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How Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Teachers Supported Students' School Readiness Skill Development During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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2021

Abstract

How Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Teachers Supported Students' School Readiness

Skill Development During the COVID-19 Pandemic

by

Eileen Manoukian

MBA, University of Phoenix, 2009

BA, Azad University of Tehran, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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Abstract

Scholarly literature lacks studies on how prekindergarten and kindergarten (PK-K) teachers supported students' school readiness skill development and successful transitions to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Framed by school readiness theory and social development theory, this qualitative study explored perspectives of 16 PK-K teachers to answer two research questions about how teachers support students' school readiness skill development foster students' successful transitions to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic in a metropolitan area in the southwest region of the United States. Data were collected through one on one, semistructured interviews, and analyzed by following an inductive process using Saldaña's coding system. Synthesis of data revealed PK-K teachers supported students' readiness skill development and fostered students' successful transitions to formal schooling during the pandemic when teachers shared leadership and enacted the following practices: (a) recognized parents' roles in children's readiness for school; (b) supported students' roles in school readiness from a whole child paradigm; (c) reflected on teachers' roles in emergent and prepared curriculum; (d) acknowledged school leaders' roles in safe, secure, and trustworthy environments; and (e) embraced technology's role in virtual and traditional learning modes. Findings contribute to positive social change by suggesting concrete ways how parents, students, teachers, and school leaders practice shared leadership and used technology during the COVID-19 pandemic to support and foster PK-K students' school readiness skills in virtual and traditional settings during and after the pandemic.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to all prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers who tirelessly took on the challenging task of educating and leading the youngest students during the COVID-19 pandemic. They had to learn how to teach within the new environment, its limitations, and new regulations within a few days. Their role was much bigger than just being a teacher. They created the sense of safety and security for the families and the students, dealt with the challenges of teaching their students how to use the new technology and kept them engaged without having physical access to them. They were the heroes who need to be acknowledged and celebrated for their hard work and dedication to our future generation.

Acknowledgments

The completion of this study could not have been possible without the mentoring, support, and guidance of Dr. Barbara Trube, my beloved doctoral committee chair. I would also like to thank Dr. Donald Yarosz and Dr. Ionut-Dorin Stanciu for their guidance. A debt of gratitude is also owed to my friend Dr. Foojan Zeine who inspired me in taking this journey and supported me along the way to complete it. I would also like to thank my colleagues, friends, and family who patiently encouraged me throughout these last three years.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The focus of this study was on how prekindergarten and kindergarten (PK-K) teachers supported development of their students' school readiness skills and fostered their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic when virtual learning in the home predominated. This study is important because PK-K teachers are charged with supporting the development of their students' formal school readiness skills (Pianta et al., 2017); however, researchers suggested that teachers are challenged to contribute to children's readiness for formal schooling during the pandemic (Franchino, 2020; Holod, 2020; Welchons & McIntyre, 2017). Kokkalia et al. (2019) defined school readiness as "children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life" (p. 4). Researchers noted that strategies and approaches used by early childhood teachers to address their students' school readiness skills are not known and need to be investigated (Brown et al., 2021; McNally & Slutsky, 2018; Slutzky & DeCruin-Parecki, 2019; Smith & Glass, 2019). Fufi et al. (2020), Poletti (2020), and Purtell et al. (2020) contended that this is especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic due to nationwide concern for children's formal school readiness skill development because children are not fully engaged in traditional school settings and there is high reliance on virtual learning. More recently in the literature, readiness is referred to as children's transition into formal schooling at first grade (Franchino, 2020; Holod, 2020; Welchons & McIntyre, 2017). This study contributes to positive social change by revealing how PK-K teachers supported their students' development of school readiness skills to help them successfully transition into formal

school during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Chapter 1, I introduce the background for the study, introduction to the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance, and the chosen conceptual framework. Two research questions are presented along with the nature of this study, its limitations and scope of delimitations, important definitions, and a summary.

Background

Early childhood teachers play critical roles in supporting their students' development of formal school readiness skills (Cadima et al., 2015; Downer et al., 2016; Pianta et al., 2017). However, in general there has been insufficient data about how PK-K teachers support the development of school readiness skills in their students (Brown et al., 2021; Smith & Glass, 2019; Welchons & McIntyre, 2017). This has been compounded during 2020-2021 due to restrictions imposed by school districts. Restrictions were placed on PK and K programs in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has presented PK-K teachers with new challenges in developing formal school readiness skills to support their students' successful transition into formal school (Franchino, 2020; Holod, 2020). I aimed to explore how PK-K teachers develop their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed by this basic qualitative study with interviews was a gap in practice about how PK-K teachers supported development of their students' school readiness skills to foster their successful transitions into formal schooling during the

COVID-19 pandemic. Holod (2020) found that teachers are challenged with how to prepare PK-K students for transitioning to the next levels of their school experiences during the 2020-21 COVID-19 global pandemic. Brown et al. (2021) found that education stakeholders have different understandings about what readiness is for young children and recommended further studies to determine if the responsibility for readiness beyond kindergarten is shifting "from the child to the entire system" (p. 138). Welchons and McIntyre (2017) found that teachers' transition practices were related to students' readiness and outcomes in K; however, these specific transition practices were not known and needed to be investigated. Piker and Kimmel (2016) suggested that further research is needed to uncover what teachers think happens during PK-K and how PK-K teachers actually support students' school readiness skill development for formal schooling.

The problem upon which this study is based existed at the local level in school systems in a metropolitan area located in the southwestern United States, as well as at state and national levels (see Franchino, 2020). At the local level, school district administrative reports from the 2015-2016 academic year up to the 2018-2019 academic year revealed that at the end of students' kindergarten year, an average of 64% of K students fulfilled the minimum requirements to transition to first grade. In 2019, the metropolitan city's school system published and distributed a memorandum suggesting the need to test K students at the beginning of the academic year in order that teachers may gain a better understanding about the reasons for children's lack of readiness for formal schooling at the end of the school year. Further, a state-level report indicated that only one out of three children had the necessary readiness skills to start formal schooling.

Five local elementary principals from the district indicated that they did not know what K teachers do to help their students develop school readiness in general and especially during the pandemic (Elementary Principals, personal communication, March 2020). Principals agreed that, based on data revealing that students were not school-ready at the end of K, there was a need to know how PK-K teachers support their students' formal school readiness skills, especially during the pandemic (Kindergarten Teachers, personal communication, March 2020).

Welchons and McIntyre (2017) found that teachers' transition practices were related to student's readiness and outcomes in K; however, these specific transition practices were not known and needed to be investigated. Piker and Kimmel (2016) suggested that further research is needed to uncover what teachers think happens during PK-K and how PK-K teachers support students' readiness for formal skill development. Franchino (2020). Further, Holod (2020) suggested that teachers of young children were challenged to contribute to children's readiness for formal schooling during the pandemic.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore how PK-K teachers supported development of their students' school readiness skills to foster their successful transition into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study addressed concerns about PK-K students' development of school readiness skills to successfully transition to formal schooling in school systems within the metropolitan area located in the southwestern United States. This study also addressed a gap in practice about how

PK-K teachers supported their students' development of school readiness skills to support their successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic at the state and national levels.

Researchers had noted that strategies and approaches that PK-K teachers used to address students' formal school readiness were not known (see McNally & Slutsky, 2018; Slutzky & DeCruin-Parecki, 2019; Smith & Glass, 2019). Smith and Glass (2019) indicated that updated research was needed to understand early childhood teachers' use of strategies and approaches to impact children's academic school readiness. Moreover, McNally and Slutsky (2018) found that further research was required to understand early childhood teachers' knowledge of the components of school readiness, their beliefs about factors related to school readiness, and their alignment of readiness skill development to practice in early childhood settings. Brown et al. (2021) suggested that there was a need for research that examines perspectives of education stakeholders "that make sense of how kindergarten is to ready children for elementary school," (p. 138) which could reveal kindergarteners' needs during the pandemic, as well as their future needs. In research findings specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Giovannella et al. (2020) and Lapada et al. (2020) highlighted the need to investigate the work of teachers in maintaining the educational mission of schools in preparing children for successful learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic or any time in the future when distance or online learning curriculum models are enacted. The works of these researchers guided my decision to research the problem and conduct a basic qualitative study.

Research Questions

The following two research questions guided this basic qualitative study with interviews:

RQ1: How do PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ2: How do PK-K teachers foster their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?

Conceptual Framework

The phenomenon upon which this study was based was how PK-K teachers developed their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. PK-K teachers support students' school readiness skill development to prepare their students for successful transition into formal schooling; however, little was known about how they accomplish the goal of school readiness skill development in general (Smith & Glass, 2019; Welchons & McIntyre, 2017), or during the global pandemic (Franchino, 2020; Holod, 2020).

The conceptual framework of this study was guided by Vygotsky's (1962) social development theory and Winter and Kelley's (2008) theory of school readiness, which researchers Winter and Kelley extrapolated from Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989) bioecological systems theory. These theories aligned with the roles of PK-K teachers and how they address students' development of formal school readiness skills.

Vygotsky's (1962) social development theory is comprised of three major themes, as follows: social interaction, the more knowledgeable other (MKO), and the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky believed that learning gives direction to

development within social interaction (Demirbaga, 2018). The MKO typically is a

teacher, a parent, older siblings, or a peer who is more knowledgeable than the child.

Technology can be considered a MKO (Eun, 2017). According to Eun (2017), the ZPD

plays "a critical role in offering principles of effective learning in both formal and

informal contexts in various domains of human functioning" (p. 18). The three

components of social development theory facilitate a child's development (Demirbaga,

2018; Eun, 2017; Vygotsky, 1962).

In acknowledging Bronfenbrenner's influence for the creation of the school

readiness theory, Winter and Kelly (2008) highlighted the interrelatedness of each child's

development and various contextual factors within the family, the school, and the

community that had an impact on the child's development. Those most influential factors

consisted of family members, early caregivers, teachers, neighbors, and other community

members.

In summary, social development theory and school readiness theory framed the

study. The framework guided development of the research questions, the choice of

methodology, and the methods of data collection and data analysis in this study. The

conceptual framework is further elaborated upon in Chapter 3 of this document.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this basic qualitative study was to explore how PK-K teachers

supported their students' development of school readiness skills to help them successfully

transition into formal school during the COVID-19 pandemic. Basic qualitative

methodology with interviews was the best choice for research that aimed to examine the

challenges and experiences of a group of people at a certain time in a certain context (see

Creswell & Poth, 2017; see Peterson, 2019; see Stake, 2013). Interviews with PK,

transitional kindergarten (TK), and K teachers resulted in my ability to gain rich, deep,

and individualized data in the context of PK-K early childhood programs (see Ravitch &

Carl, 2016). The environment within which the study was conducted was a virtual one.

