleges and universities were called on to implement retention measures as the cost of higher education increased over past decades (Archibald & Feldman, 2008). Because student attrition impacts the institution and student, it is imperative researchers examine the factors related to higher education persistence and retention (Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012).

Even though researchers such as Hauser (2014), Hunley (2015), and Tetreault (2013) uncovered evidence that self-determination impacted student persistence and retention in higher education, they advised additional studies be conducted. Additional studies were deemed critical because they had the potential of identifying the full impact of self-determination on other fields of study and diverse study populations (Hauser, 2014; Hunley, 2015; Tetreault, 2013).

This study on the impact of self-determination on the persistence and retention of ECE college students expanded upon existing research. Additionally, this study provided information to college and university administrators, students, and the workforce on what causes ECE students to persist in higher education and gave insight into strategies that could be utilized to support degree completion. Also, this study helped in understanding what occurs during freshman year for early childhood educators that impacts student departure. Likewise, this research could identify the strategies students used to motivate them to persist and continue until degree attainment.

Studies on self-determination are considered crucial for uncovering the persistence traits contributing to student success. Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002) examined the phenomena of self-determination and the psychological reason behind what motives behavior of individuals by examining fields of study such as medicine, sports, and education. Although researchers continued to examine these same topics, only a limited number of studies focused on self-determination related to persistence and retention of higher education students. Even fewer studies focused on the impact of self-determination on higher education students pursuing ECE degrees. This study filled the gap in literature related self-determination in higher education specifically focusing on students who completed ECE higher education programs.

Because research showed expert teachers impacted the quality of childcare programs (Espinosa, 2015), it was important to study their persistence in higher education. This study examining the role of self-determination on ECE higher education students could potentially be an avenue for increasing the number of teachers completing their degrees. Therefore, this study could consequently impact the number of high-

quality childcare programs in California and beyond. Moreover, the study added to existing literature by providing information to assist childcare programs and administrators in making decisions on ways to support early childhood teachers attending college. Research focused on the impact of self-determination on the persistence and retention of ECE is important to colleges and universities and the early childhood workforce.

Definitions

The following terms were used in this study and their explanations are provided for the purpose of giving clarity to their use in the study.

Autonomy. "The need for autonomy is about sensing some level of control and choice about the work one is doing" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 262).

Challenge. "Something that requires stretching one's abilities, trying something new" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 33).

Competence. "The need for competence is about growing and experiencing challenge to one's current abilities or knowledge" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 264).

Dropout. A "student whose initial educational goal was to complete at least a bachelor's degree" (Seidman, 2012, p. 12), but was unsuccessful and left the institution.

Family childcare. Care provided for young children in a licensed home-based group setting (Childcare and Early Education Research Connection, 2017).

Goals. "What people are consciously trying to attain, involve[ing] important symbolic and self-regulatory processes that people use to instigate and sustain actions" (Ryan, 2012, p. 18).

Innate Needs. Inherent needs a person is born with and "those that must be satisfied for the organism to remain healthy" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 3).

Licensed home-based early childhood educator. The business owner and lead educator in a childcare program operated within the individual's home under state and local regulatory guidelines.

Needs. "Inner human conditions that are necessary for optimal psychological development and wellbeing" (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 255).

Persistence. The "desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning year through degree completion" (Seidman, 2012, p. 12). Persistence is the action taken by the student that supports personal continuation in higher education.

Quality. A description provided for early childhood settings where measures ensure children receive safe, healthy, age-appropriate care that supports secure connections and school readiness (Childcare and Early Education Research Connections, 2017).

Relatedness. "The need to feel connected to, supported by, or cared for by other people" (Johnston & Finney, 2010, p. 280).

Retention. A "measure of the rate at which institutions reduce friction that stands in the way of a student's continued enrollment" (Habley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012, p. 9). Retention is the action taken by the academic workforce that supports the student to continue in higher education.

Student Engagement. A multilayered process that involves behavioral attributes such as educational activities that influence academic achievements, emotional

characteristics that consist of relationships with people at the school that support learning, and cognitive traits that involve learning skills and concepts (Zepke, 2014).

Wellbeing. Need satisfaction and thriving (Gagne, 2014).

Delimitations

This study was delimited to licensed home-based early childhood educators in San Diego County, California. In addition, this study was delimited to licensed home-based early childhood educators who were registered members of at least one professional family childcare organization and attended a higher education program.

Organization of the Study

The study is presented in five chapters along with references and appendices. Chapter I provided an overview of the study on self-determination of early childhood educators' persistence in higher education. Chapter II reviews relevant literature in higher education attrition, history of higher education, persistence and retention, and the theoretical framework of self-determination. Chapter III describes the research design and methodology used to conduct this study, along with the population, sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis descriptions. Chapter IV presents the findings of the study. Chapter V summarizes the study and provides the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Many students entering higher education did not persist in achieving the degree goal originally intended. Studies showed over 40% departed from college without a degree (Habley et al., 2012). Academic institutions across the nation were called on to address the issue of student retention as the majority of students who attended higher education institutions departed within the first year (Baier et al., 2016; Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012). The attrition numbers included licensed home-based early childhood educators who need higher education training to advance and develop quality care programs (Steinhaus & Walker, 2016). As this problem continued to impact the student, workforce, and college institutions, research studies focused on factors that motivated degree seekers to persist through degree attainment.

Habley et al. (2012) described persistence in education as the student who continued in college to complete personal educational goals despite challenges and oppositions encountered. Research showed college persistence significantly impacted student and college staff, as both must work together to ensure measures are in place to help students succeed (Habley et al., 2012; Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012).

According to Seidman (2012), elements that impacted dropout rates included: "(1) demographic characteristics; (2) financial assistance; (3) pre-college behaviors/experiences; (4) social and academic experiences; (5) environmental pull factors; (6) student commitment; and (7) institution characteristics" (p. 239). Le, Casillas, Robbins, and Langley (2005) examined the psychosocial and behavioral factors impacting college continuation. Findings detailed motivation and skills, social

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engagement, and self-management were vital for student persistence and retention (Habley et al., 2012; Huy et al., 2005).

Student readiness factors were compared to the self-determination theory (SDT) basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as they too involved student choice of self-regulation, self-connection with others, and self-confidence in abilities (Deci & Ryan, 2002). These elements were strong indicators of characteristics key for self-determination. Self-determined students persisted until completing their college degree (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Gagne, 2014; Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Research was conducted on college persistence and retention for several decades (Habley et al., 2012; Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012). Although some studies included education, few studies existed on persistence and retention of students who worked as early childhood educators. In addition, no studies were found specific to early childhood educators and the impact of self-determination on degree completion. The purpose of this study was to examine, identify, and describe the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who completed higher education programs.

This chapter provides literature relevant to this study and includes a theoretical framework of self-determination and basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The literature review examined higher education, characteristics of student engagement and support, and how engagement and support helped students continue until obtaining a degree. The literature provided a backdrop of licensed home-based early childhood educators and barriers faced in higher education.

Finally, the literature review covered college retention models in addition to how autonomy, competence, and relatedness impacted persistence in education.

Theoretical Framework of Self-Determination

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

SDT is a motivational theory researchers spent years examining in various fields such as education, healthcare, relationships, organizations, sports, health, and goals (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Deci and Ryan (2002) posited:

> There are necessary conditions for the growth and well-being of people's personalities and cognitive structures, just as there are for their physical development and functioning. These nutriments are referred to within SDT as basic psychological needs. By this SDT definition, basic needs are universal that is, they represent innate requirements rather than acquired motives. (p. 7)

Deci and Ryan (2002) defined basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness and claimed they were essential for goal achievement. According to Deci and Ryan (2002), autonomy is the "degree to which individuals feel responsible for the initiation of their behavior" (p. 235). Competence related to the feeling one had the ability and knowledge to accomplish goals (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Relatedness was described as the level to which individuals "feel connected to others in a warm, positive, interpersonal manner" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 235). When basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness were supported, individuals were intrinsically motivated to perform at their highest potential and had a

sense of overall well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Gagne, 2014; Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

SDT suggested "people engage in self-determined behavior because they have an awareness of potential satisfaction" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 237). Self-determined individuals gravitated toward the experience that led to fulfillment and satisfaction of needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002). Ryan and Deci (2017) suggested for an item to meet the need criterion, it must be clear about the "specific experiences and behaviors that will lead to wellbeing" (p. 251).

Ryan and Deci (2017) suggested autonomy, competence, and relatedness met the need criterion as people desired to perform important activities while endorsing and connecting to others to be healthy and satisfied in life. The concept of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness differed from the self-actualization motivation as described by Maslow (1971) where self-actualization was more outcome-based than need-based (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation referred to the "desire to expend effort on a certain task based on an interest in and enjoyment of the task itself" (Llopis & Foss, 2016, p. 2). No reward was needed to encourage continuation as the drive was internal (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Gagne, 2014; Ryan, 2012). Deci and Ryan (2000) stated:

> The fullest representations of humanity show people to be curious, vital, and self-motivated. At their best, they are agentic and inspired, striving to learn; extend themselves; master new skills; and apply their talents responsibly. That most people show considerable effort, agency, and

commitment in their lives appears, in fact, to be more normative than

exceptional, suggesting some very positive and persistent features of

human nature. (p. 68)

Intrinsic motivation was considered a true reflection of the "positive potential of

human nature" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 70).

Ryan and Deci (2017) posited in social settings, intrinsic motivation was the

"context of relational security and can be enhanced by a sense of belonging and

connection" (p. 124). Researchers postulated when individuals had both intrinsic

motivation and self-determination, they felt more fulfilled and had increased well-being

(Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gagne, 2014; 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Seminal work regarding the impact of external rewards on motivation found

demotivation occurred in individuals paid or rewarded to achieve a goal (Deci, 1971).

The research focused on intrinsic motivation where individuals were asked to complete a

block building puzzle. Participants were observed for reactions when given a reward for

performance. In the study, the control group, which received no compensation,

outperformed the test group that received rewards (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

This study revealed and confirmed individuals were intrinsically motivated to perform at

the optimal level when they did so for no other reason than enjoyment (Deci, 1971).

Similar studies were conducted and corroborated intrinsic motivation as the foundation of

goal achievement (Deci & Ryan, 1971, 1985, 2000, 2002; Ryan, 2012; Gagne, 2014;

Ryan & Deci, 2017).

At the center of intrinsic motivation was choice or self-determination (Deci &

Ryan, 1985, 2002). Self-determined individuals "tend naturally to seek challenges, to

discover new perspectives, and to internalize and actualize their human potentials" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 3). Deci and Ryan (2002) theorized self-determination could be measured by an individual's internal locus of causality, sense of volition, and perception of choice. Locus of causality reflected high self-determination and consisted of personal choice. Volition involved participating in activities because of one's will. Perceived choice was identified as doing what one chooses (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Deci and Ryan (1985) explained the more opportunities individuals received to exercise self-determination and choice, flow happened; flow was defined as "that peculiar, dynamic, wholistic sensation of total involvement with the activity itself" (p. 29).

Flow was at the heart of self-determination. Individuals were more fulfilled and experienced a sense of well-being when they felt included, were immersed and involved in an action, and had the power to exercise free-will (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Deci and Ryan (1985) postulated "in the state of flow, action and experience seem to move smoothly from one moment to the next, and there seems to be no clear distinction between the person and the activity" (p. 29).

Intrinsically motivated individuals became one with the activity and experienced flow when optimally challenged (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Further, these same individuals felt in control of their destiny. Intrinsic motivation functions well, unless a block or interruption of a motive or need was more significant (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Deci and Ryan (1985) described these as a "real-time need" (p. 234). Real-time needs demanded immediate attention and therefore could thwart or undermine intentions toward goal attainment despite an intrinsic motivation to accomplish a task (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002).

The impact of need satisfaction on an individual's persistence and perseverance should not be underestimated as need satisfaction is a key element of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Intrinsically motivated individuals were engaged, energized, and immersed while actively participating in activities that satisfied and met basic needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; White, 1959).

Need Satisfaction and Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness

According to Ryan (2012), when individuals operated at self-determined levels, they were authentically true and "live according to their core interests and values" (p. 150). Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002) proposed individuals tended to satisfy core basic intrinsic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Baard, Deci, and Ryan (2004) defined needs as something more than "conscious wants, desires, or motives" (p. 2046). Researchers purported needs were things people must have for "survival, growth, and integrity" (Baard et al., 2004, p. 2046). Further, need was suggested as innate versus learned (Baard et al., 2004; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Gagne, 2014). Studies showed once satisfied, basic needs aided self-motivation and increased performance (Baard et al., 2004). Therefore, once an individual's autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs were satisfied, the potential of operating at the highest level was possible, which included education and school activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Gagne, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Deci and Ryan (1985) suggested autonomy, competence, and relatedness were as essential to psychological well-being as Maslow (1971) claimed food, water, and safety were to individuals' physiological well-being. SDT considered these needs fundamental for "optimal physical, psychological, and social functioning" (Gagne, 2014, p. 366).

Individuals must meet and satisfy basic needs or significant setbacks and failure to complete a task and follow through on goals will result (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Gagne, 2014; Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Autonomy. Autonomy was defined as a sense of control of one's own behavior with outcomes self-caused or self-determined versus regulated by others (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002, 2017; Gagne, 2014; Johnston & Finney, 2010; Ryan, 2012). Autonomy, in the context of this study, was defined as an individual's desire to be in control. Individuals functioned better when they made decisions about activities and felt they created successes (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002).

Autonomous individuals acted out of self-interest and initiate actions, as they brought personal value (Gagne, 2014; Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Continuous autonomous support was deemed important, as it went beyond providing choice (Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintrio, & Turner, 2004). Autonomous support was foundational for achieving goal-directed outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Competence. Individuals with strong competence attributes wanted and needed to experience challenging tasks to advance personal development and growth (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Gagne, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2017; White, 1959). According to Lynch and Salikhova (2016), as individuals experienced stimulating activities, they realize they possessed the skills needed for successful outcomes.

Relatedness. Relatedness was defined as needing interaction and connections with others (Gagne, 2014; Johnston & Finney 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017). At the core of relatedness was warm, interactive, caring relationships with others (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Gagne, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Individuals high in relatedness were provided with

many people-oriented experiences that allowed sharing of ideas, experiences, and goals (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Relatedness was expressed by a sense of belongingness and connection to other individuals or groups (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002, 2017).

Need satisfaction. Satisfaction in autonomy, competence, and relatedness provided individuals the energy and direction to persist with goals and tasks until accomplished (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Gagne, 2014; Ryan, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Sari, 2015). Several factors must be considered to understand autonomy, competence, and relatedness: (1) needs must be satisfied for individuals to grow and be well; (2) environment impacted both need satisfaction and frustration; (3) autonomy support was a key element of basic psychological needs; (4) effects of need satisfaction or frustration were not dependent on an individual's value of the need; (5) satisfaction of the three basic needs were interrelated; and (6) although deficit needs such as security and self-esteem became primary wants when the basic needs were thwarted, deficit needs did not contribute to well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Higher Education

Increased access to postsecondary education was not correlated to improved student success or degree completion (Eaker & Sells, 2015). Students continued to drop out of college despite extra efforts institutions placed on student retention (Seidman, 2012). Data from National Center for Education Statistics (2018) showed 59% of students attending college took up to six years to complete a bachelor's degree. Students who persisted to earn a degree benefited with higher wages, increased employment opportunities, better work satisfaction, improved job performance, and work fulfillment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Research showed student support and increased

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engagement positively impacted achievement and learning, convincing students to remain in school and supporting success in higher education (Habley et al., 2012; Kahu, 2013; Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012).