Contact and recruitment of volunteers took place via emails. Digitally audio-recorded

interviews were conducted with PK-K teachers due to social distancing regulations

during the COVID-19 pandemic via telephone. I followed a purposeful sampling

technique and chose participants from a pool of volunteers based on teachers having a

minimum of 2 years of teaching experience at the PK-K levels in a metropolitan school

system located in a southwestern state. Following semistructured, audio-recorded

interviews via audio conferencing, participants received emails with summaries of their

interviews for member checking. Interviews were conducted in a setting where

confidentiality was maintained for approximately 30-45 minutes exploring the research

questions. Participants were given alphanumeric codes: PK teachers were coded

TPK1…TPK3, TK teachers were coded TTK1…TTK9, and K teachers were coded

TK1…TK6. The interview instrument developed by me was guided by the conceptual

framework and validated by an expert in PK-K school readiness skill development. Data

were collected, coded, and patterns and categories were recognized resulting in emerging

themes that answered the research questions. Methodology is further elaborated upon in

Chapter 3.

Definitions

Curriculum: Rhode Island Department of Education (n.d.) defined curriculum as a sequence of experiences that are planned for learners based on standards; students use the curriculum in their practices as they work to achieve proficiency in the domains of learning in content areas and behavioral expectations.

More Knowledgeable Other (MKO): A MKO is an adult or peer learner who knows more, understands a certain task, process, concept better, or has a higher capability than the learner (Safia & Mala, 2012). MKO in most cases is the caregiver, older sibling, or an older person who mentors the child with a more advanced understanding of the resolution of an issue.

School Readiness: Researchers have found that there is no one widely accepted definition for school readiness (Bernstein et al., 2019; Haspel, 2020; Schachter et al., 2019; Slutzky & Debruin-Parecki, 2019). However, the definition suggested by Kokkalia et al. (2019) summarizes school readiness as "children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life" (p. 4). This definition considers all domains of learning as important for children to be school ready.

Whole Child Approach: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD; 2021) defined whole child approach as "ensuring each child, in each school, in each community is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged" (para. 1) Holistic education, which is based on the whole child approach emphasizes that learning happens beyond the school and classroom and supports each individual students' development based on individual interests, strengths, and needs (Paget, 2019)

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): Based on the work of Vygotsky ZPD is the learner's maximum capacity of learning (Silalahi, 2019). The inconsistencies between a learner's mental development and his problems solving abilities with help is the decisive factor of the learner's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1962). ZPD is the gap between the capabilities of a learner when accomplishing a task with peer interactions or with adult guidance and his/her independent execution of the tasks (Reynoso et al., 2012). The ZPD is described as a broad concept that incorporates key principles of Vygotsky's theory of human development (Eun, 2017).

Assumptions

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), identifying assumptions is a necessary step in a study that includes analysis of data and reporting of findings. There were three assumptions in this study. First, I assumed that all participating PK-K teachers were familiar with the policies regarding the instruction of young children during the pandemic, including the methods of delivery of instruction and preparation of the instructional environment. Second, I assumed that PK-K teachers understood the critical importance of supporting development of their students' school readiness skills. Third, I assumed that PK-K teachers would answer all questions as truthfully and accurately as they were able.

Scope and Delimitations

The 16 participants of this basic qualitative study with interviews were PK-K teachers who worked in one metropolitan school system in the Southwestern region of the United States during the Covid-19 pandemic. PK-K programs were using virtual

platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic. The teaching methods, curriculum, standards, and practices had changed from face-to-face learning to online and distance learning due to the pandemic. This basic qualitative study with interviews addressed the way PK-K teachers supported their students' development of formal school readiness skills during the Covid-19 pandemic. Excluded from the study were teachers who were not teaching PK-K during the pandemic and teachers of higher grades.

Limitations

The data collected and analyzed, and the resulting findings of this study were limited to 16 PK-K teachers in school systems within one metropolitan area located in the southwestern region of the United States. The findings of this study represented a small number of PK-K teachers, and their perspectives might not be generalized beyond the metropolitan school system. Findings would not represent all PK-K teachers throughout the entire country or necessarily represent all PK-K teachers' supportive actions of their students' school readiness skill development during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the limitations of this study were related to various teaching styles, educational background of the teachers, diverse teaching experiences, and PK-K teachers' training and certifications. Nonetheless, this study theoretically serves as a helpful means and contributes to positive social change for the PK-K teachers and student communities by generating a greater understanding of the ways PK-K teachers support student's school readiness skill development during a pandemic.

Significance

Researchers indicated that teachers' supportiveness of students, provision of stimulating early childhood education practices (Kokkalia et al., 2019), and high-quality teacher-child interactions (Bustamante & Hindman, 2019; Kokkalia et al., 2019) positively affect students' school readiness skill development. However, researchers have indicated that because there is not a commonly accepted and understood definition for school readiness (Slutzky & DeCruin-Parecki, 2019), specific practices demonstrating how early childhood teachers address PK-K students' school readiness skill development are unknown (McNally & Slutsky, 2018; Slutzky & DeCruin-Parecki, 2019; Smith & Glass, 2019). This problem is currently relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic as teachers are engaging in restrictions based on time and delivery of instruction and limited face-to-face interactions with their students due to COVID-19 restrictions imposed by school districts (Giovannella et al., 2020; Lapada et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020). At the local level, four out of five principals that I spoke with expressed their views that K teachers could make a difference by strategizing with other teachers to come up with a plan to address students' formal school readiness skill development in a virtual environment. All five of these principals believed that knowledge of how PK-K teachers addressed students' school readiness skill development is critical for positive student outcomes; however, principals revealed that they did not know how PK-K teachers developed their students' readiness skills and expressed the need-to-know teachers' practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. This basic qualitative study with interviews contributes to positive social change by impacting teachers' capacities to develop their

students' formal school readiness skills during the current pandemic or future pandemics or natural disasters.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore how PK-K teachers developed their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. I collected data through semistructured interviews with PK-K teachers via digitally audio recorded telephone conversations. The problem addressed by this basic qualitative study with interviews was a lack of knowledge about how PK-K teachers develop their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the first chapter of this study the problem and the purpose of the study, the nature of the study, research questions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the conceptual framework of the study were presented. Moreover, it includes the definitions and the elements of the study. The literature review related to the topic of the study is covered in the following chapter. In Chapter 2, I also explain the problem in terms of a gap in practice pertaining to readiness skill development and transition practices of PK-K teachers during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 global pandemic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem addressed by this basic qualitative study with interviews was a lack of knowledge about how PK-K teachers developed their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study addressed concerns about children's lack of readiness to transition to formal school in early childhood programs in the local metropolitan area school systems located in a southwestern state in the United States, as well as addressing state and national concerns highlighted in the literature on practice. Therefore, I sought to explore how PK-K teachers developed their students' school readiness skills to support their students' successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. A concise synopsis of the current literature that establishes the relevance of the problem is presented in this chapter. I also present the literature search strategy, conceptual framework, and literature review related to key variables and concepts in this chapter.

Literature Search Strategy

I obtained and collected research-based information from the Walden library databases and other sources which included, Sage Journals, Eric, Taylor, and Francis Online, ProQuest, Education Source, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Science Direct, Google Scholar, PsycInfo, Teacher Reference Center, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, and the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Some articles were accessed directly from Walden University librarians and through the Walden Research Center team. Terms used to

compile the literature review for this study included the following: *school readiness, readiness for school, kindergarten teacher and school readiness, transition to kindergarten, kindergarten transition, teacher perceptions, teacher perspectives, teacher attitudes, teacher views, early childhood, preschool, kindergarten, early childhood education, pandemic and early childhood educators, pandemic and school readiness, pandemic and kindergarten, COVID-19 and school readiness, COVID-19 and kindergarten, COVID-19 and kindergarten readiness, COVID-19 and preschool education, COVID-19 and teacher's perception, COVID-19 and teacher's perspective, COVID-19 and kindergarten teacher, COVID-19 and formal schooling, Kindergarten assessments, kindergarten teacher's perception and school readiness, preschool teacher's perception and school readiness, early childhood educator's perception and school readiness, school readiness components, school readiness definition, school readiness policies, whole child, shared leadership, shared leadership in schools, children's school readiness,* and *kindergarten students' school readiness*.

Conceptual Framework

Vygotsky's (1962) social development theory and Winter and Kelley's (2008) school readiness theory extrapolated from Bronfenbrenner's (1978) bioecological system's theory guided the conceptual framework of this study. These two concepts aligned with the roles of PK-K teachers and how they address students' formal school readiness. In this section, the theories and concepts of both Vygotsky and Winter and Kelly are defined, and the alignment of the theories of social development and school readiness are explained.

Social Development Theory

Vygotsky's (1962) thinking was influenced by Marx's theory of society. He used his knowledge and education of literature, psychology, and medicine in forming his theory of social development. His work in psychology influenced the study of art, literature, linguistics, and education.

Vygotsky (1962) stated that the mind cannot be understood in isolation from surrounding society, stressing that culturally constructed beliefs shape a person's behavior; thus, an individual's development is directly affected by society and culture. He assumed that language and thought develop independently of each other (Vygotsky, 1962). Thus, in applying Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, a researcher or an educator who is aware of this theory assumes that children's learning is a cultural process that happens because of sharing systematic activities that are a part of the culture (Vygotsky et al., 1978; Parkin & Harper, 2020). The social development theory is comprised of three major themes, as follows: social interaction, the MKO, and the ZPD. Vygotsky believed that learning gives direction to development within social interaction (Vygotsky et al., 1978). The MKO typically is a teacher, a parent, older sibling, or a peer who knows more than the child. Today, technology can be considered a MKO as well. The ZPD plays "a critical role in offering principles of effective learning in both formal and informal contexts in various domains of human functioning" (Eun, 2017, p. 18). Scaffolding interfaces with students' abilities to achieve what they cannot do independently with the help of a MKO in an interactive space in the ZPD (Vygotsky et al., 1978). The presence of a MKO assumes there is a culturally informed other, which is required for achieving

cultural goals within the process (Parkin & Harper, 2020). The interaction provides

mediated awareness by a MKO that enables the child to achieve what he could not do

individually and passes on cultural norms. It is required that the MKO offers enough

support to help students learning process and not let them struggle while helping them

move towards independence (Parkin & Harper, 2020). The goal of an educational system

is to create an agreement between the students and the disciplines put forth for the

students' academic growth (Parkin & Harper, 2020). Vygotsky's theory links roles

fulfilled by the teacher and the student. A balanced level of scaffolding is particularly

important for formal schooling. Parkin and Harper (2020) noted the importance of a

balanced level when educators work with students who are marginalized students and at

high risk of academic breakdown if left on their own with limited tools.

In social development theory, a student's social environment and the MKO

become determining factors in a student's level of social development (see Vygotsky et

al., 1978). The appropriate classroom environment combined with teaching by skilled

teachers are essential for improving students' early school success and readiness to

progress in developmentally and culturally appropriate ways. Vygotsky's (1962) social

development theory also supports developmental assessment for identification of the skill

level at the entry and throughout the kindergarten year. Historically, the approach of

school readiness has been that the students develop the capacity to be successful at school

in an innate and natural way (Carlton & Winsler, 1999; Piaget, 1936). In the last few

years, this mindset about school readiness has shifted. School readiness is getting

attention from a social learning and ecological point of view, where students are

supported by their teachers in developing skills necessary to be successful in formal schooling during early years of education. (see Bronfenbrenner, 1979; see Carlton & Winsler, 1999; see Vygotsky et al., 1978).