Student Success in Higher Education

Expectations, support, assessment, feedback, and involvement were crucial for college student success (Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012). When students fulfilled these conditions, they persisted past year one, acclimated to school, and had a better opportunity of completing a degree (Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012).

Expectations. Clear expectations about what was needed to be successful was crucial for academic accomplishment (Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012). High expectations challenged students and provided optimal learning experiences (Seidman, 2005, 2012). Also, students needed to establish their own expectations and goals about how to reach the school requirements of coursework, academic achievement, administrative functions, enrollment, and a list of other criteria necessary for matriculation. Likewise, institutions needed specific systems and strategies available to help students understand expectations for continuous enrollment. The literature showed "students quickly pick up expectations and are influenced by the degree to which those expectations validate their presence on campus" (Seidman, 2012, p. 255).

Support. Support was needed for students to succeed in college. According to Seidman (2012) academic, social, and financial support were essential, especially during the first year (Tinto, 2012). Institutions provided student advisement to afford students the support necessary to understand what school involved and expectations for success (Seidman, 2005, 2012). Seidman (2012) stated the most effect support was connected to

the students learning environment (Habley et al., 2012; Seidman, 2012,). Faculty, mentors, and peer support were options students had to gain knowledge and support needed for elements of college life.

       Assessment and feedback. Assessment and feedback were also considered essential conditions of support (Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012). Students were more successful when they received feedback related to academic achievement. Feedback offered a mechanism for students to correct behaviors that yielded better success and promoted learning (Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012).

       Involvement. Involvement was synonymous to engagement. Research showed the more students were connected to and involved with the academic community, the more likely they were to graduate (Habley et al., 2012; Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012). Involvement happened in the classroom learning environment with other students and faculty. The literature indicated if a student was actively involved both academically and socially, they reaped the benefits of social and emotional support and had a successful college experience (Tinto, 2012).

Student Engagement in Higher Education

       A vast amount of literature examining both student engagement and factors that support student success in college suggested student engagement was the single solution to fix what ailed higher education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996; Coates, 2007; Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonk, Furco, & Swanson, 2016; Quaye & Harper, 2014; Kahu, 2015; Krause, 2005; Pacarella & Terenzin, 2005; Trowler, 2010, 2013, 2015; Zepke, 2014, Zepke & Leach, 2010). Literature showed student engagement actually centered around student practices and participation (Gorley, 2015). Coates

(2007) commented student engagement was precipitated by active and collaborative learning and participation in challenging academic activities. However, some literature showed in a higher education setting student engagement centered on good school practices that included providing student support and aid. Chickering and Gamson (1987) hypothesized college stakeholders had power over good practices that supported student engagement and success. Chickering and Gamson (1987) proposed effective engagement included:

- Frequent contacts between students and faculty members

- Reciprocity and cooperation among students

- Active learning techniques

- Prompt feedback

- A focus on student time on task

- High expectations

- Respects for diverse talents and different methods of learning

Several dimensions of student engagement enhanced higher education experiences (Kahu, 2013; Trowler, 2010). First, behaviorally engaged students complied with school norms. Second, emotionally engaged students connected to the school and showed a true interest and enjoyment in activities experienced. Third, cognitively engaged students appreciated challenging experiences and exceeded academic expectations (Kahu, 2013; Trowler, 2010). The responsibility of student engagement was shared between student and institution, where institutional support determined whether a student experience would produce positive outcomes (Kahu, 2013).

Researchers explained student engagement in numerous ways. Whereas some focused on how to activate students as participants in college, others focused on faculty and staff engagement with students (Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012). As student engagement involved both student and staff, it was vital to enhance and support program attributes in a way where student needs were addressed (Habley et al., 2012). Coates (2007) suggested many ways an institution could help support student engagement. When student engagement became a partnership between the student and the institution, it was more likely the student persisted and continued in college until degree completion (Habley et al., 2012; Kahu, 2013; Trowel, 2010). The definition of engagement by Coates (2007) was compared to Chickering and Gamson's (1987) seven principles of good practice in undergraduate education, which showed students and institutions were co-partners in active student engagement.

The Licensed Home-based Early Childhood Educator

Early Childhood Education (ECE) became more important than ever before as families were required to work and needed quality programs to meet their childcare needs (Couse & Recchia, 2016; Hyson & Tomlinson, 2014; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2011; Pianta, Barnett, Sheridan & Justice, 2012). Early childhood settings included children birth to school aged and facilities where children received developmental support preparing them for school and society (Buysse, 2013; Hyson & Tomlinson, 2014).

As more children needed early care, teacher education became increasingly important as it helped early childhood educators to enrich the childcare experience (Couse & Recchia, 2016; Hyson & Tomlinson, 2014; Pianta, Barnett, Justice, & Sheridan, 2012). Initial efforts prepared and educated teachers to work with kindergarten

and primary programs rather than nursery schools and childcare settings (Couse &
Recchia, 2016). Over the years, studies showed birth to three and early preschool years
were critical for children which, in turn, reinforced the need for teacher education for
those in childcare settings (Couse & Recchia, 2016; Hyson & Tomlinson, 2014; Pianta et
al., 2012).

A critical member of the early childhood workforce is a licensed home-based
early childhood educator (California Early Care and Education Workforce Study, 2006;
Couse & Recchia, 2016; Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2016; Pianta et al., 2012).
Research showed they educated more than 12 million children between birth and age five
annually (Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2016). Pianta et al. (2012) defined ECE
leaders as "those who have responsibility for overseeing an early childhood program" (p.
99). As the lead teacher in a home-based setting, early educators managed quality of the
program by setting expectations regarding teaching, interactions, and child outcomes
(Pianta et al., 2012).

Higher education was essential for licensed home-based early childhood
educators, as they served as the lead teacher and were often the sole teacher in the
childcare setting (Pianta et al., 2012). Research showed lead teachers who earned
bachelor's degrees with specialization in PreK instruction had better student academic
outcomes (Pianta et al., 2012).

California has a large number of licensed home-based early childhood educators.
The Center for the Study of Childcare Employment and California Childcare Resource
and Referral Network (2006) documented:

In California, more than 50,000 licensed family childcare providers and

paid assistants care for approximately 250,000 children…Approximately

80% of the children cared for by licensed providers are not yet in

kindergarten, and nearly one-half are age two or under. A little more than

one-half of licensed providers report caring for at least one child who

receives public childcare assistance. Twenty percent of licensed providers

report caring for at least one child with special needs. (p. 62)

In California, studies revealed that although half of the providers possessed some

college-level training in ECE, only a small segment earned a college degree (Center for

the Study of Childcare Employment and California Childcare Resource and Referral

Network, 2006). Licensed home-based early childhood educators in California had

responsibility of approximately 250,000 children, meaning a greater focus on higher

education for early childhood educators is crucial for improved child outcomes (Center

for the Study of Childcare Employment and California Childcare Resource and Referral

Network, 2006; Couse & Recchia, 2016).

Higher education barriers. Studies showed education was important for young

children; hence, licensed home-based early childhood educators must possess knowledge

in business operations and how to provide quality childcare services (Couse & Recchia,

2016; Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2016). Attending higher education classes and

obtaining a degree provided necessary validation home-based early childhood educator

was not just babysitting, but rather providing a high-quality facility for children.

The early childhood educator, as a student attending college, faced many obstacles while

juggling the commitment of the childcare job and requirement to attend school on a part-

time basis. According to Couse and Recchia (2016), obstacles included personal barriers such as:

- Financial pressures and family responsibilities beyond school

- Care for their own children or aging parents

- Working full-time jobs while going to school

- Limited access to transportation

- Commitments to the larger community

Couse and Recchia (2016) suggested in addition to personal barriers, early childhood educators faced institutional barriers as students, such as:

- Limited access to institutional support and classes because they were only available during hours when they were working

- Limited staff diversity to identify student needs

- Cost of obtaining a degree

To address the many barriers faced by home-based early childhood educators while pursuing higher education, personal attributes were identified for students to persist in college (Couse & Recchia, 2016; Renn & Reason, 2013). Personal self-determination was found to be a significant factor for pursuit and perseverance in school (Getzel, 2014) especially, when faced with obstacles that threatened to derail early educators' experience and degree completion (Couse & Recchia, 2016).

Persistence in Higher Education

Student demand for higher education triggered concerns for persistence and retention (Renn & Reason, 2016; Seidman, 2005). Student retention gained interest during the last few decades, which prompted studies exploring lack of persistence in

higher education (Habley et al., 2012; Renn & Reason, 2016; Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012). Researchers found similar and different variables as critical factors that impacted student persistence (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Spady, 1965; Tinto, 1971).

The Spady Dropout Process Model

Spady's original model proposed the following factors impacted social integration and success of students in college: grade performance, intellectual development, and normative congruence. In 1965, Spady conducted a longitudinal study of 682 first-year students and revised his model (Figure 1) according to the results of that study. The revised model had additional factors of structural relationship and friendship support. (Habley et al., 2012; Seidman, 2005, 2012; Summers, 2003).
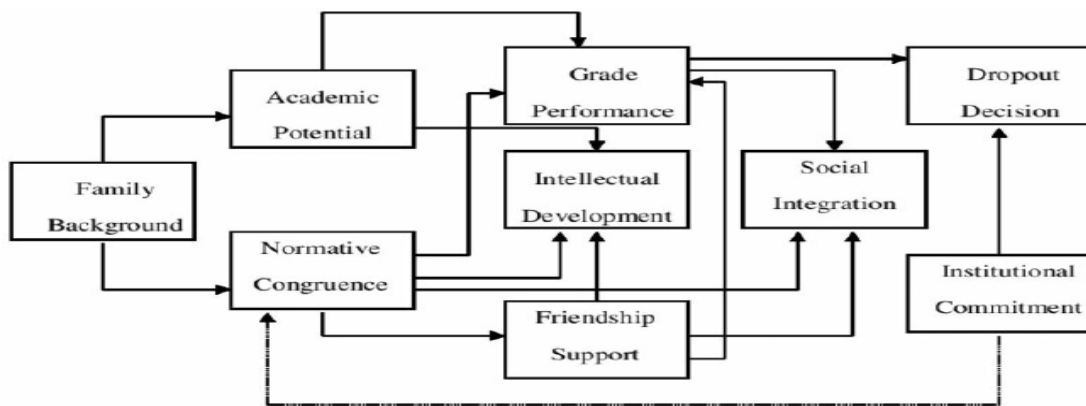
Figure 1. The Spady Dropout Process Model (1971)

Tinto's Dropout from College Model

Tinto's (1993) model used research from Spady and Durkheim to integrate social and academic aspects of college life as factors in student persistence. Tinto's proposed factors that impacted student social integration included background, initial commitment to college, and interaction with peers and faculty (Habley et al., 2012; Seidman, 2012; Summers, 2003; Tinto, 2012). Tinto's (1993) model illustrated the importance of

friendship support, but specifically identified social connections related to school were the most important for a student's persistence and retention (Figure 2).
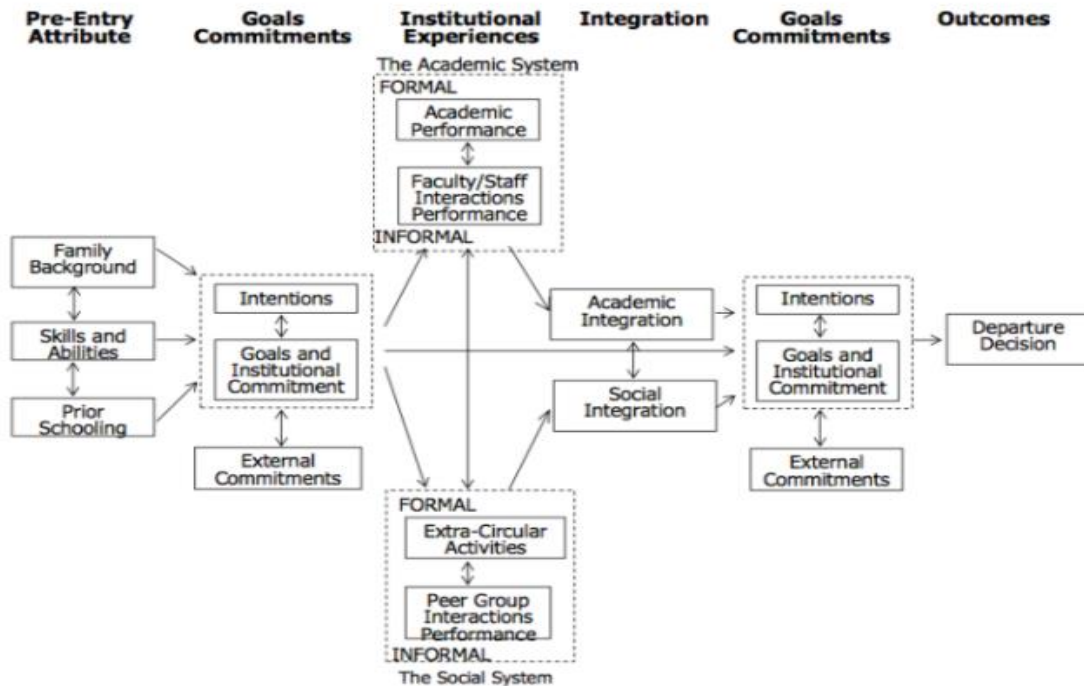
Figure 2. Tinto Dropout from College Model (1993).

Bean and Metzner Model

Bean and Metzner developed their model in 1985 considering previous models of attrition and the impact of social integration for non-traditional students. The model was based on factors of "academic performance, intent to leave, background and defined variables and, most importantly, environmental variables" (Alojahani, 2016, p. 3). Bean and Metzner (1985) argued previous studies on student attrition did not recognize non-traditional students who did not have the same social integration in college as traditional students (Figure 3).
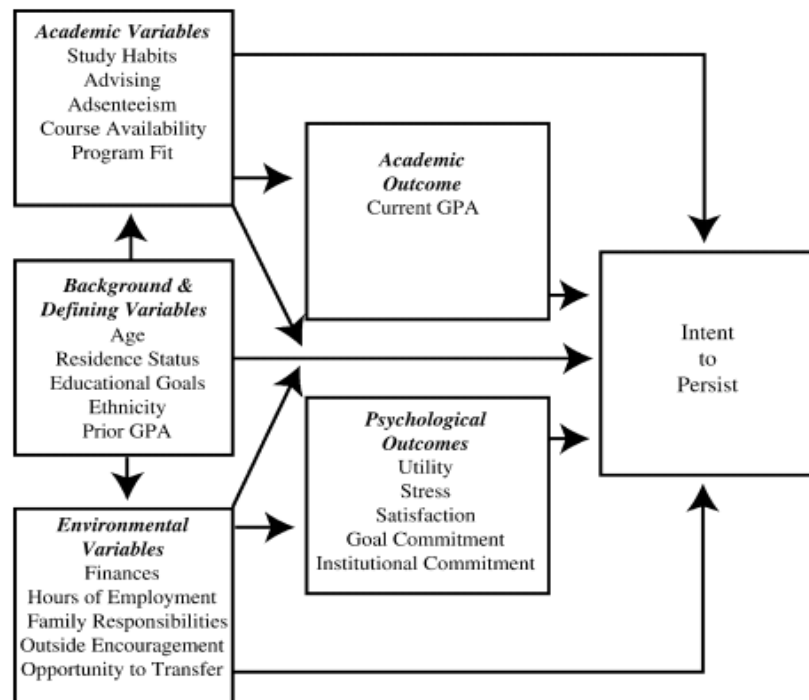
Figure 3. Bean and Metzner Nontraditional Undergraduate Student Attrition Model (1985). Source: Rovai, 2003, p. 6.

Although much was known about factors related to retention, Renn and Reason (2016) claimed over the past four decades, little change occurred in student retention or degree completion rates. This fact further underpinned the importance to conduct additional research on retention and persistence in higher education.

Persistence in Higher Education and Self-Determination

According to Habley et al. (2012), completing higher education continued to gain national attention. Studies revealed an educated workforce provided global competitiveness, national productivity, and individual well-being. Yet, "by mid-century…those who are least likely to succeed in the educational system will account for nearly half of the U.S. population" (Habley et al., 2012, p. 61). College completion rates

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equated to student success; therefore, degree attainment was critical (Couse & Recchia, 2016; Habley et al., 2012; Pianta et al., 2012; Renn & Reason, 2014; Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012).

A limited number of available studies researched self-determination related to persistence in school settings (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002, 2014; Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997). Even fewer studies focused on self-determination in higher education (Black & Deci, 2000; Field, Sarver & Shaw, 2003; Getzel, 2008). Of those available, the focus was typically special education student persistence in higher education (Field et al., 2003; Getzel, 2008). These studies emphasized the importance of self-determination as a critical factor for student persistence, both through the first year and until degree attainment (Field et al., 2003; Getzel, 2008).

The ECE field is becoming increasingly important as more children and families use early childhood settings (Hyson & Tomlinson, 2014). As research showed, teacher education, especially degree completion, was a critical quality indicator in early childhood settings (Couse & Recchia, 2016; Hyson & Tomlinson, 2014; Pianta et al., 2012). Studies on the self-determining factors that caused persistence until degree attainment were needed as early educator students faced barriers that derailed academic aspirations (Couse & Recchia, 2016; Pianta et al., 2012).

Quality of childcare depended on educational achievement and degree attainment by the caregivers (Couse & Recchia, 2016). Therefore, it became vital to the early childhood educator community to better understand the factors necessary to succeed in higher education (Couse & Recchia, 2016; Pianta et al., 2012). This knowledge would

give students and institutions strategies for future use when considering how early educators can be self-determined to persist in higher education.

Summary

Multiple findings supported a student's self-determination resulted in increased well-being, optimal performance, and successful outcomes. Additionally, the literature strongly suggested autonomy, competence, and relatedness, once satisfied, gave a person what was needed to achieve goals and succeed in most endeavors. Some research showed basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) aided in persistence.

In addition, several studies showed a significant relationship between student achievement and the ability to self-regulate (autonomy). Research revealed a unique link between a student's social connections with others at college (relatedness). Likewise, the literature presented a significant relationship between student success in higher education and individual awareness of personal capabilities to perform well in an academic setting (competence).

However, research on unifying efforts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness impacting higher education persistence until graduation was sparse. Therefore, additional research was needed on how self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness affected an individual's persistence in higher education until degree attainment.

To fill the gap, the researcher examined early childhood educators, specifically southern California licensed home-based early childhood educators, and explored their perceived impact of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and

relatedness on completion of a higher education degree. Research that examined the

impact of self-determination on higher education persistence and retention could help

early childhood educators stay in college until degree attainment.

Synthesis Matrix

A synthesis matrix summarized the literature used for this study (Appendix A).

The matrix provides the references used to organize the literature review and shows the

relationships between sources.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter provides the methodology used for this research study. It includes a review of the purpose statement and research questions, then describes the research design. Chapter III further details the study population and sample, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. The chapter explains methodology, validity, reliability, and study limitations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine, identify, and describe the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs describe their personal self-determination?

2. What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?

3. What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?

Research Design

The use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches was referred to as mixed-methods research (Bamberger, Rugh, & Mabry, 2012; Creswell, 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Mixed-methods designs brought a comprehensive approach to a study and allowed the researcher to benefit from both qualitative and quantitative methods as opposed to a single method (Patton, 2015). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), this method was appropriate for looking at variables and the influences related to them.

For this study, the researcher used a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods approach in which both quantitative and qualitative research data were collected simultaneously and given equal emphasis. According to McMillian and Schumacher (2010), the "interpretation of results is the key to this method as it provides a convergence of evidence" (p. 403). Using the concurrent triangulation design, the researcher leveraged the strength of one method to counterbalance the weakness of the other method (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Creswell (2014) suggested different types of information were available from quantitative and qualitative data in the concurrent triangulation design. However, once used together, the information added reliability and validity to a study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) claimed credibility of findings were enhanced using mixed-methods research compared to the use of a single method. Merging information from two data sources provided a more comprehensive understanding of this study and the perceived impact of self-determination on persistence and retention in higher education.

Quantitative Research Design

Quantitative research designs used "numbers, statistics, structure, and control" to understand a phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 21). Nonexperimental survey design described a form of quantitative research where the researcher collected data using questionnaires or surveys to gain information about subjects (Creswell, 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher collected quantitative data deploying a survey to licensed home-based early childhood educators who were members of two professional family childcare organizations in southern California.

Creswell (2014) suggested surveys in quantitative research were useful to identify trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population. The researcher used the Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction and Frustration in General (BPNSF-G) instrument to collect data on licensed home-based early childhood educators' perceived levels of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Qualitative Research Design

According to Salkind (2003), qualitative data were typically collected through documentation, archival records, physical artifacts, direct observation, participant observation, focus groups, and interviews. For this study, the researcher used interviews to collect qualitative data on licensed home-based early childhood educators' perceptions of personal self-determination and the impact the attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness had on their persistence and retention in higher education.

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Population

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A population was defined as the total group from which a subset was pulled and results or findings could be generalized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The

population for this study was all licensed home-based early childhood educators in California. Under state and local regulatory guidelines, a licensed home-based early childhood educator referred to the business owner and lead teacher in a childcare program operated out of his or her home. As of 2014, there were 30,701 licensed home-based childcare programs in 58 counties in the state of California (Kids Data, 2017).

Creswell (2014) defined a target population as the sample group from the population from which a study used. The target population for the study was home-based early childhood educators living in San Diego County, California. Limiting the target population to home-based early educators in San Diego County allowed the researcher to narrow the population of participants who met the criteria of the study. As of 2014, there were 3,693 licensed home-based early childhood educators in San Diego County (Kids Data, 2017).

Sample

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) described a sample as the "participants from whom the data are collected" (p. 129). Researchers used samples of their population because it was often impractical to study the whole population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Salkind, 2003). Researchers inferred characteristics from a sample to be identical across the population (Patten, 2012). According to Salkind (2003) and McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a researcher must develop precise plans to ensure the sample represents the population to increase the likelihood of generalization.

Types of sampling approaches included probability and nonprobability sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Salkind, 2003). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) presented the concept of known probability of selecting units from a larger population

and opportunities for random sampling. In nonprobability sampling, random selection did not exist (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggested researchers use nonprobability sampling in selecting subjects from a population otherwise unfeasible. Probability sampling provided a better chance of accurately representing a population and therefore, was the preferred method (Salkind, 2013). In contrast, nonprobability sampling was the acceptable option (Creswell, 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Salkind, 2003). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), nonprobability sampling types included:

- Convenience sampling – selecting accessible subjects

- Purposive sampling – selecting those "likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest" (p. 489)

- Quota sampling – selecting subjects "in proportion to the characteristics they represent in the general population" (p. 490)

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggested a convenience sample was often used in both "quantitative and qualitative studies because this may be the best the researcher can accomplish due to practical constraints, efficiency, and accessibility" (p. 137). The convenience sampling approach was a practical choice for this study as the researcher had access to participants who fit the sample criteria. In addition, the researcher used convenience sampling to increase participation rates.

For this study, the researcher used purposive sampling to select home-based early childhood educators who could provide additional explanations and information about their experiences attending higher education degree programs. This study's sampling frame included home-based early childhood educators in San Diego County licensed by

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the state of California to provide childcare in their homes. San Diego County is among the top 10 counties in California with a large population of licensed home-based early childhood educators (Table 2). There were 3,693 licensed home-based early childhood educators in San Diego County (Kids Data, 2017).

Table 2

Number of Home-based Facilities in the Top Ten Counties: 2014

Locations	Number of home-based facilities
Los Angeles County	7,378
San Diego County	3,693
Santa Clara County	1,867
Alameda County	1,502
Sacramento County	1,445
Orange County	1,301
Riverside County	1,291
San Bernardino County	1,287
Contra Costa County	990
Ventura County	738
California	**30,701**

The researcher worked with the San Diego County Family Childcare Association (SDCFCCA) and California Family Childcare Network (CFCCN) to locate participants who attended college and met three of the four criteria:

1. Attended college and took classes in early childhood education or a related field of study

2. Was a registered member of a professional family childcare organization

3. Worked as the proprietor and not a substitute or assistant working in a licensed family childcare home

4. Worked in a home-based setting in San Diego County for one or more years

The researcher contacted an individual who served as a board member for both SDCFCCA and CFCCN to gain permission to conduct the research study with the organizations' members. Licensed home-based early childhood educators who met three of the four criteria were offered the opportunity to participate.

To enhance participation, the researcher worked closely with the board member to promote the study, disseminate email information, and extend invitations for phone interviews. Contact information was provided for phone interview volunteers. In addition, emails provided information explaining the study, voluntary participation, and privacy processes. Further, electronic communications described names would not be shared with others and participants may discontinue at any time during the study without consequences.

Quantitative Sampling

The researcher used purposive sampling to identify licensed home-based educators who attended college and met three of the four study criteria. Working with the SDCFCCA and CFCCN board member, participants were recruited. Licensed home-based educators are voluntary members of a professional organization as there are no regulatory requirements mandating their affiliation. Approximately 300 members of SDCFCCA and CFCCN professional family childcare organizations were invited to participate in the study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggested "two approaches to determining adequate sample size [are] published tables and/or sample size calculators"

(p. 141). An online calculator determined 83 participants was a satisfactory sample size

for the study.

Qualitative Sampling

        To gain information about lived experiences, the researcher employed a

phenomenological design for the qualitative portion of the study. Creswell (2014)

suggested a range of 3 to 10 individuals was a sufficient number to interview with the

phenomenological approach. The researcher worked with the SDCFCCA and CFCCN

board member to identify seven interview candidates to participate in the study.

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Instrumentation

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        This study included both quantitative and qualitative instruments. The

quantitative instrument was the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration

Scale - in General (BPNSF-G), developed by Chen et al., 2015. The qualitative

instrument was an interview protocol developed by the researcher.

Quantitative Instrumentation

        The 24-item BPNSF-G scale was developed to measure levels of basic need

satisfaction and/or frustration related to the self-determination attributes of autonomy,

competence, and relatedness (Chen et al., 2015). The instrument and scale were

validated via studies across diverse cultures and settings such as China, United States,

Peru, Belgium, and South Africa (Chen et al., 2015). Permission to use the BPNSF-G

was granted by Edward L. Deci and Richard Ryan on their website with stipulation of

copyrighted instruments only for academic (non-commercial) research projects. The

researcher made no changes to the original BPNSF-G instrument and incorporated it into

the survey.

Quantitative Validity and Reliability

Creswell (2014) posited when determining reliability and validity in quantitative studies, the researcher looked for inferences from the instrument to include:

- Content validity (do the items measure the content intended)

- Predictive or concurrent validity (do scores predict a criterion measure and correlate with other results)

Chen et al. (2014) stated the BPNSF-G instrument was validated with "significance tests, which help researchers decide whether the differences in [items being measured] are reliable" (p. 103). Chen et al. (2014) explained the use of two major research studies to determine reliability of the scale. The first study used a 3-factor model that did not show statistical significance. The scale was adapted to a 6-factor model that showed statistical significance "in both the sample used to select and the sample used to cross-validate the retained 24 items" (Chen et al., 2014, p. 230).

In the quantitative portion of the study, the researcher used a demographic questionnaire and the BPNSF-G. The demographic questionnaire asked participants to identify specific characteristics, such as gender, educational attainment, and age range. The purpose of administering the demographics and BPNSF-G together was to compare the levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness based on the demographic variables. A field test of the BPNSF-G and demographic questionnaire was conducted to check the feasibility of the time and other aspects of the instrument.

Qualitative Instrumentation

The qualitative portion of the study allowed the researcher to use a semi-structured interview to gain information about the participants' perception and

experiences with self-determination and higher education persistence and retention. The interview questions were developed utilizing the self-determination theory of the basic psychological need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The interview protocol is presented in Appendix B.

Qualitative Validity and Reliability

When the researcher checked for reliability and validity in qualitative studies, it strengthened the study (Creswell, 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Creswell (2014) advised validity should take into consideration accuracy "from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account" (p. 201).

The researcher used multiple validity strategies as advised by Creswell (2014) to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. One strategy used for this study was completing a check with the interviewee to determine whether the final report was accurate. The researcher brought an inherent level of bias to the study. To limit the influence of biases, the researcher was mindful throughout the study about her own personal background and experiences that could shape interpretations.

Creswell (2014) advised qualitative researchers employ the following reliability procedures for interview data:

- Check transcripts to make sure they do not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription
- Make sure there is not a drift in the definition of codes, a shift in the meaning of codes during the process of coding—by constantly comparing data with the codes

- Single researchers [should] find another person who can cross-check their

   codes for—intercoder agreement (p. 203)

Additional reliability procedures the researcher employed included presenting the

interview questions along with the purpose statement and research questions to an expert

with a doctorate and experience with mixed-method research for review of alignment to

the study. The expert reviewed the questions and the researcher adjusted as needed to

ensure interview questions gathered the intended data. Also, before data collection, the

researcher conducted a pilot test of the interview using a home-based early educator with

a college degree who met three of the four criteria of the target population. A doctoral

student monitored the pilot test and critiqued the process to check the feasibility of the

study and help improve the process.

Data Collection

Before data collection began, the researcher completed the National Institute of

Health's Office of Extramural Research web-based training on protecting human research

participants and obtained approval from the Brandman University Institutional Review

Board (BUIRB) to conduct this study. Participation in the study was voluntary. The

researcher solicited a board member from the professional organizations to provide

preliminary contact with the study population to improve response rates.

The researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data from individuals who

attended college and met three of the four criteria:

1. Attended college and took classes in early childhood education or a related

   field of study

2. Was a registered member of a professional family childcare organization

3. Worked as the proprietor and not a substitute or assistant working in a licensed family childcare home

4. Worked in a home-based setting in San Diego County for one or more years

Licensed home-based early childhood educators were given information about the study and those interested in participating were asked to provide consent before completing any portion of the survey or interview. The researcher protected the confidentiality and rights of the participants throughout the study.

Quantitative Data Collection

The researcher collected quantitative data by gathering demographic information and administering the BPNSF-G to participants meeting the sample frame criteria. Survey Monkey, web-based platform, was used to deliver an electronic survey to the participants. Survey Monkey was password-protected and provided a secure manner for data collection. The researcher worked with the SDCFCCA and CFCCN board member to email an informational letter recruiting members from the two professional organizations to complete the electronic survey.

The researcher sent the SDCFCCA and CFCCN board member an email to forward to members containing the BUIRB participant bill of rights and a link to the survey. The survey's introductory statement included the study purpose, confidentiality statement, and an acknowledgment of informed consent. Participants were asked to acknowledge consent before completing any survey questions. The first page of the survey provided an electronic consent form and participants were required to agree to participate before proceeding with the survey. If the user clicked "accept," the survey deployed and others could not access the survey.

Qualitative Data Collection

According to Creswell (2014), for "qualitative data collection, purposeful sampling is used so that individuals are selected because they have experienced the central phenomenon" (p. 217). The researcher used a purposeful model to recruit seven participants for the qualitative interview portion of the study.

The researcher as the instrument conducted interviews by phone due to geographic constraints. Participants were electronically sent a research participant bill of rights and informed consent form, which included permission to audio record. Participants needed to review, sign, and return the informed consent form prior to partaking in an interview.