School Readiness Theory

The school readiness theory was suggested by Winter and Kelley (2008) who based their concept on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system's theory. Because Winter and Kelley credited the work of Bronfenbrenner, it was fitting to focus this section on his work. Bronfenbrenner (1979) presented the theory of ecological psychology. Ecological psychology was based on the study of human growth and development by focusing on children's behaviors in relation to family, school, peer group, and community. Later, Bronfenbrenner changed the name to bioecological theory because he viewed a child's behavior as the collaboration of a person and the environment. He believed that development is a process of social initiations through five systems that influenced behavior in terms of roles, norms, expected behaviors, and historical context. In *Making Human Beings Human* (2005), Bronfenbrenner proposed ways to apply his bioecological model to policies and programs. Bronfenbrenner's theory acknowledges the interrelatedness of a child's development and various contextual factors outward from the child at the center of the five systems (Winter & Kelley, 2008). The most influential factors consist of family members, early caregivers, teachers, and neighbors. Bronfenbrenner (1989) explained the chronosystem as the dimension of time and biological growth within the lifecycle, the microsystem as the most persuasive organism for the child's development, which usually consists of the family members. He described

the mesosystem as the connection between the various elements of the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). For example, a child who loves and respects his/her teacher or parents is more likely to follow their guidance and try to please them with positive behavior. Bronfenbrenner introduced the exosystem as a context outside the immediate influences on the child's development (Jafari et al., 2018). The macrosystem, the outer system of influence on the child's development is influenced by cultural aspects (Jafari et al., 2018). Bronfenbrenner proposed that the future of each child is related to where he has been raised and under what conditions. Tamis-LeMonda (2013) elaborated on the premise of Bronfenbrenner and suggested that children gain the capability for cultural learning after they learn the language and theory of mind (Tamis-LeMonda, 2013). Tamis-LeMonda found cultural learning is a very important part of readiness because school starts during early childhood years and evolves at different developmental stages during children's school experience (Tamis-LeMonda, 2013). School readiness theory focuses on components that contribute to young children's development and readiness for school (Winter & Kelley, 2008).

Alignment of Social Development Theory and School Readiness Theory

In the context of formal school readiness, there is interplay between social developmental theory of Vygotsky (1962) and school readiness theory of Winter and Kelly (2008) extrapolated from Bronfenbrenner's (1989) bioecological theory. School readiness includes not only the academic skills but also a varied array of developmental skills. According to Altun (2017), the five dimensions of early learning and development include the following: cognition and general knowledge, language, social and emotional,

physical and motor, and approaches to learning. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological models focused on the components process, person, and context of several systems with the child at the middle of the modes. For Bronfenbrenner, process represented environments in the microsystems and macrosystems where children interact with MKO in a social environment, which is what school readiness theory categorizes as approaches to learning and social and emotional development. In social development theory, a child's social environment and the MKO become determining factors in a student's level of social development (see Vygotsky et al., 1978) which impacts the child's readiness for formal schooling. The appropriate classroom environment in the child's microsystem combined with teaching by skilled teachers (MKOs) are essential for improving students' early school success and readiness to progress in developmentally and culturally appropriate ways. Vygotsky's social development theory also supports developmental assessment for identification of the skill level at the entry and throughout the kindergarten year. Currently, with the onset of COVID-19, concepts of school readiness have shifted (Poletti, 2020).

The social development theory (1962) and school readiness theory (1979) align in the following ways: (a) growth and development happen in the family, community, and social environment; (b) children develop under the influence of caregivers, parents, and teachers; (c) the environment plays a crucial role on children's development; and (d) community or the society is an essential component of development. Together, these two concepts align with the problem and purpose statements, the significance of this study, and guide the questions and methodology. The conceptual framework aligns with the

purpose of this study, which is to establish how PK-K teachers develop their students'

school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during

the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social development theory and school readiness theory converge as both theories

see human development happening as a process within a cultural context

(Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1993; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Both

theories emphasized the importance of the social environment or the community on an

individuals' human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Rosa & Tudge, 2013;

Vygotsky, 1962). Scholars agreed that both theories highlighted the importance of a

guide or mentor who might be a caregiver, teacher, parent, or any other adult role model

(Jafri et al., 2018; Rosa & Tudge, 2013) who operated in the child's APD while acting in

the role of the MKO.

Previous studies have employed school readiness theory influenced by

bioecological theory as a framework to research different aspects of school readiness.

Slutzky and Debruin-Parecki (2019) used bioecological framework for their study on

school readiness. Their findings suggested that educators agree on the importance of

noncognitive features such as student's health, communication skills, and approach to

learning for their school readiness; however, they disagree about the role of academic

skills stating there is a "need for further consideration of adopting a universal,

multifaceted kindergarten readiness definition that calls attention to the role of child and

environmental inputs as a starting point for preparing all young children for school"

(Slutzky & Debruin-Parecki, 2019, p. 1). Smith and Glass (2019) recognized a

connection between preschool teachers' opinions about their students' school readiness and students' actual levels of readiness based on the results of math and reading assessments. Ohle et al. (2017) use the school readiness framework as the conceptual framework to investigate educators' views of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA), finding that educators viewed the KEA had little impact on students' skills required for school readiness. The application of social development theory and school readiness theory provides a strong and suitable framework for this study.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables

In this section, I begin by presenting definitions of school readiness which are accepted in the field of early childhood education. Researchers have found that there is no one widely accepted definition for school readiness (Bernstein et al., 2019; Haspel, 2020; Schachter et al., 2019; Slutzky & Debruin-Parecki, 2019). Haspel (2020) argued that in the United States school readiness is viewed as a product rather than as a context process; therefore, it should be implemented as a process for it to be more effective and long lasting. According to Bernstein et al. (2019), school readiness includes knowledge and social-emotional development skills that students acquire and need before entering kindergarten. Slutzky and Debruin-Parecki (2019) highlighted a need for practitioners in the field of early childhood education to identify a more universal and complex definition of school readiness for students entering formal schooling because it encompasses roles played by both the environment and the student. Jarrett and Coba-Rodriguez (2019) surveyed teachers from different school settings and found that teachers' perceptions of skills needed for school readiness differ based on the type of the school, the curriculum

followed in the school, and teachers' ethnicities, as well as teachers' years of teaching experience. Slutzky and DeCruin-Parecki (2019) suggested that further studies are needed to explore teachers' perspectives of adopting a commonly understood multifaceted definition of school readiness, so they understand the components children need to be school ready. Likewise, Schachter et al. (2019) suggested that there is a need for more universal clarity on a definition of school readiness and its alignment to each state's learning standards. Brown et al. (2018) stressed that state administrators and policy makers view K as the foundational year for children's development of formal school readiness skills. Development of positive academic and social-emotional readiness skills during K determine children's future successes throughout their elementary education years and beyond (Brown et al., 2018).

Impact of Children's Experiences on Formal School Readiness

Researchers have stressed that formal school readiness policies and programs should be implemented before K (Bernier et al., 2020; Williams & Lerner, 2019). Children's readiness for formal schooling is influenced by their experiences and not just the level of a children's inherent physical development (Bernier et al., 2020; Williams & Lerner, 2019). Williams and Lerner (2019) found that children's early learning experiences matter in their preparation for school. Children who are determined to lack school readiness skills for K can be helped during PK through early intervention (Williams & Lerner, 2019). Researchers found that measuring each child's readiness skills during PK (Bernstein et al., 2019) and at the beginning of K (Bernier et al., 2020)

will provide teachers with information about each child so teachers can maximize children's successes during PK and K.

When teachers provided school readiness skill interventions, children experienced positive learning outcomes during PK-K (Bernstein et al., 2019; Bernier et al., 2020). Morrissey and Vinopal (2018) concluded that children who attended center-based care and received readiness skill interventions scored higher in math and reading at transition to K based on readiness assessment tests regardless of their socioeconomic status. In addition, Welsh et al. (2016) found that it was important for K teachers to be attentive to children's diverse behavioral patterns, which may be exhibited by children who lack positive early education experiences and have challenges adjusting to school at the beginning of K. However, Jenkins et al. (2018) discovered that the whole child curricula used in Head Start programs and some PK schools did not increase students' school readiness.

Readiness Assessments

There are a variety of formal school readiness assessments that measure different developmental domains of young children (Houri & Miller, 2019). In the United States, 34 states utilize some type of Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) (Franchino, 2020). These assessments are predominantly designed to identify the need for any special education services for the students. Distance learning, which had been enforced due to the Covid-19 pandemic, made it more difficult for teachers to assess children's readiness skills at the K level. Some states that had mandated K education had also assigned a qualified testing administrator to their state-level training and technical assistance

agencies (Franchino, 2020). These experts assisted teachers in assessing K students during COVID-19 as part of remote learning processes followed in the state during the pandemic (Franchino, 2020). Some K assessments could be conducted in public places such as parks; and others were administered virtually with the assistance and permission of children's parents by recording videos or sending pictures of children completing components of assessments (Franchino, 2020).

Knowledge and Readiness Assessment

Bernstein et al. (2019) explored the Knowledge and Readiness Assessment (KRA) tools used by school personnel in various states of the United States to assess the readiness skills of K students. Bernstein et al. reported that the use of the KRA tool in PK can identify children's learning needs and alert teachers to the need for resources that would assist them in preparing all children at the PK level for success in K. KRA can assist PK teachers in documenting children's learning needs when teachers use data to plan individualized activities to assist children in getting ready for K (Bernstein et al., 2019). Schachter et al. (2019) investigated teachers' perceptions of the KRA and found there is unequal understanding of the term readiness, and the lack of a consistent definition influenced teachers' views of its usefulness in supporting children's readiness skill development. Bernier et al. (2020) examined the benefits of using KRA data to improve teaching practices. Researchers identified that KRA influenced teachers' shift from teaching in large groups to providing individual or small-group instruction to increase teacher and child interactions (Bernier et al., 2020).

Kindergarten Access Assessment

Ohle and Harvey (2017) investigated educators' perceptions of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA). Penttinen et al. (2020) discovered that the development and implementation of KEA in each state was directly related to federal funding. Researchers found the KEA had no effect on teachers' beliefs or practices related to school readiness (Ohle & Harvey, 2017). Educators stressed that all children, regardless of their knowledge and abilities, should be welcomed to K and it was the teachers' job to be ready for them (Ohle & Harvey, 2017).

Early Development Instrument

Duncan et al. (2020) investigated the success of the Early Development Instrument (EDI) in predicting K students' successes in math and English proficiency at third grade. Researchers found that skills learned during PK-K resulted in later academic success and achievement (Duncan et al, 2020). Duncan et al. suggested that the EDI given during K was a strong predictor of students' achievement scores on standardized tests at third grade.