The researcher used an interview protocol that provided a consistent script with each participant (Appendix B). Each interview was recorded using primary and backup recording devices. Additionally, handwritten notes were scribed during the interviews. Interview recordings were transcribed and submitted to study participants by email to review for accuracy before data analysis occurred.

Data Analysis

This concurrent triangulation mixed-methods study collected both quantitative and qualitative data from licensed home-based early childhood educators who were registered members of SDCFCCA or CFCCN. The results of the quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data were reviewed, analyzed, and compared to determine similarities, differences, associations, and relationships between the two data sets. The information was compiled and used to examine, identify, and describe the impact of the

self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative section included demographic four identifiers used to gather data: gender, rage range, years of experience, and educational or degree attainment. The higher education variables included those in early childhood or a related field of study. The survey also included the 24-question BPNSF-G instrument, which asked participants to share their feelings about specific statements used to capture perceived levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Questions assessing perceptions were based on a five-point Likert scale with response options ranging from 1 to 5 to indicate the degree to which the statements were true with 1 = *Not True at All* and 5 = *Completely True*. The scores were tallied based on six scales: autonomy satisfaction, autonomy frustration, relatedness satisfaction, relatedness frustration, competence satisfaction, and competence frustration.

The mean and standard deviation of the scales were calculated by scale and for individual items. The mean scores and standard deviation data were tabled to see the overall picture of autonomy, competence, and relatedness among home-based early childhood educators in the sample frame of the study.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher conducted seven phone interviews, with at least one from each of the different educational categories: 2-year college degree (associates), 4-year college degree (bachelors), and graduate degree (master's or doctorate). The data for each participant was transcribed and provided back to them to review for accuracy. The

researcher examined the transcribed data for common themes. NVivo software was used to input and code the various themes and tally frequencies for the codes. An expert with coding experience and a doctoral degree was asked to conduct an interrater reliability check on the data to confirm the themes and coding patterns. Creswell (2014) advised an 80% match between the coders indicated reliable results. The results of the qualitative data along with the quantitative data were analyzed and presented in Chapter IV of this research study.

Limitations

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) asserted that although researchers planned carefully for a study, there were still limitations. The limitations to this study included:

- The sample frame was limited to the state of California, which may not reflect the impact of self-determination on higher education in other geographical areas.

- The research participants included were members of two family childcare professional organizations. Other early childhood organizations would possibly bring additional information to the study.

- Due to the nature of qualitative research and the researcher as the instrument, unintentional personal biases must be taken into consideration as a limitation of the study.

Summary

This study used a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design to examine, identify, and describe the impact of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of California licensed

home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education. This chapter

reviewed the purpose statement, research questions, and research design used.

Additionally, a detailed description of population, sample, instruments, and data

collection procedures and data analysis were provided. The chapter closed with a review

of limitations and summary of the chapter. The primary purpose of Chapter III was to

provide the process and rationale for conducting this mixed-methods research study.

Chapter IV presents the findings from the study.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

This study examined the impact of self-determination on home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs. Chapter IV includes a review of the purpose statement, research questions, population, sample, methodology, and data collection procedures of this study. The chapter concludes with the analysis of the data and a summary of the findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine, identify, and describe the perceived impact of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs.

Research Questions

1. How do California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs describe their personal self-determination?

2. What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?

3. What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

This study used a concurrent triangulation, mixed-methods approach in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and given equal emphasis. The merging of information from these two data sources provided a more comprehensive understanding of the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education programs.

The Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction and Frustration in General (BPNSF-G) scale and a demographics questionnaire were sent to all members of the San Diego County Family Child Care Association (SDCFCCA) and California Family Child Care Network (CFCCN), which included over 300 California licensed home-based early childhood educators. Forty-eight licensed home-based early childhood educators reviewed the survey; however, only 37 completed the survey in entirety and met three of the four study criteria. The survey results are reported in this chapter.

Seven of the licensed home-based early childhood educators confirmed by phone or email they would be willing to participate in a phone interview. The interview consisted of eight questions focused on identifying and describing the perceived impact of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on persistence and retention in higher education degree programs. Before conducting the interviews, a field test was performed with a colleague observing to give feedback about the questions and interview process. After completing the field test and obtaining feedback from the observer, interviews were conducted. The data collected from the interviews were

transcribed and NVivo software was used to code the themes and patterns to examine the home-based early childhood educators' perceptions of their personal self-determination.

Population

The population for this study was all licensed home-based early childhood educators in California. Under state and local regulatory guidelines, a licensed home-based early childhood educator referred to the business owner and lead teacher in a child care program operated in the home. As of 2014, there were 30,701 licensed home-based childcare programs in 58 counties in California (Kids Data, 2017). The target population for the study was licensed home-based early childhood educators in San Diego County.

Sample

Two professional associations for family childcare providers were utilized to contact licensed home-based early childhood educators to participate in the study, SDCFCCA and CFCCN. Over 300 members participate in these two organizations. The researcher worked with an individual board member of both SDCFCCA and CFCCN to locate participants who attended college and met three of the four criteria:

1. Attended college and took classes in early childhood education or a related field of study

2. Was a registered member of a professional family childcare organization

3. Worked as the proprietor and not a substitute or assistant working in a licensed family childcare home

4. Worked in a home-based setting in San Diego County for one or more years

Among those who qualified for the study, 37 completed the survey and 7 participated in interviews.

Demographic Data

A total of 37 participants completed the survey and met the study eligibility

criteria. No participants were under the age of 30. The highest percentage of individuals

were in the age range of 50 and above (72.9%). The participants were predominantly

female (94.6%) with only two males (5.4%). Sixty-four percent worked in the early

childhood profession for over 20 years. A large percentage of participants (72.9%)

received degrees ranging from associates to masters, and 24.3% attended college

identified as receiving something other than a degree (Table 3).

Table 3

Survey Participant Demographics

	N	%
Gender		
Female	35	94.6
Male	2	5.4
Age Range		
30 to 39	3	8.1
40 to 49	7	18.9
50 to 59	14	37.8
60 and over	13	35.1
Years in Profession		
1 to 5	1	2.7
6 to 10	2	5.4
11 to 15	3	8.1
16 to 20	7	18.9
21 to 25	9	24.3
26 to 30	7	18.9
31 or more years	8	21.6
Highest Education		
Associate Degree	12	32.4
Bachelor's Degree	8	21.6
Master's Degree	7	18.9
Doctorate	0	0
Other	9	24.3

Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was: *How do California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs describe their personal self-determination*?

Data collection for the quantitative portion of this study consisted of the BPNSF-G instrument and a demographic questionnaire. As described in Chapter III, the BPNSF-G instrument consisted of 24 questions that measure awareness of personal levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Responses were collected on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 to indicate the degree to which the statements were true of the person completing the survey (Chen et al., 2015). On the scale, 1 indicated *Not True at All* whereas 5 indicated *Completely True*. The survey included six scales: autonomy satisfaction, autonomy frustration, relatedness satisfaction, relatedness frustration, competence satisfaction, and competence frustration.

The results of the scores were measured using descriptive statistics with the standard deviation (SD) and mean. SD shows the distribution of scores around the average, which is defined as the mean. The lower the standard deviation, the closer scores are to the mean indicating a more homogeneous group (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The mean and SD of the items were calculated to determine the relationship between college degree attainment and BPNSF-G score. The mean score and SD data were calculated and used to determine the level of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in home-based early childhood educators in the study. The number of participants (n) in the quantitative portion of the study was 37.

Autonomy satisfaction data. The questions on the autonomy satisfaction sought the individuals' perception of his or her feelings about freedom of choice/autonomy in terms of positives. According to the data, when it comes to autonomy satisfaction, participants reported high levels of autonomy satisfaction, with average mean scores between 4.24 and 4.46 on 5-point scale.

The data revealed a high mean score for the autonomy satisfaction item, "I feel a sense of choice and freedom in the things that I undertake" ($M = 4.46$). For the item "I feel that personal decisions reflect what I want," although the mean score was above 4.0, it reflected the lowest score in the group ($M = 4.24$). The means for "My choices express who I really am" and "I feel I have been doing what really interests me" had identical mean scores ($M = 4.43$) and similar standard deviations (Table 4).

Table 4

Autonomy Satisfaction Items

	Mean	SD
I feel a sense of choice and freedom in the things I undertake	4.46	0.83
I feel that my decisions reflect what I really want	4.24	0.75
I feel my choices express who I really am	4.43	0.75
I feel I have been doing what really interests me	4.43	0.79

Autonomy frustration data. The questions for autonomy frustration sought the individuals' perceptions of his or her feelings about freedom of choice/autonomy in terms of negatives. Data revealed participants had low levels of autonomy frustration as reported by average mean score ranging between 1.86 and 2.49 on a 5-point scale.

The data revealed in the autonomy frustration item, "I feel forced to do many things I wouldn't choose to do," participants were the least autonomously frustrated ($M =$

1.86). In contrast, for the item "Most of the things I do feel like I have to," participants

reported more autonomy frustration ($M = 2.49$). Even though this score was the highest

in the group, it still revealed relatively low levels of frustration. Table 5 shows each of

the four items used to measure overall autonomy frustration.

Table 5

Autonomy Frustration Items

	Mean	SD
Most of the things I do feel like I have to	2.49	1.13
I feel forced to do many things I wouldn't choose to do	1.86	0.99
I feel pressured to do many things	1.89	1.09
My daily activities feel like a chain of obligations	2.19	1.20

Competence satisfaction data. The questions related to competence satisfaction

sought the individuals' perception of his or her ability to accomplish goals/competence.

According to the data, when it came to competence satisfaction, participants reported

average mean scores between 4.51 and 4.78 on a 5-point scale.

The data revealed in the competence satisfaction category, participants perceived

the highest levels of competence for the item "I feel capable at what I do" ($M = 4.78$). In

contrast, the item "I feel I can successfully complete difficult tasks" had the lowest mean

of the items ($M = 4.35$), but was still relatively high. The data revealed the educators

who participated in the study felt capable and confident about achieving a difficult task

and their goals. Table 6 shows each of the four items used to measure the overall

competence satisfaction score.

Table 6

Competence Satisfaction Items

	Mean	SD
I feel confident that I can do things well	4.51	0.60
I feel capable at what I do	4.78	0.41
I feel competent to achieve my goals	4.51	0.64
I feel I can successfully complete difficult tasks	4.35	0.62

Competence frustration data. The questions related to competence frustration

sought the individuals' perception of his or her ability to accomplish goals. According to

the data, when it came to competence frustration, participants reported average mean

scores between 1.27 and 1.68 on a 5-point scale.

The data revealed in the competence frustration category, participants perceived

the most competence frustration on the item "I feel insecure about my abilities" ($M =$

1.68). In contrast, the item "I feel like a failure because of the mistakes I make," had the

lowest mean of the four items ($M = 1.16$), indicating low levels of competence frustration

on the scale. According to the data, although there were some levels of competence

frustration reported by the participants, overall, individuals perceived themselves to be

highly confident in their ability to complete goals. Table 7 shows each of the four items

used to measure the overall competence frustration score.

Table 7

Competence Frustration Items

	Mean	SD
I have serious doubts about whether I can do things well	1.65	1.05
I feel disappointed with many of my performance	1.65	0.99
I feel insecure about my abilities	1.68	1.04
I feel like a failure because of the mistakes I make	1.27	0.60

Relatedness satisfaction data. The questions on the relatedness scale sought the individuals' perception of his or her connection with others/relatedness. According to the data, when it came to relatedness satisfaction, participants were connected to others as reported by average mean scores between 4.51 and 4.78 on a 5-point scale.

The data revealed in the relatedness satisfaction category, participants perceived the highest levels of relatedness with people important to them ($M = 4.78$). The item "People I care about care about me," had the lowest mean ($M = 4.51$), but still revealed a high level of relatedness. Data on relatedness satisfaction revealed participants felt strong connections with people in their lives. Table 8 shows each of the four items used to measure the overall relatedness satisfaction score.

Table 8

Relatedness Satisfaction Items

	Mean	SD
I feel that the people I care about also care about me	4.51	0.86
I feel connected with people who care for me, and for whom I care	4.68	0.57
I feel close and connected with other people who are important to me	4.78	0.41
I experience a warm feeling with the people I spend time with	4.68	0.52

Relatedness frustration data. The questions on the relatedness scale sought the individuals' perception of his or her connection with others/relatedness. According to the data, when it came to relatedness frustration, participants reported average mean scores between 1.16 and 1.41 on a 5-point scale.

The data revealed in the relatedness frustration category, participants perceived the most frustration on the item "I feel excluded from the group I want to belong to" ($M = 1.41$). For the item "I have the impression that people I spend time with dislike me,"

participants reported the lowest level of autonomy frustration ($M = 1.16$). Although the mean scores in all categories showed some level of relatedness frustration, the scores reveal overall participants had close relationships with people. Table 9 shows each of the four items used to measure the overall relatedness frustration score.

Table 9

Relatedness Frustration Items

	Mean	SD
I feel excluded from the group I want to belong to	1.41	0.82
I feel that people who are important to me are cold and distant towards me	1.30	0.65
I have the impression that people I spend time with dislike me	1.16	0.37
I feel the relationships I have are just superficial	1.30	0.77

Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was: *What is the perceived impact of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?*

High mean scores in autonomy, competence, and relatedness satisfaction items represented a perception of a high impact of these self-determination attributes on persistence in higher education. The average total mean scores for autonomy, competence, and relatedness satisfaction ranged from 4.39 to 4.66 on a 5-point scale. Scores near the five continuum equaled perceptions of high levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness among home-based educators who attended higher education degree programs.

Although high mean scores in the autonomy, competence, and relatedness frustration items represented a deficit score, the low mean scores represented high

perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. For this study, all the participants

had relatively low autonomy, competence, and relatedness frustration scores. The

average total mean scores for autonomy, competence, and relatedness frustration ranged

from 1.29 to 2.11 on a 5-point scale. Scores near 1 on the continuum equaled perceptions

of high levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and thus signified perceptions

of higher autonomy, competence, and relatedness among educators who attended higher

education degree programs.

Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was: *What is the perceived impact of the self-determination*

attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on retention of licensed home-based

early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?

Similar to Research Question 2 related to perceptions of the impact of autonomy,

competence, and relatedness on persistence in higher education, the same scores

represented the impact of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on retention in higher

education. High mean scores on the autonomy, competence, and relatedness satisfaction

items represented a perception of a high impact of these self-determination attributes on

retention in higher education. The average mean scores for autonomy, competence, and

relatedness satisfaction items ranged from 4.39 to 4.66 on a 5-point scale. Scores near 5

equaled perceptions of high levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness among

home-based educators who attended higher education degree programs.

Although high mean scores on the autonomy, competence, and relatedness

frustration items represented a deficit score, the low mean scores represented high

perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. For this study, all the participants

64

had relatively low autonomy, competence, and relatedness frustration scores. The average mean scores for autonomy, competence, and relatedness frustration items ranged from 1.29 to 2.11 on a 5-point scale. Scores near 1 on the continuum equaled perceptions of high levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, thus signifying perceptions of high autonomy, competence, and relatedness in educators who attended higher education degree programs.

Presentation of Qualitative Data

Demographic Data

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with seven licensed home-based early childhood educators recruited from two professional organizations, SDCFCCA and CFCCN. All the participants met at a minimum of three of the four study criteria. Of the seven participants, six were female and one was male. The years of experience as an early childhood educator ranged from 3 to over 30 years. The highest level of education ranged from an associate to a master's degree. Two of the participants reported they were presently enrolled in a doctoral degree program. The qualitative interviews were used to answer Research Questions 1, 2, and 3. Table 10 provides a breakdown of the participant demographics.