Domains of Learning that Contribute to School Readiness

Researchers identified criteria for school readiness based on children's domains of learning such as cognitive (Kokkalia et al., 2019), social-emotional (Griebling & Gilbert, 2020; Miller & Kehl, 2019; Pianta et al., 2020), and physical (Bernier et al., 2020; Ohle and Harvey, 2017; Williams & Lerner, 2019). Ghandour et al. (2019) concluded that school readiness encompasses social-emotional, physical, and cognitive readiness as well as learning approaches and general knowledge of the student. Hustedt et al. (2017)

expressed that although K teachers valued assessment information on all developmental domains, they prioritized nonacademic skills as the most essential skills for school readiness. Hustedt et al. found that classroom teachers, who were the main enforcers of readiness practices, prefer children's development of nonacademic skills over the development of academic ones. Hustedt et al. findings revealed that teachers' views contrasted with preferences of policymakers who focused on academic or cognitive skills over nonacademic skill development, which is in contrast to other views.

Cognitive Development

Bernier et al. contended that academic knowledge is considered more valuable than social-emotional competence in school readiness. Some researchers hold the view that cognitive development is dependent on children's social-emotional development (Kokkalia et al, 2019; Son et al., 2019; Wenz-Gross et al., 2018). Son et al. (2019) examined the relationship between Inhibitory Control (IC) and students' early academic skills in kindergarten in a longitudinal study and concluded that early math skills were directly related to children's IC. Therefore, it is necessary for PK-K teachers to consider the importance of IC as an essential building block of cognitive development and school readiness (Son et al., 2019). Likewise, Wenz-Gross et al. (2018) suggested that improvement of executive functioning (EF) could be an indicator of preacademic and task-oriented success in early years of school. Choe et al. (2021) found that when parents actively promote their children's positive executive functioning in the home environment, children have better academic adjustment in the school environment. Kokkalia et al. (2019) suggested teachers should take a holistic view of their students' cognitive and

noncognitive development because doing so is imperative to their school readiness and future academic success (Kokkalia et al., 2019). Hedges (2020) found that long time effects of fostering children's interests during their early childhood years resulted in inspiration, success, joy, fulfilment, and resilience for the rest of their lives. Hedges (2020) and Kokkalia et al. (2019) contended that holistic outcomes that combined cognitive and noncognitive aspects need to be studied further.

Social-Emotional Development

Several researchers looked at social-emotional skill development as an important component in children's readiness for formal schooling (Geiger, 2019; Griebling & Gilbert, 2020; Miller & Kehl, 2019). Miller and Kehl (2019) studied the perception of teachers and parents on the most and least important characteristics of school readiness for young children, which revealed that teachers and parents had similar opinions about social-emotional skill development. Findings indicated that socio-emotional competence in young children was a predictor of academic success (Miller & Kehl, 2019). Teachers found social-emotional characteristics are essential for children to be school-ready (Piker & Kimmel, 2016). Griebling and Gilbert (2020) studied a group of children who participated in a summer program that focused on positive social-emotional skill development to smooth the transition from PK to K. Researchers found that children who showed improvement in the domains of social-emotional development with an emphasis on self-regulation were considered more skilled and school ready by their teachers at the beginning of the K year (Griebling & Gilbert, 2020). Geiger (2019) examined the legitimacy of self-regulation as one of the main characteristics that children needed to

have to be school-ready and found that self-regulation was directly linked to school readiness. Hartman et al. (2016) discovered that student's self-regulation and early behavior skills helped increase young children's school readiness. In a multinational research study conducted by Niklas et al. (2018), researchers discovered that early childhood educators generally believed that indicators of school readiness were children's ability to focus, their social-emotional development, and their independence; further, these attributes were found to be more important than academic skills as indicators of school readiness. Piker and Kimmel (2016) suggested that further research was needed to uncover what preschool teachers think happens during K and how PK-K teachers support students' readiness for formal skill development by focusing on social-emotional development.

Physical Development

Children's readiness for formal schooling is influenced by their inherent physical development and learning experiences (Bernier et al., 2020; Piker & Kimmel, 2016; Williams & Lerner, 2019). Piker and Kimmel found that teachers believed that children's physical well-being is an essential component of school readiness (Piker & Kimmel, 2016). Ohle and Harvey (2017) discovered that early childhood educators consider self-regulation, obeying the rules, following directions, collaboration with classmates, listening, and controlling the body are helpful readiness skills for transitioning to school.

The Whole Child Approach

Researchers suggested students' developmental domains should be supported by positive school environments that actively reduce stress and anxiety to optimize learning (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2018) proposed early childhood teachers should take a whole child approach to education by addressing each student's unique strengths, needs, and interests. "The health and wellbeing of the learner, including the physical, social, and emotional safety, is a requirement for learning" (Soskil, 2021). Providing children with physically and emotionally safe environments where there are opportunities of development of secure attachments with caregivers, promotes health and wellbeing (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; Soskil, 2021). Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2021) suggested requirements to attend to the needs of the whole child include healthy nutrition, appropriate physical activities, and a positive learning environment. Cantor et al. (2021) posited that whole child development is an inclusive approach to children which values physical development, emotional conditions, and social skills such as relationships which impact children's learning directly. Policymakers are encouraged to create a unified and organized vision for educational establishments to meet the needs of children as a whole and to develop and maintain safe and healthy environments (Temkin et al., 2020).

Teachers and Children's School Readiness

Pianta et al. (2020) reported the children's formal school successes increased by the level of teachers' supportiveness and educational focus in the classroom. PK students

were found to be more engaged in learning when they had a teacher who delivered an academically focused curriculum (Pianta et al., 2020). Pianta et al. (2020) suggested that engaged PK students were more likely to positively succeed in school beyond PK-K. Jarrett and Coba-Rodriguez (2019) discovered that teachers agreed that academic and social-emotional skills were equally important for school readiness.

Teachers' Expectations

Kook et al. (2020) examined the views of PK-K teachers on school readiness and found that PK teachers tended to have lower child expectations than K teachers. Smith and Glass (2019) found that teachers' expectations of PK students were influenced by the degree of teacher training they have received. Further, the relationship between PK teachers' perceptions of students' academic readiness and outcomes on math and reading assessments suggested that teachers' expectations of young children's school readiness skills might be biased based on race, cultural expectations, and socio-economic conditions. As a result of their findings, Smith and Glass suggested that further research on PK-K teachers' expectations for diverse populations of students was needed.

Teaching Practices

McNally and Slutsky (2020) reviewed the alignment of teaching practices with teacher-student relationships. Researchers found that teachers with better relational practices needed to use disciplinary actions less frequently than teachers who did not focus on building relationships with their students (McNally & Slutsky, 2020). Kook and Greenfield (2020) suggested that storybook reading and hands-on science activities were among activities that created a better interaction between teachers and students and could

affect school readiness. Teachers agreed on the idea that classroom's smooth management was related to having clear rules and guidelines. Better teacher-student relations increased the quality of learning and school readiness in PK-K students (Bustamante & Hindman, 2018). Rojas and Abenavoli (2021) found teacher-child relationships with low conflict improved children's engagement and impacted their expressive vocabulary development. Corbin et al. (2020) found that teachers who created warm and supportive environments for their students had a higher success rate in maximizing children's learning and readiness skills.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) revised position statement on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in 2020, teachers use materials, activities, and strategies that young children need for optimum growth and development. The NAEYC position statement on DAP supports each individual child's family background, language, and culture. Cavadel and Frye (2017) suggested that a theory of mind contributes to teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions that directly affects children's sense of acceptance and impacts their learning. These researchers suggested that explicit individualized instruction should include social-emotional learning, which is necessary for children's readiness to learn in kindergarten (Cavadel & Frye, 2017). NAEYC guidelines based on DAP emphasize that play is the most natural way for young children to learn and succeed academically.

Transition Practices

Cook and Coley (2017) examined national data about methods used by K educators in the United States to facilitate the transition of K children to primary school (called "transition practices") and the relationship of transition practices to children's academic and social adaptation in primary school. Researchers' findings revealed that parental guidance improved transition practices that support children's academic success (Cook & Coley, 2017). Further, transition practices were beneficial for all K students from every socio-economic level and income range (Cook & Coley, 2017). Teachers who were successful in implementing effective transition practices followed developmentally appropriate practice (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2020). Welchons and McIntyre (2017) found that K teachers' transition practices were related to student's readiness and outcomes in K; however, they suggested that these specific transition practices were not known and needed to be investigated. Puttell et al. (2020) found that PK teachers and administrators were often unaware of their students' experiences, which led to communication barriers between the PK-K teachers to promote children's transitions. Further, Puttell et al. (2020) suggested that an investigation of the importance of communication to promote fluid transitions between PK-K was needed to discover causes for challenges that arise for teachers and students related to transition to formal schooling. Puccioni (2018) surveyed teachers to find out the effects of their beliefs about school readiness on their transition practices and found that teachers' individual communication with parents and innovative teaching practices resulted in children's readiness for transition from PK to K.

Teachers and Dual Language Learners

Piker and Kimmel (2016) explored the beliefs of early childhood teachers on the school readiness characteristics that they found essential for dual language learner (DLL) children to have when entering K. Their research suggested that physical development and social-emotional development were equally important for dual language learners' school readiness (Piker & Kimmel, 2016). Pianta et al. (2017) studied the effects of the DLL classroom processes and school readiness skills. Pianta et al. found that the overall performance of children who were DLL improved in classes taught by supportive, academically focused, and structured teachers. Langeloo et al. (2019) found that monolingual students' academic outcomes could be forecasted by their multifaceted interactions and multilingual students' academic achievements could be predicted by low-classroom organizations, however, both groups benefited from engagement in large groups and frequent interactions with the teacher. Researchers discovered that multilingual students benefited from large group engagement, low classroom organization, and teacher-student interactions (Langeloo et al. 2019).

Challenges for Teachers During the Pandemic

Teachers were faced with challenges in developing their students' readiness skills during the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges included inequities in delivery of services (Dias et al., 2020; Mercer, 2020); exposure to screen time (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016; Holod, 2020), teacher relationships (Cross, 2020; Holod, 2020), peer relationships (Bowdon, 2020), virtual classroom management (Churiyah et al., 2020), working with parents and caregivers (Dias et al., 2020), and shared leadership.

Inequities in Education

According to Dias et al. (2020), in March 2020 educators were challenged to identify ways of delivering services and education for young children with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, stating that "the shift to remote learning and services increased inequities in early childhood education" (p. 39). Many children's needs had not been met with this shift due to limited access to technology, materials, and trained early childhood teachers (see Mercer, 2020). Lapada et al. (2020) found that teachers' years of experience in teaching online demonstrated a direct relationship to their successes in supporting students with school readiness through online and distance learning during the pandemic; however, few were prepared.

Screen Time

Holod (2020) found early childhood teachers faced challenges related to recommended best practices and young children's exposure to screen time. When considering developmentally appropriate practice, as it applied to young children, it was recommended that educators should limit young children's use of computer screen time (Coban, 2020). According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2016), only one hour a day of screen time was recommended for young children ages 2- to 5-years of age. Holod explained that due to the circumstances related to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, AAP had relaxed these limitations. Holod (2020) recommended that teachers should focus on learning at a distance rather than solely relying on virtual learning. To support students' academic success during the pandemic, Holod suggested teachers should provide caregivers with tools and materials via mail or school picked up

to be used at home to assist children with their academic education. Recommended resources included activity cards, markers, stickers, and other physical tools (Holod, 2020).

Teacher-Child Relationships

A second challenge of concern to teachers was the difficulty for building relationships and forming attachments with children during social distancing periods. Holod (2020) suggested keeping interactive videos short. Teachers were encouraged to work on activities that would create interaction and relationship building. Because parents were often involved in online learning by young children, Cross (2020) suggested that parents should use media and online tools for social connections with peers during the pandemic. Teachers used online tools to encourage children's social interactions to build relationships with peers (Cross, 2020).

Peer Relationships

Bowdon (2020) suggested that children should have had playdates by video chat which could have positive physical and social emotional effects on children. Bowdon recommended dividing children into groups to play games and get to know each other better. The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America organization had provided health and physical education resources during COVID-19 that were specifically directed at movement and movement literacy activities for teachers, caregivers, and parents of PK-K students.

Virtual Classroom Management

Researchers found that teachers were more concerned about correct usage of technology than attending to classroom management strategies to promoted young students' social emotional growth and development (Churiyah et al., 2020). Churiyah et al. (2020) discovered that students expressed low self-regulation skills during distance and online learning. Bowdon (2020) found some media used in the virtual classroom distracted learners; he recommended that teachers should keep special effects and animations at a minimum because they distract young children from learning.

Parents and Caregivers

Programs inside and outside of children's families and care environments provided young children with supports that promoted readiness for academic success during the pandemic (Dias et al., 2020). By addressing basic cognitive and language skills, and social and emotional competence, MKOs were needed to help students succeed in developing readiness for school during the COVID-19 pandemic (see Demirbaga, 2018; see Eun, 2017).

Shared Leadership

One effective way to establish and maintain a successful early childhood program or school is by developing shared leadership among school stakeholders (Daniëls et al., 2019; Fernandez & Shaw, 2020; Graham, 2018). Graham (2018) found administrators in the role of principal and/or director, entrust stakeholders with shared decision making when they provide an avenue for open and honest communication with active support for stakeholders' skill development. Shared decision making among stakeholders is needed

when establishing and maintaining a successful school or program (Graham, 2018).

Daniëls et al. (2019) revealed that shared leadership promoted a sense of community,

responsibility, and trust among all those acting in the role of teacher, as they engaged in

collaboration, shared purpose, and shared ownership in decision making. Fernandez and

Shaw (2020) suggested that when shared leadership is practiced in educational

establishments, all individuals respond to unexpected changes with more speed and

efficiency, which was demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter contains the conceptual framework as the basis of this study as well

as the review of the relevant literature as the source for understanding about how PK-K

teachers developed their students' school readiness skills to support their successful

transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The literature review

provided an in-depth view of the importance of formal school readiness skills in young

children, its components, and teachers' perceptions and practices. Some topics covered in

the literature review provided clarity about children's formal school readiness skill

development and the need for a whole child approach. Additional topics included

assessments such as the KEA and EDI, domains of learning that contribute to school

readiness and included cognitive development, social-emotional development and

physical development, teachers and children's school readiness, teachers' expectations,

teaching practices, transition practices, teachers and dual language learners, and teacher's

challenges during the pandemic. These topics are relevant to the study because they are

related to children's readiness skills and developmental domains, teachers' transitional

practices, and their impact on teaching and learning practices during the Covid-19

pandemic. The current study contributed to filling the gap in practice by providing a more

in depth understanding of how PK-K teachers addressed their student's school readiness

skill development and possibly elaborated on teachers' challenges and how they

overcame challenges. In Chapter 3, I present the study's research method and design with

a rationale for my role as a researcher. I discuss the processes of participant recruitment,

selection, and data collection through semistructured interviews. I also present the

process of developing and validating the instrumentation. Further, the data analysis

approach I followed is outlined along with procedures and processes for establishing

trustworthiness and following ethical practices.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study with interviews was to explore how PK-K teachers develop their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Chapter 3, I elaborated on the research design and logic, as well as the researcher's role, adherence to methodology, the participant selection method, the plan, and the tools for data analysis. I described the elements of trustworthiness and ethical procedure used in this study.

Research Design and Rationale

The goal of this basic qualitative study with interviews was to explore how PK-K teachers support the development of their students' school readiness skills to foster their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the conceptual framework as a guide, I created two research questions, as follows:

RQ1: How do PK-K teachers support the development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ2: How do PK-K teachers foster their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?

I chose a basic qualitative method for this study to focus on obtaining an in-depth understanding of the participants' experience and practices in their natural settings. I explored the five qualitative designs to identify the most appropriate one for this study. The five designs include case study, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative analysis, and phenomenology (Carlin & Kim, 2019; Levitt, 2020; Stake, 2013). The following section explains the reason why these five methods were not chosen for this study.

Within a narrative analysis, the researcher narrates a cohesive story using only one or two individuals by taking several events (Carlin & Kim, 2019; Levitt, 2020; Stake, 2013). The story is constructed by conducting in-depth interviews, compiling documents, and finding themes (Carlin & Kim, 2019; Levitt, 2020; Stake, 2013). Participant of this study were 16 PK-K teachers, which eliminates this form of research based on the number of participants and lack of compiled documents.

Within a qualitative grounded theory approach, many participants are interviewed, or existing documents are used to collect data and create a theory (Carlin & Kim, 2019; Levitt, 2020; Stake, 2013). This method provides a concept or a clarification on events (Carlin & Kim, 2019; Levitt, 2020; Stake, 2013). A series of open and axial coding techniques are used to identify themes and build the theory (Carlin & Kim, 2019; Levitt, 2020; Stake, 2013). Grounded theory was not a suitable design because I was not aiming to identify a theory.

A case study is used to gain an in-depth understanding of research by using various types of data sources (Carlin & Kim, 2019; Levitt, 2020; Stake, 2013). Case studies usually are exploratory, explanatory, or describing an event (Carlin & Kim, 2019; Levitt, 2020; Stake, 2013). Case study ethnography methods were not a suitable choice for this study because my study was not using multiple data sources.

A quantitative design was less suitable because it is usually based on theoretical or empirical considerations and quantifying phenomena. The benefit of the quantitative approach is that it quantifies the reactions of a large group of participants to a limited number of questions, facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the collected

data (Labuschagne, 2015). A basic qualitative design was the most appropriate choice for this study because it allowed me to explore how PK-K teachers develop their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic and it was often used in the field of education.

How teachers support students' school readiness skill development during the pandemic was a concern at the local metropolitan school system, as well as at state and national levels. I also addressed a gap in practice about how early childhood teachers address students' school readiness skills during the pandemic. Therefore, in this qualitative study I sought to explore how PK-K teachers develop their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with 16 PK-K teachers from one metropolitan school system in the Southwestern United States. Data were collected through semistructured interviews, lasting approximately 30-45 minutes via digitally audio-recorded phone calls, to address the research questions. After data collection, the data were transcribed by me, coded, and thematic data analysis was conducted. The rights of participants were protected by following Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol for informed consent letters, confidentiality processes, and data storage in a locked file cabinet for 5 years after the conclusion of the study after which they will be destroyed. Researchers had noted that strategies and approaches that PK-K teachers used to address students' formal school readiness were not known (McNally & Slutsky, 2018; Slutzky & DeCruin-Parecki, 2019; Smith & Glass, 2019). Smith and Glass (2019) indicated that updated research was needed to understand early

childhood teachers' use of strategies and approaches to impact children's academic school readiness. Moreover, McNally and Slutsky (2018) indicated that further research was required to understand early childhood teachers' beliefs about factors related to school readiness and their alignment to practice. The qualitative methodology is the best choice for a research that aims to examine the challenges and experiences of a group of people at a certain time in a certain context (Peterson, 2019). Qualitative research is consistent with discovering how kindergarten teachers address students' school readiness, because it allows the researcher to study the complexity of human interactions (Stake, 2013). A basic qualitative study with interviews methodology supported my role as a researcher. I used phone, individual audio-taped semistructured interviews with open-ended questions and prompts.

Role of the Researcher

I performed the role of the researcher during this qualitative study. I conducted the interviews personally. I was responsible for recording, transcribing, and analyzing the data received from the 16 PK-K teachers from eight early childhood schools and programs in a metropolitan area located in the southwestern United States. I have had more than 10 years of experience as a teacher and director of a childcare establishment. However, I have never been employed or known by any of the PK-K teachers in other early childhood schools or programs located in the metropolitan area where I conducted this study. To prevent bias and any ethical issues, I used two strategies. First, I followed a scripted interview protocol to use the same language and questions throughout all interviews. I offered each participant the same amount of time to answer each question

during the phone, semistructured audio-taped qualitative interviews. I recorded all interviews on a device to ensure that all responses were recorded accurately. Second, to further avoid bias I kept a written journal to help me stay aware of any bias I might have possibly brought to the research process.

Methodology

A basic qualitative study with interviews was conducted. Data collected from the interviews were coded and analyzed to uncover emerging themes (Creswell & Poth, 2017) linked to how PK-K teachers addressed students' school readiness skills during the 2020-21 COVID-19 global pandemic. People's opinion is the basis of qualitative studies. The perspectives of PK-K teachers were gathered through interviews. Interviews are one of the best instruments to investigate how kindergarten teachers address students' school readiness during the 2020-21 COVID-19 global pandemic (see Creswell & Poth, 2017). The qualitative methodology was the best choice for my research, which aimed to explore the challenges and experiences of a group of people at a certain time in a certain context (see Peterson, 2019). According to Stake (2013) this approach allowed me, as the researcher, to study the complexity of human interaction in a specific setting to better understand them. In this study, I limited the number of participants to 16 PK-K teachers to have the opportunity to investigate how kindergarten teachers address students' school readiness during the 2020-21 COVID-19 global pandemic and conclude with saturated data. The sampling technique was purposeful. Teachers were chosen based on their teaching experiences. Data were collected through one on one, semistructured, 30-45-minute interviews exploring the research questions.

Participant Selection

Using a basic qualitative method for the study, I explored how 16 PK-K teachers address students' school readiness during the 2020-21 COVID-19 global pandemic. Three PK teachers, seven TK teachers, and four K teachers were recruited and selected based on the following criteria: teaching the PK or K level at the time of the interviews (during the pandemic), a minimum of 2-year experience teaching PK-K levels, fluent in English, and current with certifications and teachers' training required by the early childhood program of the metropolitan school district and state. Sixteen participants were a valid sample size to collect sufficient data for this study (see Creswell & Poth, 2017). PK-K volunteers represented teachers who taught PK, transitional K, and K. All participants were identified through the school websites, recruited, and contacted by email.