Table 10

Interview Participant Demographics

Educator	Highest Education	Years in Profession
1	Master's Degree (Doctoral Student)	37 Years
2	Master's Degree (Doctoral Student)	20 Years
3	Bachelor's Degree	6 Years
4	Master's Degree	31 Years
5	Associate Degree	30 Years
6	Bachelor's Degree	16 Years
7	Bachelor's Degree	3 Years

The collection of data for the qualitative portion of this study consisted of seven interviews of licensed home-based early childhood educators who were members of professional family childcare organizations, SDCFCCA and/or CFCCN. The interviews allowed the researcher to gather insights from the participants on the impact of self-determination on their persistence and retention in college. To ensure consistency in the interviews, the researcher followed a specific interview protocol with guided questions aligned with the study's research questions. The educators were asked a series of eight questions to understand their perceptions about the impact of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on persistence and retention in college. The participants provided permission for the researcher to record the interview. A transcription was emailed to the participants providing an opportunity for them to review and give comments. The data from the interviews were coded for patterns to determine common themes. Major findings are presented and reported using the three research questions as a guide.

Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was: *How do California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs describe their personal self-determination*?

The researcher sought to answer Research Question 1 by interviewing participants and asking about the meaning of self-determination. In addition, participants were asked to share their thoughts about their own personal self-determination related to challenges they experienced when they attended college, and how it impacted their persistence and retention in college.

Description of the meaning of self-determination. Of the educators

interviewed, three major themes emerged when the participants were asked to share what

self-determination meant to them. The responses included: reaching a goal despite

obstacles and accomplishing it through hard work, feeling personally responsible for

accomplishing goals, and being intrinsically motivated to complete goals.

Theme 1 - Reaching goals despite obstacles and accomplishing them through hard

work

The most common theme that emerged was accomplishing goals despite obstacles

and reaching them with hard work, which had a frequency of 11 across the 7 interviews.

Some of the statements that supported this theme were:

- Educator 2 stated, "Sometimes you are able to go full speed ahead and
  sometimes you have to keep putting one foot in front of the other. But the
  point is you decide and you keep going." Educator 2 shared her thoughts
  about her own personal self-determination saying, "For me, it was a
  combination of that outward push and motivation that turned into self-
  determination."

- Educator 6 stated, "Self-determination means that you go for what you want
  and you try your hardest."

- Educator 3 stated, "I think it is just pursuing what you believe is important
  and just hard work."

- Educator 7 stated, "It is the persistence of working on a task to achieve a
  goal."

- Educator 4 stated, "Just being determined and unstoppable and getting them [goals] done as far as you can."

Theme 2 - Feeling personally responsible for accomplishing goals

The second common theme was feeling personally responsible for accomplishing goals. This theme was mentioned by five educators at total of nine times. Educator 5 said her goal was to, "Just to do the best I can in everything that I do. I can't do everything perfect, but I can do it the best of my ability."

Educator 4 spoke about being responsible as a description of her own personal self-determination. She described of the importance of being personally responsible, sharing self-determination meant, "Just taking responsibility for your future and assessing what it is that you need to do and just being unstoppable and getting them done as much as you can."

Theme 3 - Being intrinsically motivated to complete goals

The third common theme was being intrinsically motivated to complete goals, which was referenced seven times during the interviews. When describing their own self-determination, participants referred to being intrinsically motivated:

- Educator 2 stated, "Self-determination is about, this is what I want, and I am going to keep going until I get it."

- Educator 4 stated, "When I did that [continued my education] it just helped my self-esteem a lot because it let me know I could really do it."

Table 11 provides a summary of the themes with the number of sources and references to each theme.

Table 11

Major Themes of the Meaning of Self-determination

Common Themes Identified	Number of Respondents	Frequency of Responses
1. Reaching goals despite obstacles and accomplishing them through hard work	7	11
2. Feeling personally responsible for accomplishing goals	5	9
3. Being intrinsically motivated to complete goals	6	7

Description of personal self-determination. Of the licensed home-based early childhood educators interviewed, all reported one major theme that described their self-determination: setting a goal for yourself and doing what needs to be done to accomplish that goal. This theme was referenced 19 times during the 7 interviews and was captured by the following statements:

- Educator 2 stated "I wanted to do more. Even after becoming a family childcare provider, I was determined to expand my reach…about how young children are taught. Although I had completed my bachelor's degree, I wanted to continue on with grad school."

- Educator 1 discussed personal self-determination by sharing information about her college persistence experience, noting, "Once I had my eyes on the prize, then I just decided I would figure out a way to make it happen."

- Educator 3 described self-determination as pursuing a goal, stating, "I think it is just pursuing what you believe is important and just hard work. I believe in the power of hard work and consistency."

- Educator 7 talked about having many goals and explained the following when discussing self-determination and goals: "I do the best that I can, no stress about it but I am determined, I do my best every day to meet the goal."

Challenges early childhood educators experienced while completing a college degree. When speaking of challenges while completing their degree, participants focused on the following themes: time, coursework, feelings of being overwhelmed, competing demands, finances, personal situations, and health, although not all these were common across participants.

Theme 1 – Time

One major theme that emerged with 28 references was time. Participants talked about juggling the competing demands of home, work, and school, along with finding time to complete coursework. Although these themes were mentioned under the theme challenges, the participants spoke of ways they addressed the challenges using the following statements:

- Educator 5 stated, "I think the biggest challenge for me was time… It was finding somebody to substitute or closing a little bit early. I had to have the support of my childcare families, because I would close early [to] get to class."

- Educator 1 stated, "Once I figured out that I could do the work and started mastering the computer and technology, it became easy."

- Educator 3 spoke about purpose when she referred to challenges, saying, "Sometimes focusing on a specific education doesn't give you a guide on how you are going to use it. It was tough to make a purpose out of the education."

- Educator 2 talked about the competing demands, sharing, "There were challenges, just as far as trying to maneuver life, being a mother, a business owner, especially as a single parent."

Theme 2 – Challenging coursework

Participants talked about the challenges of the coursework as it related to finding time to complete the courses, getting help from tutors, and establishing routines to accomplish the work. The theme coursework was referenced 22 times during six different interviews. Educator 1shared about the challenges she faced with dyslexia, which was not diagnosed until she entered her doctoral program. She also explained how she had challenges with technology and math and shared her college supported her through the challenges and she was able to continue in higher education until degree attainment.

Theme 3 - Feelings of overwhelm, but not giving into them

Another theme was feelings of overwhelm, but not giving into them. Although the frequency rate was relatively low, the participants' connection of not giving into those feelings was worth mentioning as the two seemed closely connected during the interviews. Educator 4 shared about the challenges she faced:

The greatest challenge was when I was in my bachelor's program. I was in my 30s and my children were still young; I had four children. They were still in school. I had a childcare business and it takes a lot of time and energy to do that. I had personal problems I was dealing with as well. The biggest challenge was to stay motivated and stay on the grind.

Table 12 provides a summary of the themes with the number of sources and references to each theme.

Table 12

Major Themes of the Personal Challenges While Completing a College Degree

| | Number of | Frequency of |
Common Themes Identified	Respondents	Responses
1. Time (includes competing demands)	6	28
2. Course work	6	22
3. Feelings of overwhelm but not giving in to it	3	5

Addressing the challenges early childhood educators experience while completing a college degree. The participants' responses for addressing challenges while attending school centered around three basic themes: having strong support systems, finding purpose, and finding strategies to overcome challenges and obstacles.

The major theme was finding strategies to overcome challenges and obstacles, which was mentioned by all 7 educators and referenced 10 time. Educator 2 talked about the importance of developing coping skills when faced with challenges, saying, "Start developing those coping skills that you need to finish." Educator 2 also referred to coping with stress and time management as strategies to address challenges while attending school. Other comments included:

- Educator 5 mentioned the importance of "jumping in and making the commitment for the degree."

- Educator 6 spoke of perseverance, persistence, and self-determination when she addressed stated, "It doesn't matter if it takes me until I am a hundred years old to get my goal, but that will be my goal." She went on to say,

"There's has been quite a bit of [challenges], but I don't give up. You know, I

am just like that little engine that could."

- Educator 4 spoke of facing challenges and the strategies she implemented to

    overcoming them, sharing, "It was two things. I am very strong in my church

    and just my relationship with God helped me." She went on to explain about

    her faith in God and how having that relationship helped with her going back

    to school and gaining a feeling of -worth and confidence.

Table 13 provides a summary of the themes with the number of sources and

references to each theme.

Table 13

Major Themes for Overcoming the Challenges While Completing a College Degree

Common Themes Identified	Number of Respondents	Frequency of Responses
1. Establishing strategies and staying motivate until obtaining the degree	7	10
2. Support systems and the support of others	4	8
3. Making a commitment for the degree	3	5

Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was: *What is the perceived impact of self-determination*

attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence of licensed home-

based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?

During the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to respond to a

group of questions centered on their perceptions about the impact of autonomy,

competence, and relatedness on persistence in higher education.

Impact of autonomy on persistence. Participants reported two major themes that described their perceptions on the impact of autonomy/choice on persistence in higher education.

Theme 1 - Commitment to complete an educational goal and stick to it

Commitment to complete an educational goal and stick to it was referenced 19 times and by all 7 educators. The following statements captured this theme:

- Educator 3 stated, "Self-motivation at that time and it was like you finished one semester and you say 'yeah, I can do this thing.'"

- Educator 5 discussed her own personal autonomy sharing a fellow family childcare provider was going to start school with her and she led the way by signing up for two classes right off. She shared that when it came to education, "For me, it had to be my choice."

- Educator 7 spoke of making a commitment to his education noting, "If I make the commitment in the beginning to do something, I will stick to it. Also, if I paid for it, I don't like to waste any money so I stick to it and finish it."

Theme 2 – Choosing because it was important

Another theme that emerged was the choice of going to school because it was important to the individual person. This theme was stated by all seven educators and was reference 12 times. During the interviews, educators talked about wanting to go back to school, wanting to make good grades, wanting to do well in school, and being determined to finish what they started. Educator 2 shared, "I made a decision to change my major and find where I fit and where I wanted to be in this world and what my purpose was in this world." Educator 1 shared originally when she started her degree, she decided to

take one class at a time until a colleague decided to take two classes. When this occurred, Educator 1 stated she felt motivated, noting "if she could do it, I could do it too." Table 14 provides a summary of the themes with the number of sources and references to each theme.

Table 14

Major Themes of the Impact of Personal Autonomy on College Persistence

Common Themes Identified	Number of Responses	Frequency of Responses
1. Commitment to complete an educational goal and stick to it	7	19
2. Persisting because the degree because it was important	7	12

Impact of competence on persistence. The participants reported two major themes that described their perceptions on the impact of competence/ability on persistence in higher education.

Theme 1 - Resolve, perseverance, and grit

The major theme resolve, perseverance, and grit presented itself in the form of knowing it could be done and sticking with it until the goal was accomplished. This theme was referenced 28 times and by all seven educators. This was highlighted by Educator 3 who shared, "I felt very competent and I knew I was capable of completing each task." Educator 2 described resolve, perseverance, and grit as:

There was something inside of me; it was like that burning desire to be a child development professor wouldn't let me go. I had to finish it. So, I picked it back up. Thank God I was able to find the strength and say "come on [Educator 2's name], you can do this." There were people that

walked with me in 2013 and they still don't have their master's degree

because they never finished the thesis. I didn't want to be one of those

people.

Theme 2 - Not letting obstacle get in the way

The theme not letting obstacles get in the way was mentioned by six of the seven

educators with 12 references. This was highlighted by Educator 4 who stated,

The most difficult time in school for me was with math. I was so nervous

about math and the class. I had hired a tutor and I had a study partner.

We had hired a tutor together… I had to keep my mind on a positive note

and just believe that God would give me the ability to do it.

Similarly, Educator 5 shared about a challenging course experience and the

mindset of not letting obstacles stop her, recalling,

At first, I was just kind of crushed. I thought this is my thing, how can I

not do well in this course? About half-way through I decided that this is

not going to get me down. I am really good at what I do and I have a great

passion for art…. I just buckled down, figured out what [the professor]

wanted from me, because I wasn't doing well with that at the beginning. I

kind of switched around how I was doing things, until I could…get a good

grade. Even though it wasn't a positive, I think it just made me more

determined to succeed."

Educator 2 commented,

I always felt that I was competent and I think it was not until my first

statistics class in my PhD program that I really felt like, wow, this is hard.

I always liked learning. I always did research. I have always been that

person that if I didn't know what a word meant, I would look it up. I

would read books always with a highlighter and I Google everything. So,

I think having that intellectual curiosity is another determining factor as

far as motivation and competence when you are pursuing education.

Lastly, Educator 7 explained when faced with a difficult subject, he chose to be

positive, noting,

My perception for getting a good grade was not as important as getting the

skill or getting the connection. How you deal with stuff in life. I see the

academic challenge as part of it. I chose [to do] it. It was enjoyable for

me to do it, even if the course work was a hassle.

Table 15 provides a summary of the themes with the number of sources and

references to each theme.

Table 15

Major Themes of Personal Relatedness on College Persistence and Retention

Common Themes Identified	Number of Responses	Frequency of Responses
1. Resolve, perseverance, and grit	7	28
2. Not letting obstacles get in the way	6	12

The impact of relatedness on persistence. The participants reported three major

themes that described their perceptions on the impact of relatedness/connections on

persistence in higher education.

Theme 1 - Relatedness with others provided positive support, feedback, and
reinforcement

The major theme of relatedness providing support, feedback, and reinforcement was mentioned by all the education with 27 references. Educator 4 shared she received,

A lot of support from my church, my mother-in-law, my father-in-law. And toward the end of my first degree, I got a lot of support from one of my assistants in my business. She was wonderful and just the person that I needed at the time. She did a lot of hard work and gave me a lot of support there. In my second degree, I got a lot of support from my husband; that is something that I did not have with the first [degree], but I got a lot of support from him for the second [degree]. That helped me do the things that I needed to do.

Educator 3 stated,

I think just the positive reinforcement that I received, whether I knew that at the time or not, was definitely due to the relationships I had…Maybe, I would have done that without the support, but I think that with the support it was much easier.

Educator 5 shared how having support benefitted her with completing her degree, noting, "Working with other providers, doing classes and trainings and just having that one other person saying let's get this done…Just having somebody else jump in with you, I think that helps." Likewise, Educator 1 said,

When I started classes at the junior college, it was through the CARES program and it was done with other providers. So, we started talking child

development classes and getting stipends for taking the classes. I already

had the foundation of taking classes with other people, other family

childcare providers.

Theme 2 - Relatedness with family members helped with motivation to persist

Another theme referenced nine times was family members helped with motivation

to persist. Educator 2 reported the impact of relatedness on persistence by sharing:

My father died before I graduated with my bachelor's degree. There were

two things my father taught me and forbid me to do. They were to say, "I

can't" and "I don't know." I believe it was those two things that really had

a huge impact on my self-motivation. Because, yes you can…I had to put

my money where my mouth is because I told my daughter, you don't say I

can't. I couldn't just stop. My daughter lived her whole life seeing me as

a business owner and student. So, for her I had to finish and for my father

I had to finish.

Educator 6 shared her thoughts about relatedness and explained people needed the

support of others when going to school. She stated:

You may be going through something and you may need somebody to talk

to. The network is needed; you have to have support from somebody, it is

like a lifeline. You cannot do it by yourself, there is no way. You have to

have help from your family with the things that you have to do, like your

homework. The family may say we are going to go out so that you can do

your homework. Sometimes it takes a toll on your family and it is hard,

but you can't do it by yourself.

Table 16 provides a summary of the themes with the number of sources and references to each theme.