Instrumentation

A digital audio tape recorder was used to record the interviews and retain the obtained data for this basic qualitative study with interviews. The semistructured interview protocol was used with three PK, seven TK, four K teachers, and two double classrooms (TK and K) teachers. Interview questions and the prompts were designed to align with the framework to address the two research questions, the problem statement, and the purpose of this study. The research questions were designed to explore how PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic (RQ1) to help them successfully transition into formal school. PK and K teachers answered the question of how they support their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic. All interview questions were written

in a professional and direct language free of any abbreviations and confusing vocabulary to be easily and correctly understood by all participants and avoid any confusion (see Appendix B). I consulted a child development specialist located in a southwestern state in the United States to review the interview protocol to ensure the interview questions could be validated. The consultant had over 35 years of experience in child development and teaching as a lead teacher, certification expert, and higher education early childhood faculty in a university located in the southwestern area of the United States. She was an early childhood educator for over 15 years. The interviews took place over the phone. All interview questions shown on Table 1 were aligned with the two research questions.

Table 1

Two RQs Aligned with Qualitative Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
RQ1: How do PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?	1. In your own words, please define the terms *school readiness.* 2. Please share your perspectives on the children's developmental domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and formal school readiness skills. 3. In your opinion, which are the most important skills and/or developmental milestones that children need for learning? 4. Please give typical examples of ways you have supported your students' formal school readiness during COVID-19 Pandemic. 5. How have you involved families/ parents in their children's readiness skill development? 6. What tools do you use to measure students' formal school readiness? 7. What tools help you measure the impact of your practices on students' formal school readiness?
RQ2: How do PK-K teachers support their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?	8. Please describe a typical day in your work with PK or K students or on behalf of your students during the pandemic. 9. Please describe your role and the roles of others as the more knowledgeable other during the pandemic. 10. What is the role of parents in developing children's readiness as the MKO?) 11. Please identify and discuss transition practices that have emerged as a result of your response to the pandemic? 12. In what ways has the pandemic changed how you use formal school readiness measurement tools?

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

After receiving approval for the proposal from my committee members and following IRB approval (# 03-26-21-0731639), I obtained a list of PK-K settings from the metropolitan district's website and searched private school websites; these settings were from early learning centers, primary schools, or elementary schools located in the metropolitan area. I researched websites from 35 settings within different zones of the metropolitan area to obtain PK-K teachers' email addresses. I sent 36 potential volunteers an invitation letter/informed consent form through email. The invitation letter/ informed consent form included my contact information, the purpose of the study, and the university's contact information. Participants were encouraged to keep a copy of the consent form for their records. I detailed the intent of the study and the participant's privacy protection plan.

Purposeful sampling was performed based on the participants' teaching experience, training and certification, and the grade level they taught at the time of the study. We confirmed the date and time of the interviews after the participants' informed consent was obtained through e-mail with the statement "I consent." The one-time interviews were approximately 30-45minutes. I recorded the interviews using a digital audio recorder with the intention to collect and record the most accurate data. I transcribed the recordings immediately after the interviews took place. I returned to the transcription and listened to the audiotape at a later time to check for accuracy. Each participant's alpha-numeric code was listed with the transcript in a separate file for each

participant identified by an alphanumeric code such as TPK1…TPK3; TTK1…TTK9, and TK1…TK7 with the intent to keep track of the data.

The interview questions were open ended, allowing me to compile the participants' reports of their practices of supporting the development of their students' school readiness skills to foster their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Appendix C of this document includes all of the interview questions and protocols. I used Saldaña's coding system, which is a coding system that allows the user to separate and analyze the data by grouping the participants responses. According to Saldaña (2015) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, the data collection procedure is completed by collecting, recording, and transcribing the information compiled during the interview process. After transcribing all the data collected from the participant, I was able to code them by category or group (see Saldaña, 2015). I used two types of coding; a structural coding and a descriptive coding system; both of which allowed me to compile and compartmentalize the obtained general information from the participants during the interviews (see Saldaña, 2015). Volunteers were not obligated to complete the process as participants in the study after giving their consent to participate. They had the option to stop their participation at any point during the process without any consequences.

Data Analysis Plan

Data for this basic qualitative study with interviews were collected from PK-K teacher's responses to the interview questions derived from the two research questions about their practices of developing their students' school readiness skills to support their

successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The

questions as part of the protocol are shown in Appendix C. All interviews were

transcribed immediately after conclusion with the participants. I used the Saldaña, (2015)

coding method to code the subdivided groups and categories. I used thematic coding

system of Saldaña to categorize the participants' answers into themes and patterns. I

decided on the themes and patterns by reading the transcription of the participants'

responses, marking similar answers (themes), and compiling a list of keywords (codes)

used by the participants. This allowed me to detect explicit practices that aligned with

each research question. The analysis of the collected data supported me in uncovering

teachers' practices of developing their students' school readiness skills to support their

successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<div align="center">**Trustworthiness**</div>

Trustworthiness within a qualitative study consists of confirmability, credibility,

dependability, transferability, and authenticity factors, which were included in this study.

Trustworthiness and authenticity were demonstrated to the participants by clear

communication of the intention of the study and reassuring them of confidentiality.

Credibility

A crucial part of internal validity in a qualitative study consists of credibility.

Credibility is important to validate the research design, instruments, and data within the

trustworthiness of a qualitative research study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I followed the

protocol of the interview by asking each participant the same questions using the same

clear language in order to avoid any bias. I ensured credibility by carefully reviewing

each digitally recorded interview and returning to the recordings a couple of times. The identity of the participants remained anonymous throughout the interview process. Participants were chosen from teachers who were fluent in English. The participants had the opportunity to review my transcription of their interview to avoid any bias on my account.

Transferability

Transferability is the external validity of a study. It is the degree that the results of the study range through context (Burkholder et al., 2016) and the design of the study is directly linked to its transferability. This study might have been too small to accomplish transferability of the results. One way to contribute to transferability of this study was through literature review of past studies and data about this topic. Another deliberation to transferability of this topic was that the pandemic had affected all early childhood educators around the world almost in the same way. The data collected could be useful to all PK-K teachers nationally and internationally. The data collected from the 16 PK-K teachers provided an understanding of the practices used by teachers in developing their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dependability

Consistency and having factual arguments over the course of the study is how Revitch & Carl (2016) explain dependability. Dependability means that the data, its analysis, and the coding of it is replicable. I avoided interpreting the participants' provided data by asking clarifying questions and getting their feedback on my

transcription of their interviews. My lack of experience as a PK-K teacher was beneficial in avoiding interpretation of the interviews.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the researchers' natural position and avoidance of any biases of the collected data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To achieve confirmability, I consistently used the scripted interview protocol to ask each participant all interview questions. I used prompts as needed for clarification or extension of participants' responses. After each interview, I began the process of transcribing data and reviewed the audio-taped responses several times to ensure that each transcript was accurate. As each transcription was completed and summarized, I began the member checking process. I sent an e-mail asking for participants' feedback on the content of their interview summaries. Several participants extended their responses. I made additions to transcripts based on the feedback I received during member checking. All participants responded to my request for feedback; most responded that the summary was complete, and their perspectives were included.

<div align="center">

Ethical Procedures

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This study was conducted in an ethical manner, protecting participants' confidentiality and rights following IRB ethics guidelines. IRB approval (# 03-26-21-0731639) was obtained before the recruitment process began. Each participant received a consent form by email and responded to the email using "I consent" phrase before I began conducting each interview. I was the only one conducting and digitally recording participants' interviews. Participants did not have access to each other's responses;

interview transcripts were kept confidential and were not shared with anyone. I used a digital journal on my password-protected computer to capture the emphasis participants placed on certain topics. Interview questions were designed objectively, reviewed, and approved by an expert in young children's formal school readiness. Participants were teachers of children in PK, TK, and K who were fluent in the English language. Semistructured interview questions were designed to be open-ended to encourage honest responses by participants. An interview protocol was followed to ensure the consistency of collected information from each participant. Data were identified by alpha-numeric codes to keep transcripts of digital recordings, email correspondence, and my journal notes organized. Digital data and email correspondence were stored in a secure place on my password-protected home computer and later downloaded onto a flash drive. Digital and print data were stored in a secure place in my locked home office safe for confidentiality because I am the only one who has access. All data from this study are secure in a locked safe in my home office where it will remain for five years, at which time, all data will be destroyed per Walden University's requirements to dispose of data. Throughout the process, the privacy and confidentiality of participants and their data were maintained, data remained anonymous and are safely stored in a secure location where only I have access until the time of disposal.

Summary

This basic qualitative study with interviews explored how PK-K teachers supported the development of their students' school readiness skills to foster their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Chapter

3, I expanded on the research design and logic, as well as my role as the researcher, the

methodology, the participant selection method, the plan, and the tools for data analysis. I

explained the elements of trustworthiness and ethical procedure used in this study. In

Chapter 4, I present the setting, data collection, data analysis, and results of the study.

Chapter 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore how PK-K teachers supported the development of their students' school readiness skills to foster their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The conceptual framework focused on human development as a process within a cultural context that emphasized the importance of the social environment in children's development. Vygotsky's (1962) social development theory and Winter and Kelley's (2008) school readiness theory, based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, framed this study. The two following RQs guided this study:

RQ1: How do PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ2: How do PK-K teachers support their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?

This study addressed a gap in practice in early childhood programs and schools in a metropolitan area located in the southwestern United States. In Chapter 4, I provide information about the setting, the process of data collection and data analysis, and report findings of the study related to interview questions one and two.

Setting

Post Walden University's IRB approval, I obtained PK-K teachers' email addresses from websites of early childhood programs and schools located in the metropolitan area where PK-K teachers were employed. I obtained individual campus websites from the school districts' websites and through online search engines. All

teachers were teaching in early childhood schools and programs within a large

metropolitan region of the southwestern United States. I screened the teachers to ensure

that all of them met the criteria. I sent 36 invitations and informed consent documents

through email to potential volunteers. I explained that their interviews would be followed

by my transcribing the audio recordings, summarizing data, and sending a member

checking email. The invitation email also served as the letter of informed consent

providing potential participants with information about the intent of the study, the

procedure of data collection, and their rights as the participants. I received the consent of

16 volunteers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and social distancing

requirements, all interviews were conducted over the phone. The member checking

process was completed by sending participants a follow-up email and requesting that they

make any edits or additions to the summary as they felt necessary to provide clarity.

Demographics

I used purposeful sampling in this study to recruit subgroups of teachers meeting

specific criteria. Palinkas et al. (2015) noted there are limitations to purposeful sampling

which can lead to the inability to generate similar findings across settings; however,

Lodico et al. (2020) suggested it is not necessary to interview the entire population of

teachers in each setting in qualitative studies. All volunteers were teachers with a

minimum of two years of experience and currently (during the pandemic) teaching PK,

TK, or K students. Volunteers were from private and public-school districts and included

teachers working in dual-language programs because there are wide diversities within the

metropolitan area. Teachers of PK, TK, and K grades taught students from diverse

socioeconomic groups comprised of low-income, middle class, and affluent families located in a large metropolitan area in the southwestern United States. Table 2, below, lists teachers' alpha-numeric codes, years of experience, type of school where employed, type of classroom, and their school's status based on students' socioeconomic levels. Eight teachers had more than 20 years of experience teaching in early childhood programs. Four teachers were teaching in private schools. Of the 16 teachers who volunteered and became participants in the study, some teachers were teaching remotely, some were teaching on campus, and four teachers were teaching in a hybrid program (see Table 2). Half of the teachers' students were on campus with the teacher and the other half were joining the class remotely. Two teachers were teaching two classrooms, a TK class in the morning and a K class in the afternoon. All teachers were current with the state-mandated certifications and required training specific to PK-K levels.