Table 16

Major Themes of the Impact of Personal Relatedness on College Persistence

	Number of Responses	Frequency of Responses
Common Themes Identified		
1. Relatedness with others provided positive support, feedback, and reinforcement	7	27
2. Relatedness with family members help with motivation to continue and persist	3	9

Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was: *What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?*

Semi-structured interviews were used to answer Research Question 3 and participants were asked to respond a group of questions focused on their perceptions about personal autonomy, competence, and relatedness on retention in higher education.

The impact of autonomy on retention. The participants reported two major themes that described their perceptions on the impact of autonomy/choice on retention in higher education.

Theme 1 - Self-motivation and the decision about a major

The major theme of self-motivation and the decision about a major was referenced by 5 educators 31 times. This was highlighted by Educator 1 who stated, "Once I realized I could do it, then I decided I could, one class at a time. The counselor

helped me to figure out what I needed to take and…Before I knew it, I was done."

Another educator shared, "If you really want to do something, you will find a way."

Theme 2 - Support and encouragement from the school

Theme two related to support and encouragement from the school. Educator 2 shared about her self-motivation and the following information about her autonomy and retention in higher education:

That has fully been the determining factor of why I have continued with

my education. That is what made me start my master's degree. As a

childcare provider, that level of education was not necessary but there was

this burning desire in me that would not go away that I had to teach child

development… That is what kept me going with my education.

Table 17 provides a summary of the themes with the number of sources and references to each theme.

Table 17

Major Themes of the Impact of Personal Autonomy on College Retention

Common Themes Identified	Number of Responses	Frequency of Responses
1. Self-motivation and choice about program	5	31
2. Support and encouragement from the school	3	6

The impact of competence on retention. The participants reported several major themes that described their perceptions on the impact of competence on their retention in higher education.

Theme 1 – Keeping a positive attitude about completing the degree

The theme that received the greatest number of references with 21 was keeping a positive attitude about completing the course work and the degree. Educator 4 stated, "Everything that I accomplished and that I can do I believe that God give me the ability to do it. Therefore, because of that I can do everything that I start out to do." Educator 5 shared:

I am a pretty confident person. Of course, when you are taking classes you will struggle with confidence. What am I doing in a neuroscience class? But I have always kind of had my eyes on what I wanted to do in life and I just knew I could do it. I was good at what I did and wanted to do better, so I just kept striving for that.

Similarly, Educator 3 stated:

I am definitely a task-oriented person; I was a rule follower. I felt very competent and that I was capable of completing each task. I was somebody who could appreciate the basic homework lifestyle. I feel like it was my upbringing, I was told that I could do anything if I spent the time, effort, and energy on it.

Educator 1 shared how encouragement from a professor helped her develop feelings of competence, saying:

The professor, she was the one that gave the talk at the college fair [for College X]. She also was the head of the Child Development Department. She told us in the beginning of the class that if anybody was struggling to let her know, that she would go to dinner with us or she would meet with

us to help us figure out what we needed to do to finish the program. I

knew that I always had that to fall back on. If I couldn't do it, I knew that I

had support. And, I think getting my pilot's license gave me the

confidence. That was a big accomplishment and so then I could just do

anything.

Theme 2 - Feeling competent about coursework

The theme that received the second greatest number of references with 17 was

feeling competent about coursework. Educator 6 shared she had some challenges with

taking a biology class, but she overcame those challenges because of her competence.

She explained how she made good grades in college and sought to get A's. She shared

every time she did well because she gave it her all.

Table 18 provides a summary of the themes with the number of sources and

references to each theme.

Table 18

Major Themes of the Impact of Personal Competence on College Retention

Common Themes Identified	Number of Responses	Frequency of Responses
1. Positive attitude about completing the degree	7	21
2. Feelings of competence about coursework	7	17

The impact of relatedness on retention. The educators reported two major

themes that described their perceptions of the impact of relatedness/connections on

retention in higher education.

Theme 1 – Others served as companions, role models, mentors, and guides

Four participants referred to the importance of others serving as companions, role models, mentors, and guides 13 times. The following statements represent the impact of relatedness on retention:

- Educator 1 described, "They put you in a cohort, and so that helped, so you were with the same people through the program and I made friends in the class.

- Educator 5 commented, "Working with other providers, doing classes and trainings, and just having that one other person saying let's get this done… Just having somebody else jump in with you, I think that helps."

- Educator 3 explained,

    I just knew that once I went to college, I would finish. So, I am sure that [it] had a lot to do with the positive relationships that I had from the people that went to college and the people that had not went to college. They have been very supportive making sure that I had all of the tools to complete [my degree].

Theme 2 - Assistance and support with the daycare business

The second theme connected to relatedness was the support of others in the daycare business, including parents and staff. Educator 2 shared the impact of relatedness on her retention by reflecting on what her daycare assistant did to support her educational pursuits:

    I have had the same assistant for 15 years now. I have this village and I really feel supported. Last Friday is a good example, I created a research

poster for the Student Research Symposium at [College X]. My assistant

dropped me off to do my presentation. She went back to the house to cook

for me, and she picked me up from the presentation. Then she dropped me

off at the train station to go to my class in LA. She picked me up, had my

lunch and my dinner, dropped me off at the Amtrak station, and held down

the daycare for me. It is relationships like that where I feel support in

helping me achieve my goals.

Table 19 provides a summary of the themes with the number of sources and

references to each theme.

Table 19

Major Themes of the Impact of Personal Relatedness on College Retention

Common Themes Identified	Number of Responses	Frequency of Responses
1. Others served as companions, role models, mentors, and guides	4	13
2. Assistance and support with the daycare business	2	3

Closing remarks related to the impact of self-determination on attending

higher education degree programs. Educators were given the opportunity to provide a

closing remark and respond to the following statement: *As we close out this interview, I*

would like to give you the opportunity to share any other information that you would like

to add regarding your experiences and the impact of self-determination. The themes

varied greatly but aligned with the literature and research data from this study. Table 20

provides a summary of the themes, and example quotations follow the table.

Table 20

Major Themes for Closing Remarks related to the impact of Self-determination

Themes Identified	Number of Responses	Frequency of Reponses
1. Extrinsic motivation ignited the desire, but intrinsic motivation was needed to persist.	6	4
2. Confidence overtime developed from faculty encouragement, which aided in persistence	3	4
3. Successful completion of one degree aided in persistence toward additional degrees.	2	4
4. Autonomy and confidence developed from earning a college degree	3	2
5. The value and benefit of a degree impacted persistence	2	2
6. The demanding work and responsibilities related to running a home-based childcare business impacted persistence	2	2

Educator 1 stated,

I had spent 35 years trying to get my BA and that's all I wanted, but then

once I got into a program and felt confident that I could do it…After I

finished and was told to keep on going because I was doing well, then I

said why just get a bachelors, why not get a master's. Then when the

University offered up a new doctorate program. [I enrolled].

Educator 2 stated, "I think self-determination is…kind of nature and nurture.

Yes, it can be taught, because my father taught me. But, some people are very resilient.

For me it was a combination of that outward push and motivation that turned into self-

determination." Educator 2 went on to explain, "I had to realize I can't expect people to

be like me. I can encourage people but…the decision had to be theirs. And, I can't want

more for them then they want for themselves." Educator 3 shared getting the degree was

beneficial, commenting,

Just having that basic degree, whether I knew it or not at the time, has

been very invaluable. It has gotten me into all sorts of different positions

that I would not have been able to have taken if I had not had that degree,

so I am thankful for that.

Educator 4 stated, "I can't express enough what going to… and most of all getting

that degree did for me as far as giving me confidence and autonomy. Just all the

determination, all that, it just amplified that." Educator 5 explained the impact of

extrinsic motivation on persistence, saying,

Before the CARES project we did training and workshops but were not

compensated…. When they started the stipends for the CARES program,

everyone wanted to take training because the wanted the money. Then

when the CARES program went away there was this huge drop in

providers that didn't go to trainings or workshops because they were not

being reimbursed anymore. I have always wondered why. That always

bothered me. Though the money was nice, you should [seek training and

higher education] because it makes you better at what you do, not just

because someone gives you money.

Educator 6 shared the importance of the institution considering the needs of the

home-based educator as a non-traditional student and stated,

Because our work is so intense, to be allowed to have someone to take into

consideration your schedule, and that some may have more classes than

others. When it comes to education, it is important to be flexible, we may

not all come from the same background, we all have different luggage. It

is important to know your audience.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Comparison Analysis

The researcher used a concurrent mixed-methods design model to strengthen the

study and confirm findings obtained from the quantitative and qualitative data sets.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) triangulation of data enriches a study

and gives it trustworthiness and reliability. The quantitative data were used to examine,

identify, and describe perceptions of self-determination as measured by the attributes of

autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The qualitative data were used to answer the

question about the participants' perception of the impact of the self-determination

attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on their persistence and retention in

higher education. Table 21 presents the analysis of the triangulation between the

quantitative and qualitative data sources.

Table 21

Summary of Research Questions and Data Analysis Findings

	Quantitative Data Analysis Findings	Qualitative Data Analysis Findings
RQ 1	BPNSF-G questionnaire results showed high self-determination with an average ACR mean score of 4.5. The highest rated items were: • Feeling choice and freedom about goals—M 4.39 (A) • Feeling confident and capable about the ability to achieve goals—M 4.53 (C) • Feeling close connections with people—M 4.66 (R) BPNSF-G also measured levels of ACR frustration. The data showed low mean scores. The highest frustration items were: • Feeling obligated and forced to do task—M 2.11 (A) • Feeling unable to achieve goals—M 1.56 (C) • Feeling separated and apart from others/group—M 1.29	Descriptions of self-determination • Reaching goals despite obstacles and through hard work (C) • Feeling personally responsible (A) (C) • Being intrinsically motivated (A)
RQ 2	High mean scores on ACR satisfaction items represented a high impact of the self-determination attributes of ACR on persistence in higher education. In contrast, low mean scores in the ACR frustration items represented a perception of a high impact of the self-determination attributes on persistence and retention.	ACR impact on persistence • Commitment to complete an educational goal and sticking to it (A) • Persisting because the degree is important (A) • Resolve, perseverance, and grit (A) (C) • Not letting obstacles get in the way (A) (C) • Relatedness with others provided positive support, feedback, and reinforcement (R) • Connection with family members helped with motivation to persist (R)
RQ 3	High mean scores on ACR satisfaction items represented a high impact of the self-determination attributes of ACR on persistence in higher education. In contrast, low mean scores in the ACR frustration items represent a perception of a high impact of the self-determination attributes on persistence and retention. (see above scores)	ACR impact on retention • Self-motivation and choice about program (A) • Support and encouragement from the school (R) • Feelings of competence about coursework (C) • Positive attitude about completing the degree (A) • Others served as companions, role models, mentors, and guides (R) • Assistance and support with the daycare business (R)

Note. Autonomy is represented by "A," competence "C," and relatedness "R."

The quantitative data revealed licensed home-based early childhood educators

who attended college were highly self-determined, which was supported by the

qualitative finding that validated the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness were vital contributors to completing a college degree.

Summary

The purpose of Chapter IV was to examine, identify, and describe the impact of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs. The chapter provided an overview of the purpose statement, research questions, research design, population, sample, and demographics for both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the study. In addition, Chapter IV presented the major findings of the study focusing on the research questions that guided the survey and interviews.

Statistical charts with means and standard deviations were used to present quantitative findings. A narrative discussion and frequency charts were used to present qualitative findings. Chapter V provides an examination of the findings related to the research questions and relevant literature, as well as conclusions, implications for actions, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V includes the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the methodology. The chapter summarizes and provides a description of the findings based on the results as reported in Chapter IV. The chapter presents the researcher's conclusions about the major findings from the study and concludes with implications for action and recommendations for future research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine, identify, and describe the perceived impact of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs.

Research Questions

1. How do California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs describe their personal self-determination?

2. What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?

3. What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?

Research Methodology and Data Collection

This study used a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods approach in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and given equal emphasis. The merging of information from these two data types provided a more comprehensive understanding of the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education programs.

The Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction and Frustration in General (BPNSF-G) scale and demographics questionnaire were sent to all members of the San Diego County Family Childcare Association (SDCFCCA) and California Family Childcare Network (CFCCN), representing over 300 California licensed home-based early childhood educators. Forty-eight licensed home-based early childhood educators reviewed the survey, 37 completed the survey and met at a minimum three of the four requirements of the study criteria. Seven of the licensed home-based early childhood educators also participated in a phone interview. The interview consisted of eight questions focused on identifying and describing the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention in higher education degree programs.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was all licensed home-based early childhood educators in California. This study used a purposive convenience sample to select a sample frame of California licensed home-based early childhood educators who were members of two professional organizations, SDCFCCA and CFCCN. A total of 300

licensed home-based early childhood educators were members of the two organizations. Thirty-seven educators completed the survey for the quantitative portion of the study and seven educators participated in a phone interview for the qualitative portion. All the study participants met at a minimum three of the four designated criteria for the study:

1. Attended college and took classes in early childhood education or a related field of study

2. Was a registered member of a professional family childcare organization

3. Worked as the proprietor and not a substitute or assistant working in a licensed family childcare home

4. Worked in a home-based setting in San Diego County for one or more years

The researcher contacted the president of both the SDCFCCA and CFCCN to gain permission to conduct the study in their organizations. All licensed home-based early childhood educators who meet the criteria were offered the opportunity to participate.

Major Findings

The major findings of this study were organized and reported in accordance with the three research questions. In addition, each finding was examined in relationship to the literature on the topic.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was: *How do California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs describe their personal self-determination*?

To answer Research Question 1, home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs were asked to evaluate and describe their

levels of self-determination by completing a 24-question survey and an 8-question semi-structured interview about self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Literature postulated "Self-determination, or autonomy, is a theoretical concept. It communicates an inner endorsement of one's action—the sense that an action is freely initiated and emanates from within one's self" (Gagne, 2014, p. 196). The following findings represent what educators reported about descriptions of their self-determination.

Finding 1 - Interest in receiving a higher education degree. When educators were asked to define self-determination and describe their self-determination, all the educators used their educational pursuits as a reference point. According to Ryan (2012) when individuals were operating at the self-determined level, they functioned based on their core values. Findings from the interview questions showed all the participants were interested in completing their degree, so they developed strategies to support their efforts. They spoke to the importance of completing the degree and the educational knowledge it provided.

Finding 2 - Intrinsic motivation. Educators were intrinsically motivated to complete their degree and felt a high level of personal responsibility for their degree aspirations. When educators defined the meaning of self-determination, they referred to being responsible for completing their coursework and degree. Literature showed intrinsically motivated individuals did not passively let the world go by, but were engaged, energized, and immersed in their surroundings and actively participated in activities to satisfy and meet basic needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; White, 1959).

Finding 3 - High levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The survey and interviews data revealed all the educators perceived themselves to be highly self-determined. The 37 educators reported satisfaction of basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Literature revealed when an individual's autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs were satisfied, he or she had the potential of operating at the highest level possible in all areas of life, including those related to education and school (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Gagne, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Finding 4 - Use of self-determination to overcome challenges and obstacles. Educators used self-determination to overcome challenges and obstacles faced while completing their degree. The most significant obstacles reported related to time, coursework, finances, and personal situations. Literature on college completion suggested support was crucial for students as it increased their chance of persisting until degree completion (Seidman, 2012; Tinto, 2012). Consistent with this literature, when speaking of their self-determination to overcome challenges, a common theme was the importance of having a support system available to help through the challenges.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was: *What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?*

Home-based early childhood educator who obtained degrees were interviewed to gain their perception of the impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Three core interview questions asked participants to describe autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Persistence for this study was defined

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as a "desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning year through degree completion" (Seidman, 2012, p. 12).