Table 2

Demographics of Participants

	Years of Experience	School Type	Classroom Type	Socioeconomic Status
K1	32	Public	Remote	High SES
K2	20	Private	Campus	High SES
K3	20	Public	Hybrid	Middle SES
K4	18	public	Remote	Middle SES
K5	15	Public	Remote	Middle SES
K6	9	Public	Remote	Low SES
PK1	19	Private	Campus	High SES
PK2	12	Public	Remote	Low SES
PK3	5	Private	Campus	High SES
TK1	35	Public	Remote	Middle SES
TK2	33	Public	Remote	Mixed SES
TK3	25	Public	Remote	Low SES
TK4	25	Public	Hybrid	Middle SES
TK5	25	Public	Remote/Campus	Middle SES
TK6	20	Public	Hybrid	Middle SES
TK7	14	Public	Remote/Hybrid	Low SES
TK8	14	Private	Campus	High SES
TK9	9	Public	Remote	Low SES

Data Collection, Management, and Analysis

No software program was used to collect or analyzing data. Data were collected and digitally audio recorded over the phone and transcribed by me shortly after each interview closed. After listening to the audio recordings several times and referring to the journal that I maintained throughout the interview process, data were coded manually by me. I used the smart art option of the Word application on my computer. Criteria of participation was that volunteers had 2 or more years of experience teaching PK-K students, were currently licensed or certified for early childhood levels by the state, and currently teaching a PK-K classroom. Each participant of this study fulfilled all the requirements (see Table 1). Common words and phrases were coded, patterns were revealed, codes were placed into categories, subthemes emerged by questions, and overarching themes emerged during the data analysis (see Saldaña, 2015). Data saturation occurred when the codes extracted from data lead to information, and coding yielded no more coding or new information to interpret (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2016).

Data Collection

The recruitment of all volunteers for this study started immediately after I received approval from Walden's IRB (#03-26-21-0731639). Out of 36 invited teachers, 16 consented to participate in the study, two of which were dual grade teachers. I invited early childhood teachers to participate in a 30–45-minute semistructured, one on one phone interviews that would be audio-recorded and scheduled at their convenience outside of working hours. Data for this study were collected through semistructured phone interviews with the 16 volunteers. Phone interviews were followed by my sending

participants member checking emails. All interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and summarized by me. Summaries of the interviews were used for member checking. Transcriptions and recordings were used as data for the study. Digital recordings of all interviews were stored on my personal password-protected computer and later were moved to an external hard drive, which is kept in a locked cabinet in my office, where it will be kept for 5 years. After 5 years, I will permanently delete all recordings and copies of transcripts according to Walden University's protocol. Data are secure in my home office. Only I have access to password-protected electronic files, external hard drives, and file cabinets where paper copies are kept.

Interview Process

The interviews were conducted between March 27 and April 3, 2021. Before beginning the interview process, I introduced myself, stated the intent of the study and the topic of the study, I reminded participants about their rights to stop the study at any time. I also received their verbal consent at the time of the interviews, which was the second time I asked for that information. I informed them of the number of questions and the expected length of the interview. All volunteers stated that they were comfortable speaking about their experiences. All participants shared their practices and experiences without any signs of distress. After the conclusion of the interview, I thanked each of the participants for their participation, reiterated how important their input was, and explained the process of transcription, summarization, and member checking. I reminded them that their answers and identities will be kept strictly confidential and that they will receive a summary and the link to the study after it is published. During the

summarization process, I reviewed the recordings, and my written journal notes to ensure that I was impartial and only stated the facts contributed by each participant. After completing each summary, I forwarded it to each participant for the member checking process. All 16 participants replied within 24 hours of receiving the email confirming that the summaries were accurate, and one participant wished to add a sentence to her response. I added the sentence and began the coding process.

Data Analysis

This section includes the data analysis processes, ethical considerations, criteria for trustworthiness, and validity. Data were obtained from semistructured interviews with 16 participants. All data were recorded and transcribed by me. I began transcribing each participant's digitally recorded interview as soon as each interview was completed. Digital audio recordings and transcripts were given alpha-numeric codes for organization. Following Saldaña's (2015) coding system, for the initial coding process, I created a horizontal diagram of the two concepts to construct a framework using the smart chart option of the Word application. I used the school readiness theory for the base of the diagram and added the three major themes of the social development theory: social interaction, MKO, ZPD.

As I read and reread each transcript while listening to the audio recordings, I highlighted words and phrases used by each participant. I followed this process as I collected data. While reviewing the transcripts, I created a new document containing each interview question and the answers of each one of the participants for that specific question. This document helped me compile the data I collected in an organized manner.

Because I began highlighting repeated words and phrases, this document made it easier

for me to easily identify common phrases and keywords used by participants. I added the

keywords that I heard from the teachers to the corresponding codes. I identified codes

and patterns, by creating a chart for each interview question and after reading and

rereading the transcripts and the answers of participants several times, I added commonly

used words, terms, and phrases in the charts as codes. When I finished making horizontal

charts for interview questions, I began compiling the most used codes (overlapping

codes) for each RQ (27 codes for RQ1 and 25 codes for RQ2; see Appendices D and E).

On a separate document, I began writing all categories of codes with direct quotations

from the teachers. These processes helped me identify the themes by RQ1 and RQ2 that

revealed how PK, TK, and K teachers have supported, and will continue to support their

students' formal school readiness skills development during the pandemic.

Themes from Research Question 1

In responding to RQ1, participants suggested that they supported development of

their students' school readiness skills during the COVID-19 pandemic in five different

ways, as follows:

- creating relationships between teachers and parents or families,

- building trust with students and families within a safe and secure environment,

- following emergent and prepared curriculum that is developmentally and
  linguistically appropriate, and culturally relevant,

- providing students' continuous assessments and progress monitoring based on a
  whole child paradigm,

- maintaining a cycle of reflective practice by teachers and caregivers.

Participants explained how their developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant teaching practices contributed to their students' school readiness skills during the COVID-19 pandemic. PK, TK, and K teachers elaborated on how their curriculum and pedagogy changed from what they used during prepandemic years. The changes that were elaborated upon by all groups of teachers included the three different learning environments: classroom, online, or hybrid. The themes were based on data from interviews which were consistently reported by participants in all environments. In the following paragraphs, I will elaborate on the themes.

Creating Relationships

Teachers emphasized the importance of the relationship between teachers and families in supporting children in developing their school readiness skills. All teachers stated that family engagement, partnerships, cooperation with the teacher, and following school policies are crucial for the students' successes in developing formal school readiness skills. Teachers communicated that they made every attempt to have an open communication system with the families. They mentioned that they provided the parents with multiple avenues of communication such as phone, text, email, video conferences, or face-to-face meetings with social distancing and face masks.

Building Trust

All PK, TK, and K teachers stressed the importance of building trust by forming and maintaining contact with parents to address any of their concerns. They talked about how important parents' roles are overall in children's success in school. Teachers added

that the changes imposed on schools in response to the pandemic had made the roles of

parents even more crucial in children's success in school. Most teachers mentioned that

they trained parents on how to help children be successful in school without interfering in

their learning process. PK, TTK, and K teachers expressed concerns over the importance

of creating a safe and secure environment to establish the trust of children and families

regardless of the instructional setting (online, hybrid, campus). All teachers

communicated that uncertainty inflicted by the pandemic and isolation caused anxiety

and stress in families and children, which made teachers attention to establishing trust of

great importance.

Following Curriculum

Teachers revealed that they followed an emergent and prepared curriculum that is

developmentally and linguistically appropriate, and culturally relevant. Teachers

explained the pedagogy, methods, and strategies they used to have a productive learning

environment where children were safe, happy, and productive. Teachers explained

methods that they used to help reduce anxiety in families by encouraging them to

emphasize the importance of play when children were learning at home.

Teachers communicated that their understanding of curriculum was broad and

included everything they did to promote learning for the whole child. All teachers

mentioned the importance of creating a routine that children can predict and feel

connected to the learning process. Visuals such as charts with photographs or clip art

were an important part of the prepared curriculum because children could refer to the

visual aid and more readily understand the progression of their day of learning in the

classroom, online, or hybrid. Teachers ensured that when students were online, to the degree possible with the cooperation of family members, they followed the same routines they would have followed if they had been learning in the classroom. Teachers communicated that emergent and prepared curriculum were followed for hybrid and online learners. Most teachers developed individualized kits (grab and go) based on children's interests and the schools' vision and mission that was based on teaching philosophies. All teachers regardless of the social-economic status of the community they served, provided families with several ways to contact them at any time for support in following the curriculum.

Participants stressed new and emerging practices they were following, and the array of technologies they had embraced. Teachers also mentioned some new technologies they used to teach online such as YouTube for some activities (storytelling, yoga, dance, and phonic songs), educational applications like Seesaw, and communication apps like ClassDojo. Teachers discussed the need for them to spend time learning and developing their knowledge, skills, and understanding of online instruction to help students develop school readiness skills.

Participants mentioned that they used emergent curriculums to accommodate every child's needs individually and have the flexibility to change their practices to adapt to the newly emerged online classroom. Teachers used innovative methods to help children learn, stay connected, and stay focused. They invited speakers, created small groups online, and came up with new ideas such as travel around the world. They also had to find new ways of teaching children how to hold a pencil or use scissors remotely.

During the interviews, participants talked about the challenges they faced specifically in developing children's social skills. They mentioned new and creative activates they used to develop children's social skills, such as dividing children into small groups to interact with each other online or using every student's photo and name during morning song and having each student greet their classmates.

Providing Assessments

Success and progress were measured by using existing tools such as Educational Software for Guiding Instruction (ESGI) and observations as well as new tools like usage of apps and parent reports. They all mentioned that they assessed their students using several methods. All of them used observations as an assessment tool. Most of them explained that they kept records of student's work to practice progress monitoring and keep track of students' learning in all domains. All teachers used parent feedback as a tool to measure the success of parents' engagement in the children's learning. Teachers mentioned that other than formative assessments of small groups of children to check for understanding during an activity, assessments were conducted with children individually as opposed to the prepandemic group assessments.

Maintaining Reflective Practice

All teachers emphasized the importance of reflective practice during the pandemic. Some felt they were more intentional in carefully choosing strategies that would motivate children and keep them on task, regardless of the learning environment. Teachers mentioned the practices of evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of their teaching and gauging the interest levels of their students. All teachers mentioned the

importance of exchanging ideas and collaboration with other teachers as an effective way to measure the impact of their own practices in the classroom. Teachers mentioned that they ensured that their practices covered all learning domains for their students. Teachers at several schools created checklists listing all domains and reflected on each of their practices related to each domain to make sure that they were following a whole child approach for teaching and learning.

Themes from Research Question 2

In responding to RQ2, participants reported that they fostered their students' successful transitions to formal schooling during the pandemic in the five following ways:

- preparing and planning for short term and long-term learning,
- partnering with families and other teachers,
- providing transitional guidance and support,
- creating new ways of teaching the whole child,
- creating new ways of guiding and supporting social-emotional development.