Finding 5 - Commitment. Educators reported making a conscientious effort and committing to completing their degree. This finding aligned with literature about autonomy. Deci and Ryan (2002) suggested autonomy was having control and choice regarding situations. The qualitative data for this study revealed that all participants presented some level of control and choice about completing their degree. This was represented in a common theme from the data showing 100% of the participants committed to completing their degree.

Finding 6 - Higher education is interesting and necessary. When asked about autonomy and its impact on persistence and retention in higher education, the educators described continuing in college because it was necessary to them. This theme was noted by all seven educators who participated in the interviews and referenced 12 times. As presented in the literature review, autonomous individuals acted out of self-interest and initiated actions because of personal value (Deci & Ryan 2002; Gagne, 2014; Johnston & Finney, 2010; Ryan, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2017). For autonomous individuals, "even when actions are influenced by outside sources, the actors concur with those influences, feeling both initiative and value about them" (Johnston & Finney, 2010, p. 8).

Finding 7 - Do not let obstacles get in the way. When asked about the perception on personal competence, educators reported they faced challenges and obstacles while pursuing their degree; however, the common theme among the educators was when faced with constraints, it was important not to let them derail plans or get in the way. Educators talked about experiencing challenging coursework and the importance of

remembering it was possible to get through it. This aligned with literature on self-determination that posited as individuals experienced stimulating activities, they were not overwhelmed but knew they had the skills to produce successful outcomes (Lynch & Salikhova, 2016).

Finding 8 - Extrinsic motivation ignited the desire to initiate a degree, but intrinsic motivation was needed to persist and complete a degree. When asked to share additional information about self-determination in higher education, educators explained extrinsic motivation derailed degree completion when it was removed. Educators talked about how receiving money or stipends for competing training and courses encouraged educators to go to school, but when the funding stopped, home-based educators not intrinsically motivated dropped out of higher education. Deci and Ryan (1985) suggested intrinsic motivation was the basis for goal achievement and intrinsically motivated individuals engaged in activities for personal satisfaction.

Finding 9 - Self-determination was different for individual educators. When educators were asked to share their thoughts on the impact of self-determination, a variety of themes arose representing differences in self-determination among individuals. Deci and Ryan (2002) suggested self-determined behavior was inherent and originated from a place of personal fulfillment. Although all the study participants spoke of their autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and how they impacted their persistence in higher education, there were diverse meanings, conversations, and themes.

Research Question 3

Home-based early childhood educators who completed a college degree were interviewed to gain their perception of the impact of self-determination attributes of

autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Three core interview questions asked participants to describe autonomy, competence, and relatedness in relation to retention in higher education. Retention for this study referred to the "measure of the rate at which institutions reduce friction that stands in the way of a student's continued enrollment" (Habley et al., 2012, p. 9).

Finding 10 - Relationships with others aided retention. The educators in this study perceived relationships with others, whether family, teachers, or colleagues, were key for continuing with college until completion. A major theme regarding relatedness was the importance of support to provide encouragement and reinforcement. Although educators had a strong sense of their competence and ability to complete their degree, they still understood the importance of others to help meet goals and be successful in higher education. The literature on student engagement and success advised higher education institutions must "have programs available to support students [and] employees must go out of their way to ensure that the majority of students use the services and programs" (Habley et al., 2012, p. 111).

Finding 11 - Others served as companions, role models, and mentors. During the interview, educators reported about the importance of relatedness to persistence and retention in higher education. This common theme was presented as having others to serve as companions, role models, and mentors. This theme was referenced 11 times. Ryan and Deci (2000) posited "relatedness promotes self-determined motivation by providing the support and secure attachment needed for growth, exploration, and action" (p. 31).

Unexpected Findings

Unexpected Finding 1

One unexpected finding that arose during this research was uncovering the concept of flow. The educators in this study provided varied comments about the impact of competence on degree completion. One theme that resonated among all participants was knowing that it could be done and sticking with it until the goal was accomplished. This theme aligned with a term from the self-determination literature, flow, which was defined as "that peculiar, dynamic, holistic sensation of total involvement with the activity itself" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 29).

According to the literature, flow was the heart of self-determination as individuals felt included, immersed, and involved in an action and had the power to exercise free-will (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2017). The interviews revealed with challenges and strategies to overcome them, the concept of flow emerged. It was clear during interviews participants had obvious connections to flow.

Unexpected Finding 2

The second unexpected finding related to entrepreneurship and high levels of persistence and self-determination. According to Cardon and Kirk (2015) "persistence is a key element in entrepreneurship because the process of founding and growing a business is ambitious and difficult and numerous obstacles occur along the way" (p. 1). Each of the educators were business owners who started their business from scratch, which required self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. As business owners, they worked closely with state agencies to get the business started,

had self-direction and purpose, and made major personal decisions about running a childcare business from the home.

Unexpected Finding 3

A third unexpected finding was grants and free-money did not support or promote self-determination. During the interviews, three participants talked about the CARES stipend being an avenue for completing coursework. Banuelos (2016) explained "First 5 CA created the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Education Standards (CARES) Plus program, which aimed to increase the quality of early learning programs by supporting the education and professional development of the early childhood education workforce in California" (p. 7). Two individuals mentioned how many home-based early childhood educators dropped from education after there was no more stipend. These two participants talked about the importance of continuing with educational pursuits because of self-motivation instead of being motivated by financial gain.

Unexpected Finding 4

A fourth unexpected finding was educators pursued their educational endeavors from a place of purpose and awareness. Ryan and Deci (2017) posited "Mindfulness, defined as the open and receptive awareness of what is occurring both within people and within their context, facilitates greater autonomy and more integrated self-regulation, as well as greater basic psychological need satisfaction, which contributes to greater well-being" (p. 286). Participants in this study were keenly aware of what was occurring within themselves as it related to completing coursework, understanding personal self-determination, and describing the impact self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness had on their persistence and retention in higher education.

The educators in this study were reflective about the reasons behind pursuing the degree as well as strategies they used to achieve their goal of degree completion.

Unexpected Finding 5

A fifth unexpected finding was that attaining a college degree generated autonomy and confidence. Educators during the interviews reported their self-esteem and confidence improved after getting the college degree. Additionally, completion of the first degree provided the boost for some educators to continue with their education and earn advance degrees. Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002) posited that autonomous individuals had the self-regulation to choose freely and were confident about the decisions made in life. In this study, educators' confidence about higher education was evident by their ability to complete multiple degrees.

Conclusions

Autonomy, competence, and relatedness satisfaction provided energy and direction for individuals to persist with goals and tasks until they were accomplished (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Gagne, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2017). From the literature review and research findings, the following conclusions were developed.

Conclusion 1 - Early Childhood Educators have High Levels of Self-Determination

It was concluded licensed home-based educators with a college degree had high levels of self-determination, which were displayed in their commitment to completing educational goals. Early childhood educators reported high perceptions of self-determination related to autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Data from this study showed early childhood educators were highly self-determined when it came to attending college, completing coursework, and earning a degree.

Conclusion 2 – Educators Intentional about Completing their Degree Persisted in Higher Education

During the qualitative portion of the study, educators talked about degree completion and their experiences with college. When educators were asked about self-determination, the conversation drifted to college course and degree completion. Deci and Ryan (2002) posited individuals presented "self-determined behavior because they have an awareness of potential satisfaction" (p. 237). The research concluded educators who pursued higher education degree programs with the intent of completing a degree did so because it satisfied the inner need of increasing the quality of care they provided.

Conclusion 3 – Intrinsically Motivated Educators Achieved their Higher Education Goals

Educators who received their degree were intrinsically motivated to complete their educational goal. Although individuals received extrinsic rewards such as good grades, praise from others, grants, and scholarship funding, these were not the driving factors for finishing the degree. When educators were intrinsically motivated to complete their degree, it was a true reflection of the confidence and optimism they had about achieving goals. Literature showed intrinsic motivation was an attribute available to everyone and was "positive potential of human nature" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 70).

Conclusion 4 – The Self-Determination Attribute of Relatedness was Prominent in the Lives of Educators who Successfully Completed their Degrees

Educators needed and were connected to many people who supported their success in obtaining a higher education degree. Literature on student engagement showed support connected with the student learning environment helped them succeed

and continue until their educational goals were obtained (Seidman, 2012). One educator illustrated this when she mentioned a professor who made herself available to assist students through the challenges faced with coursework.

Conclusion 5 – Commitment was Key for Educators to Complete a College Degree

The literature posited commitment related to persistence and retention in higher education. According to Habley et al. (2012), when individuals committed to college, they had a "clear and understood belief that college is important and finishing college essential" (p. 159). Commitment helped during the challenging times and was a driving force behind persistence in higher education.

Conclusion 6 – Student Engagement Impacted Persistence and Retention in Higher Education

Educators in college degree programs needed others to help and support them with their competence in higher education. Tinto (2012) noted that although friendship support was essential, friendships or social connections related to school were the most important for student persistence and retention. Educators as students needed this help to support their ability to navigate the school, understand course requirements, and complete the degree.

Conclusion 7 – High Levels of Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness Provided Grit for Persistence in Higher Education

The data from this study showed educators developed confidence over time, which propelled over 40% of the educators to earn bachelor's degrees and nearly 20% to earn master's degrees. Additionally, two of the seven interview participants were enrolled in doctoral programs, which represented 28% of the interview participants. The

educators had resolve, perseverance, and grit when it came to persisting through college until degree attainment. This aligned with grit research conducted by Bowman, Hill, Deson, and Bronkema (2015) that postulated,

> Grittier students were more satisfied with college, had a greater sense of belonging, engaged in more cocurricular activities, and even reported more interactions with faculty. In each case, perseverance had a stronger relationship than did consistency of interest. These findings suggest that those students who are more prone to "keep on truckin" may better realize the opportunities the college experience affords and be more likely to appreciate them. In turn, these benefits may help explain why grittier individuals attain higher levels of education. (p. 644)

Implications for Action

The findings showed self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness were high among educators who completed college. These findings showed early childhood educators had the right level of persistence to continue in college until they received their degree. Although data revealed early childhood educators had adequate self-determination to complete degrees, a number of them never completed the degree (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2011). From the reflections on the surveys and interviews from this study and discussion from the home-based educators about the challenges and obstacle to getting a degree, the following implications for actions were derived.

Implication 1 - Supporting Self-determination in Students with Financial Challenges

Colleges and universities were called on to implement retention measures as the cost of higher education increased over the past decades (Archibald & Feldman, 2008).

Academic institutions need to establish measures to support self-determination in students with financial challenges by providing the educator with a counselor or mentor to offer guidance on navigating the college financial aid process. Additionally, support for financial assistance could be provided by offering discounted rates for educators experiencing unexpected financial hardship during course completion.

Implication 2 – Invest in Self-determination Research to Advance Quality Childcare

This study revealed educators who obtained a college degree had high levels of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The early childhood policymakers at the local, state, and national levels should invest in research to examine the impact of self-determination on the standards used to measure quality in childcare homes and centers. Such studies would encourage early childhood workforces to increase the educational requirements and support early educators in their efforts to get a college degree.

Implication 3 – Develop Programs in Higher Education to Successfully Integrate Early Childhood Educators

Although more individuals can access higher education, access did not necessarily equate to success or completion (Eaker & Sells, 2015). This study revealed early childhood educators had to juggle the needs of their childcare business with those of school. Higher education institutions, as the gate keepers to education, should develop programs to target successful integration of early childhood educators and provide support to address their unique and individual needs. The research and referral agencies throughout the state of California track the number of licensed home-based educators available to provide childcare services for families. Colleges should partner with the

resource and referral agencies to set up mobile programs at these agencies to provide student services for registration, counseling, and financial aid advisement. Also, the resource and referral partnership with the college should support distant learning opportunities for educators by providing semi-annual college fairs at the referral agencies.

Implication 4 – Advocate for Degree Programs to Support and Engage Non-traditional Students

Literature suggested student engagement centered on good school practices in higher education settings, which gave students the support and aid to be engaged (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Krause, 2005; Pacarella & Terenzin, 2005; Trowler, 2010, 2013, 2015; Zepke, 2014, Zepke & Leach, 2010). This study revealed connection and support were key for persistence and retention of early childhood educators in higher education. Often the offices of support operated during the traditional work day and early educators could not access the support without arranging for someone else to watch the children in their care. As such, policymakers must advocate for and develop degree programs that allow early childhood educators access to the same supports as traditional students. These non-traditional support hours would be an avenue for non-traditional students such as the early childhood educators to access the support they need.

Implication 5 – Student Partnership with the Higher Education Student Services

According to Kahu (2013), when engagement became a partnership between students and institutions, it was more likely students would continue in college until they obtained their degrees. Data from this study aligned with the engagement literature as it

revealed educators' relatedness or connections with the school impacted their persistence and retention.

Childcare resource and referral agencies focused on advancing quality childcare for families and were often a source of educational opportunities for home-based early childhood educators. Childcare resource and referral agencies need to work with colleges and universities in the local area to provide workshops on how the educator as a student can access and benefit from the student service departments at the school.

Recommendations for Further Research

The goal of this study was to better understand the impact of self-determination on early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs. With more than one-third of individuals who attend school dropping out during the first year, it is important studies are conducted to address the situation. Little literature investigated this plight for early childhood educators; therefore, the following future research is recommended:

- Conduct a qualitative study examining the impact of self-determination on licensed home-based early childhood educators in their second year of college
- Conduct a quantitative study comparing the level of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in individuals in the early childhood workforce with and without degrees
- Conduct a qualitative study examining licensed home-based early childhood educators' perceptions of extrinsic motivation and the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness

- Conduct a qualitative study examining the self-determination attribute of relatedness and its impact on student engagement

- Replicate this study with licensed home-based early childhood educators using other states

- Conduct a quantitative study comparing the self-determination attribute of autonomy with the concept of mindfulness

- Conduct a qualitative study examining the impact of intrinsic motivation on self-determination of early childhood educators who obtained a degree

- Replicate the study with center-based early childhood educators

- Conduct a quantitative study examining the impact of self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on degree completion of early childhood educators who are center-based compared to home-based

- Conduct a qualitative case study examining strategies institutions of higher education use to support self-determination in early childhood educators

- Conduct a mixed-methods study examining the impact of flow on the intrinsic motivation and self-determination of early childhood educators' persistence in higher education

- Conduct a longitudinal quantitative study using the Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction and Frustration - General Scale at the entry and exit of higher education to determine the impact of self-determination on students

- Conduct a qualitative case study examining the relationship between self-determination and entrepreneurship on licensed home-based early childhood educators

- Conduct a mixed-methods study to determine if there is a difference between grit and the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on early childhood educators who completed a graduate degree

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

As I reflect on the experience I had examining the impact of the self-determination aspects on educators pursuing higher education degree programs, I was reminded of my journey with completing a college degree. It took me over a decade to receive my associate degree as I traveled from base to base as a military spouse, worked fulltime, and juggled coursework and life in general. It took another decade to get my bachelor's and master's. This study was dear to my heart as I savored the words of the beloved licensed home-based early childhood educators who shared their insights on persistence and retention in college.

As I reflect on this population of educators and the information they provided for this research, I must mention I am not surprised this study revealed licensed home-based educators had high levels of self-determination. These individuals must be self-determined to overcome the obstacles faced opening a business, let alone a business that operated from the home, while juggling competing demands. To add completion of a college degree to the mix takes extreme levels of self-determination.

Licensed home-based educators as teachers of young children are valued members of the ECE community. Their ability to juggle the demands of a childcare business and pursue a college degree is commendable. The home-based educators' level of self-determination was a crucial fact for continuing in the early childhood field, which often had low wages and little recognition as a profession. These educators are hidden

pearls many do not know about, and the goal of this study was to present their story and bring them to the forefront of the educational arena.

Often, the home-based educator was not considered a teacher and was often referred to as a babysitter. Few know of the sacrifices these individuals make to provide quality childcare services for the families they serve. Many times, the home-based early childhood educator become more than just a caregiver and teacher for the children they watch. They are the support system, mentor, counselor, and extended family member for families who enter their home.

Several of the educators who participated in this study talked about close connections they had with their childcare families and reminisced on how they provided the support needed to meet their educational goals. These families gave them space and time to do what was needed to attain their educational goals.

The culture of today's educational system impacted whether home-based early childhood educators persisted with college. The higher education institutions' willingness to individualize programs, offer varied opportunities to participate in degree programs, and implement systems to engage home-based educators within the culture of the school will have long-term implications on their success.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – SYNTHESIS MATRIX

Syntheis Matrix	Childcare Need	Attrition in HE	Self Determiatinon Theory	Basic Pschological Needs	Autonomy, Compettence, and Relatedness	Intrinsic Motivation	Need Satisfaction	Early Educators in HE	Higher Education (HE) Barriers	Student Success in HE	Student Engagement in HE	Persistence in HE	Persistence in HE and Self-Determination	Methodology
Ackerman, D. J. (2005)	X													
Altbach, P. G., Berdahl, R. O., & Gumport, P. J. (2016).		X												
America, C. C. A. o. (2017).	X													
Angelino, L. M., Williams, F. K., & Natvig, D. (2007).		X												
Archibald, R. B., & Feldman, D. H. (2008).		X												
Baard, P. P., Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2004).							X							
Baier, S. T., Markman, B. S., & Pernice-Duca, F. M. (2016).		X										X		
Bamberger, M., Rugh, J., & Mabry, L. (2012).														X
Bandura, A. (1997).													X	
Bean, J. P., & Metzner, B. S. (1985).												X	X	
Black, A. E., & Deci, E. L. (2000).												X		
Blecher, L. (2006).		X												
Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2012).														X
Braxton, J. M., Milem, J. F., & Sullivan, A. S. (2000).												X		
Burchinal, P., Kainz, K., Cai, K., Tout, K., Zaslow, M., Martinez-Beck, I., & Rathgeb, C. (2009).	X													
California Department of Education. (2017).	X													
California Post Secondary Education Commission. (2017).	X													
Carey, P., & Trowler, P. (2013).											X			
Carnevale, A. P., & Desrochers, D. M. (2003).		X												X

Reference													
Chen, B., Vansteenkiste, M., Beyers, W., Boone, L., Deci, E. L., Van der Kaap-Deeder, J., . . . Mouratidis, A. (2015)..					X								
Chen, K.-C., & Jang, S.-J. (2010)..					X								
Chickering, A. W., & Ehrmann, S. C. (1996).										X			
Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987).										X			
Childcare Services Association. (2017).	X												
Child Trends. (2017).	X												
Coates, H. (2007).										X			
Cohen, A. J. (1996).													X
Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018).													X
Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2009).	X												
Couse, L. J., & Recchia, S. L. (2015).	X	X				X		X					
Creswell, J. W. (2013).													X
Creswell, J. W. (2014).													X
Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. R. (1999).	X												
Deci, E. (1997).		X		X									
Deci, E. L. (1971).		X		X		X							
Deci, E. L., & Flaste, R. (1996)..			X		X								
Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985).			X		X	X	X						
Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2002)..			X		X	X	X						
Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2014).						X							
Deci, E. L., Vallerand, R. J., Pelletier, L. G., & Ryan, R. M. (1991).			X		X								
Edge, E. (2017).							X						
Espinosa, L. M. (2010).													
Espinosa, L. M. (2015).													
Essa, E. L. (2012)..													
Field, S., Sarver, M. D., & Shaw, S. F. (2003).											X		
Fitzgerald, H. E., Bruns, K., Sonka, S. T., Furco, A., & Swanson, L. (2016).										X			
Gagné, M. (2015).			X		X	X	X						
Getzel, E. E. (2014)..											X		

Reference													
Getzel, E. E., & Thoma, C. A. (2008).											X		
Habley, W. R., Bloom, J. L., & Robbins, S. (2012).		X								X	X		
Hauser, P. M. (2014).		X			X							X	
Hunley, R. D. (2015).												X	
Hyson, M., & Tomlinson, H. B. (2014).	X					X					X		
Johnston, M. M., & Finney, S. J. (2010).					X		X						
Kahn, P. E. (2014).										X			
Kahu, E. R. (2013).										X			
Kids Data. (2017).	X												
Lascarides, V. C., & Hinitz, B. F. (2013).	X							X					
Lascarides, V. C., & Hinitz, B. S. F. (2011).	X												
Krause, K. (2005).										X			
Lawrence, D. L. (2010).	X												
Le, H., Casillas, A., Robbins, S. B., & Langley, R. (2005)..											X		
Llopis, O., & Foss, N. J. (2016)..						X							
Lotkowski, V. A., Robbins, S. B., & Noeth, R. J. (2004).											X		
Lynch, M. F., & Salikhova, N. R. (2016).								X					
MacGillvary, J., & Lucia, L. (2011).													
Maslow, A. H. (1971).							X						
McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010).													X
O'Keeffe, P. (2013).		X											
Ogren, C. A. (2003).												X	
Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005).											X		
Patton, M. Q. (2015).													X
Pianta, R. C., Barnett, W. S., Sheridan, S. M., & Justice, L. M. (2015).								X					
Quaye, S. J., & Harper, S. R. (2014).										X			
Radford, A. W., Berkner, L., Wheeless, S. C., & Shepherd, B. (2010).	X												
Reavis, W. C., & Mahoney, L. H. (1940).	X												
Reavis, W. C., & Shanner, W. M. (1937).	X												
Renn, K. A., & Reason, R. D. (2013)..		X							X		X		

Reference														
Rose, E. (2007).	X													
Rose, E. (2009)..	X													
Rossi, P. H. (1993).	X													
Rovai, A. P. (2003).												X		
Ryan, R. M. (2012).		X		X	X	X								
Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000).				X										
Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017).		X		X	X	X								
Salkind, N. J. (2003).														X
Saracho, O. N. (2013).	X													
Sari, I. (2015).				X										
Schaack, D. D., Le, V. N., & Messan Setodji, C. (2017).							X							
Schuetz, P. (2005).		X												
Schuh, E. J. H., Jones, E. S. R., & Harper, E. (2011).		X												
Schwarz, R. M. (2002).				X										
Seidman, A. (2005).		X								X		X		
Seidman, A. (2012).		X								X		X		
Spady, W. G. (1970).		X										X		
Stefanou, C. R., Perencevich, K. C., DiCintio, M., & Turner, J. C. (2004).			X											
Steinhaus, P., & Walker, D. (2016).		X												
Terrell, S. R., Snyder, M. M., Dringus, L. P., & Maddrey, E. (2012).													X	
Tetreault, J. (2013).		X	X	X								X	X	
Thelin, J. R. (2011).		X												
Tinto, V. (1975).		X												
Tinto, V. (1987).		X												
Tinto, V. (1993).		X												
Tinto, V. (2006).		X												
Tinto, V. (2012).		X								X		X	X	
Trowler, P. (2015).										X				
Trowler, V. (2010)..										X				
Trowler, V. (2015).										X				
Vallerand, R. J., Fortier, M. S., & Guay, F. (1997).		X										X		
White, R. W. (1959).		X		X										
Zepke, N. (2014).										X				
Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2010).										X				

Introduction

First, I want to say thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am interviewing licensed home-based early childhood educators as part of my dissertation research for an Educational Doctorate in Organization Leadership at Brandman University in Irvine, California. The purpose of this interview is to examine, identify and describe the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators in higher education degree programs. I will be seeking your perceptions of the impact that self-determination has on the persistence and retention of early educators attending higher education degree programs. The interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes and will include three main questions that has two Sub-questions. Additional follow-up questions will occur as needed.

Informed Consent

I would like to remind you that any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported without reference to any individual(s) or any institution(s). After I record and transcribe the data, to ensure that I have captured your thoughts and ideas, it will be provided to you by email, so that you can check it for accuracy.

Ask this before starting the phone interview:

I want to verify, did you received the Informed Consent and Brandman Bill of Rights I sent you via email? Do you have any questions or need clarification about either of these documents? Given the information in those documents, do you agree to participate in this study? (*Note/reminder*: at the conclusion of the interview ask the participant to email back a signed copy of the informed consent so that you can maintain it on file).

I want to let you know that at any point during the interview you may ask that I skip a particular question or stop the interview altogether. With your permission, I would like to tape record this interview so that I ensure accurate recording of your responses. Do I have your permission to record this interview? As mentioned early, after I record and transcribe the data, you will be provided an email with the transcription to allow you the opportunity to review it to ensure that it accurately capture your thoughts and ideas.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Researchers such as Edward Deci and Richard Ryan have done extensive studies on self-determination and suggest that the conditions of a person's growth and well-being is dependent on the three basic psychological needs autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These researchers advise that these basic needs are essential for goal achievement. The interview questions are for the purpose of understanding your personal perceptions and thoughts about self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness and their impact on your persistence and retention in college.

1. How long have you been working as a licensed home- based early childhood educator?

2. Please share the level of education that you have and what field of study is your degree in?

3. What does self-determination mean to you?

4. How would you describe your own personal self-determination?

5. Studies show that early childhood educators face a variety of challenges while completing a college degree. Did you face any personal challenges? And if so, what were they and how did your personal self-determination help with overcoming them?

6. Autonomy means feeling as if one has the freedom of choice and responsibility for the initiation of their behavior.

   a. Please share your thoughts and opinions about your own personal autonomy or freedom of choice and how it impacted your college completion?

   b. Was there any particular time that stands out where having freedom of choice determined your decision to continue with your educational pursuits?

   c. If so, can you please share what that experience was and describe your perceptions of how that experience impacted your decision as a student to persist and continue with your educational pursuits until the degree was in hand?

7. Competence is defined as the inward belief and feeling that one has the ability and know how to accomplish their goals.

   a. Please share your thoughts and opinions about your own personal competence or the inward belief that you had the ability to accomplish goals?

   b. Was there any particular time that stands out where knowing you had the capacity to accomplish your goals impacted your decision to continue with your educational pursuits?

       c.   If so, can you please share what that experience was and describe your perceptions of how that experience impacted your decision as a student to persist and continue with your educational pursuits until the degree was in hand?

8.   Relatedness is defined as connections and warm interpersonal relationships with others.

       a.   Please share your thoughts and opinions about your own personal relatedness or connections and interpersonal relationships with others?

       b.   Was there any particular time that stands out where having connections and warm interpersonal relationships impacted your decision to continue with your educational pursuits.

       c.   If so, can you please share what that experience was and describe your perceptions of how that experience impacted your decision as a student to persist and stay with your educational pursuits until the degree was in hand?

Probes to questions to produce additional conversation:
Could you please tell me more about that?
Can you give me an example?
What are your thoughts about that?
How did you feel about that?

Closing remarks, end of interview:
As we close out this interview I would like to give you the opportunity to share any other information that you would like to add regarding your experiences and the impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs.

Within a week, I will be sending you the transcription or our interview via email. Please, if you have any corrections or additions, feel free to send them to me within seven days after receiving them. I appreciate the time you have given to the interview and your support in completing my research.

APPENDIX C – ALIGNMENT OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO RESEARCH

QUESTIONS

Research question	Corresponding interview questions
1. How do California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs describe their personal self-determination?	Questions 3, 4 5, 6a, 7a, 8a
2. What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?	Questions 6, 6b, 6c, 7, 7b, 7c, 8, 8b, 8c
3. What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?	Questions 6, 6b, 6c, 7, 7b, 7c, 8, 8b, 8c,

APPENDIX D - ALIGNMENT TABLE

Research Question	Interview/Survey Items	Analytic Technique
Research Question 1: How do California licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs describe their personal self-determination?	Semi-structured interview questions and the higher education demographics with the BPNSF General Scale Questionnaire in Survey Monkey	Interview data compiled, and codes, themes, and patterns charted and presented using NVivo summaries. Survey data presented with descriptive statistics using mean and correlation tables and charts.
Research Question 2: What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?	Higher education demographics with the BPNSF General Scale Questionnaire in Survey Monkey	Survey data presented with descriptive statistics using mean and correlation scores tables and charts.
Research Question 3: What is the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on retention of licensed home-based early childhood educators who attended higher education degree programs?	Higher education demographics with the BPNSF General Scale Questionnaire in Survey Monkey	Survey data presented with descriptive statistics using mean and correlation tables and charts.

APPENDIX E – QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction and Frustration General Scale (BPNSF-G) and Demographics

Welcome

ELECTRONIC INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Thank you for participating in the survey. Your feedback is important.

The purpose of this research study is to examine, identify and describe the perceived impact of the self-determination attributes of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on the persistence and retention of California licensed home-based early childhood educators that attended higher education degree programs. This is a research project being conducted by Shirley Denise Collins at Brandman University as part of her EdD Dissertation. You are invited to participate in this research project because you are a member of the San Diego County Family Child Care Association (SDCFCCA) and the California Family Child Care Network (CFCCN).

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalized.

The procedure involves filling out an online survey that will take approximately 20-30 minutes. Your responses will be confidential, and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address or IP address.

The survey questions will pertain to the basic psychological needs autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

All efforts will be made to protect your privacy. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only and may be shared with Brandman University Representatives.

If you have questions about the research study, please contact Shirley Collins at scollin2@mail.brandman.edu.

This research has been reviewed according to Brandman University IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

- you have read the above information

- you voluntarily agree to participate

- you are at least 20 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button.

* 1. If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

Instructions

Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale – General Measure and Demographics

Below, we are going to collect demographic information and ask about your actual experiences of certain feelings in your life. Please read each of the following items carefully. You can choose from 1 to 5 to indicate the degree to which the statement is true for you at this point in your life.

1	2	3	4	5
Not true at all				Completely True

2. Are you male or female

○ Male

○ Female

3. What is your age

○ 20- 29   ○ 50- 59

○ 30- 39   ○ 60 or over

○ 40- 49

4. What is your current years of experience as a home-based early childhood educator

○ 1-5 years   ○ 21-25 years

○ 6-10 years   ○ 26-30 years

○ 11-15 years   ○ 31 years and above

○ 16-20 years

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed
- ○ 2- Year Degree (Associate's)
- ○ 4- Year Degree (Bachelor's)
- ○ Graduate Degree (Master's)
- ○ Graduate Degree (Doctorate)
- ○ Other (please specify)

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* 6. I feel a sense of choice and freedom in the things I undertake

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 7. Most of the things I do feel like "I have to"

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 8. I feel that the people I care about also care about me

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 9. I feel excluded from the group I want to belong to

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 10. I feel confident that I can do things well

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 11. I have serious doubts about whether I can do things well

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 12. I feel that my decisions reflect what I really want

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 13. I feel forced to do many things I wouldn't choose to do

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 14. I feel connected with people who care for me, and for whom I care

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 15. I feel that people who are important to me are cold and distant towards me

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 16. I feel capable at what I do

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 17. I feel disappointed with many of my performance

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 18. I feel my choices express who I really am

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 19. I feel pressured to do many things

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 20. I feel close and connected with other people who are important to me

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 21. I have the impression that people I spend time with dislike me

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 22. I feel competent to achieve my goals

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 23. I feel insecure about my abilities

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 24. I feel I have been doing what really interests me

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 25. My daily activities feel like a chain of obligations

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 26. I experience a warm feeling with the people I spend time with

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 27. I feel the relationships I have are just superficial

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 28. I feel I can successfully complete difficult tasks

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

* 29. I feel like a failure because of the mistakes I make

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○