Teachers shared their practices on a typical day and how they prepared for each day. They mentioned the importance of familiarizing themselves with technology and helping students navigate it properly during classroom sessions. Teachers who were already back in school shared their daily practices and the preparation to ensure that the classroom was safe and ready for children. The five themes are elaborated upon in the following paragraphs.

Preparing for Learning

Participants credited most of their successes in supporting their students' formal school readiness skills to the fact that they planned daily and charted planning for the weeks and months ahead. Teachers with many years of experience were not able to use all the plans that they had followed in previous years. Teachers prepared for learning by providing students with the necessary material and by communicating with parents about what was needed for learning activities of each day. Teachers prepared individualized kits some called "grab and go" bags for each child at the beginning of the year. These kits provided students with the materials they would need for the classroom activities. All teachers mentioned that they would arrive early at school or begin early at home and spend an hour before classes began to organize for that day's curriculum.

Partnering

All volunteers emphasized the importance of partnering with children's families and other teachers. They all mentioned that their successes were directly related to their relationships with the families and colleagues. Some of the teachers mentioned that parents were very helpful in providing support to them in the following ways: help with technology (hardware, software, and applications), appearing as a guest to read or provide a demonstration of something interesting, or teaching a special subject related to their work. Teachers from all three grade levels mentioned the importance of teamwork with other teachers on their successes and growth as a teacher.

Providing Support

Teachers emphasized the teamwork they experienced with school leaders and their coworkers daily. Teachers revealed during their responses to the pandemic, they collaborated on learning the new technology and supported each other's growth in overcoming daily challenges by sharing best practices. Teachers kept most of their traditional teaching methods. All participants reported that they added transitional activities and new ways to accommodate, modify, or intervene for students. They explained how they kept the traditional classroom routine and ways of structuring time during the pandemic when they were online with children. This included the routine practices of morning meetings with a morning song, calendar activities, and weather chants. All teachers kept the traditional story reading, storytelling, and guided reading activities as part of their online, hybrid, or in classroom practices.

Teaching the Whole Child

Teachers emphasized that readiness for formal schooling is much more than addressing children's academic skills. For these teacher participants, they emphasized whole child learning: cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and now, technological which teachers suggested involves all the domains of learning. Participants who taught students at all three levels, from both public and private schools, highlighted their use of creativity and reflection on past teaching experiences to make changes due to the pandemic. Teachers discovered the need to accommodate all their student's learning needs in all domains. By working with families and other educators and specialists, teachers engaged in revising, adapting, or adding new methods, strategies, and practices

to address whole-child learning. Most teachers came up with new ideas on how to help students develop fine motor skills in the absence of in-person interactions and handholding when they would traditionally use a hand-over-hand method while guiding an individual child's practice of a skill. All teachers identified new ways to keep children focused and engaged while attending school from their homes and practicing social distancing while in the classroom or hybrid environments. Teachers emphasized the importance of teaching the whole child within the newly established classrooms.

Supporting Social-Emotional Development

All teachers talked about the importance of social-emotional skill development in early childhood; and emphasized the importance of children's school readiness skills development, especially during the pandemic. They all mentioned new ways to support social-emotional skill development by encouraging parents to allow their children to be part of a social group in the online environment. Teachers relied on Zoom breakout rooms for creating small groups where students could engage in social activities and collaborate during a group project. Teachers reported that parents were supportive of online playgroups as their children's social-emotional development was one area of development that concerned them. Some teachers encouraged students to stay after class was over to interact with each other online; and they reported that parents often joined these sessions.

Themes from Alignment of RQ1 and RQ2

I continued analyzing data by using my charts to synthesize data. I developed a table that presents subthemes from each of the two RQs side by side. In following this

step, I was able to synthesize the data and identify overarching themes from data (see

Table 3). From this chart, I aligned RQ1 and RQ2 to reveal the five overarching themes

of this study, as follows:

- Recognizing parents' roles in children's readiness for school

- Supporting students' roles in school readiness from a whole child paradigm

- Reflecting on teachers' roles in emergent and prepared curriculum

- Acknowledging school leaders' roles in safe, secure, and trustworthy environments

- Embracing technology's role in virtual and traditional learning modes

I reviewed and revisited the process several times to make sure I did not miss

anything. Saturation was achieved when the answers to the interview questions were

similar (see Table 3). Within Saldaña's coding system, the most important step in

achieving results is determining if data saturation was achieved. According to

Onwuegbuzie et al. (2016), data saturation occurs when the codes extracted from data

lead to information, and coding yields no more coding or new information to interpret.

In the Data Analysis section above, I elaborated on data collected from

semistructured interviews with 16 PK-K teachers from public or private early childhood

settings who were delivering instruction in the classroom on campus, fully online, or

hybrid. I presented subthemes that emerged from my analysis of codes, patterns, and

categories for RQ1 and RQ2. The overarching themes that emerged from the alignment

of data provided by participants while responding to RQ1 and RQ1 were presented (see

Table 3). The overarching themes will be elaborated on in the findings section of this

chapter.

Table 3

RQs Categories and Themes Findings Alignment

RQ1 How do PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?	RQ2 How do PK-K teachers foster their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?
Overarching theme 1: Recognizing parents' roles in children's readiness for school	
Creating Relationships (1) Building strong and positive relationships with parents and families to create a support system for students' success	**Partnering** (1) Partnering with parents for students' success by involving families in classroom activities and seeking their help with technical support
Overarching theme 2: Supporting students' roles in school readiness from a whole child paradigm	
Building Trust (2) Building trust with parents by open communication and collaboration	**Teaching the whole child** (2) Getting students ready for formal schooling by focusing on whole child learning: cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and technological
Overarching theme 3: Reflecting on teachers' roles in emergent and prepared curriculum	
Following Curriculum (3) Following developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant emergent and prepared curriculum to address each individual child's learning needs	**Preparing for learning** (3) Preplanning and providing students with individualized kits to use in class
Overarching theme 4: Acknowledging school leader's roles in safe, secure, and trustworthy environments	
Maintaining reflective practices (4) Exchanging ideas and collaborating with other teachers as an effective way to measure the impact of their practices	**Providing support** (4) Teachers and leaders supporting each other in learning the new technology, overcoming challenges, and sharing best practices
Overarching theme 5: Embracing technology's role in virtual and traditional learning modes	
Providing assessments (5) Providing existing and new online assessments, using technology to teach, assign homework, and measure students' engagement and learning	**Supporting social-emotional development** (5) Creating new ways to provide children with social and emotional activities using virtual breakout rooms and traditional learning methods

Results

In this section, I present the findings of the study. The findings of this study were derived from participants' responses to interview questions. The interviews of this study were aimed at exploring how PK-K teachers supported their students' school readiness skills development during the pandemic. The following overarching themes indicated that parents, students, teachers, leaders, and technology had roles in supporting students school readiness skills. Themes that emerged from synthesis of the two RQs of this study and appropriately addressed the problem and purpose of this study, are as follows: (1) recognizing parents' roles in children's readiness for school; (2) supporting students' roles in school readiness from a whole child paradigm; (3) reflecting on teachers' roles in emergent and prepared curriculum; (4) acknowledging school leaders' roles in safe, secure, and trustworthy environments; and (5) embracing technology's role in virtual and traditional learning modes.

Theme 1 from Synthesis of RQ1 and RQ2: Parents' Roles

Prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers revealed that they recognized parents' roles in supporting their children's development of readiness skills and fostering their children's successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers emphasized the importance of the strong relationships between teachers and families in supporting children in developing their school readiness skills. All teachers shared that family engagement, cooperation, and collaboration with their children's teachers and school staff are crucial for the students' successes in developing formal school readiness skills. Teachers communicated that they made every attempt to have an

open communication system with the families. Teachers mentioned that they supported parents by providing them with suggestions on activities that will help develop school readiness skills in their children.

In answering RQ1 (How do PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?), TK2 said, "I would say that the parents can give the kids the literacy and social experiences." She emphasized the importance of parents' reading for kids, talking to them, and just listening to what they have to say. TPK3 stated, "I think the teacher, child, and parent relationships are integral to the benefit of the child." TPK2 mentioned, "It's like a community--teamwork between parents and teachers so they can be involved in the children's learning." TPK2 emphasized the importance of parents' involvement in school board leadership and other school activities.

In answering RQ2 (How do PK-K teachers foster their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?), TK3 explained how she partnered with families to support children's learning in a fun way. She stated:

I assign homework or homework activities. I try to include at least one that's a parent or family involved. One cook dinner with your family this week. Count how many whatever you used at the table; how many settings are there. Here's a conversation starter to talk to your family as you're sitting down to dinner and all of those things kind of indirectly encourage them to have that family time together to have those conversations with their kids.

TK5 stated:

I think for them [the parents] seeing what it means to be in that teacher role has

given them a new perspective in their parent role. I think it's tuned them in a bit

more to tuning into their children's interests versus pushing them to practice

letters.

Theme 2 from Synthesis of RQ1 and RQ2: Students' Roles

All participating teachers acknowledged the importance of students' roles in

developing their own readiness skills and successfully transitioning to formal school

during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers emphasized supporting their students' roles in

readiness for school from a whole child paradigm. In response to RQ1 (How do PK-K

teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the

COVID-19 pandemic?), TK3 said:

School readiness has very little to do with academic readiness and I believe that it

has everything to do with the foundational skills of being ready to learn. That has

more to do with the understanding of following directions, the ability to sit and

listen to a story, the ability to have a conversation, to be able to ask and answer

questions, the ability to manage in a group setting with other students, and to be

able to have those social skills.

TPK2 shared, "The most important skills and developmental milestones that

children need for learning are [related to] social and emotional development -- by far

those are the most important ones." TK4 explained, "Their sense of community either on

the screen or in-person is important. [Children's sense of community is full of readiness

skills] because if the child is not feeling comfortable to learn you can't teach them anything." TTK4 believed that school readiness is, as follows:

> …more than just knowing the academics; it's more about [answering some basic questions:] Are they able to sit for a sustained period of time? Are they able to listen and follow directions? Are they able to raise their hands to share? I tell parents it's more of the social skills, not just the academics.

Theme 3 from Synthesis of RQ1 and RQ2: Teachers' Roles

Prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers recognized the importance of their own roles in supporting their students' development of readiness skills and fostering their successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. They recognized their need to work as a community to support each other and parents of their students. All participants used emergent or prepared curriculum to meet every child's need in an unfamiliar environment of learning. Both private and public-school teachers from all socio-economic communities mentioned that the best way for them to ensure their students' success was to use a curriculum that focused on every need of each child. Most of them spent one on one time with their students daily. TK5 elaborated on how she measures her own practices and their effectiveness. She candidly stated, **"**You created this what you think is amazing lesson and they're all sitting and staring and totally checked out, it's time for a quick pause and reflection and let's figure this out and change it.**"**

In answering RQ2 (How do PK-K teachers foster their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?), TTK2 shared that she "tried to

recreate what would be happening in the school online." TTK5 stated that "We kind of look at the whole child in a more guided way," explaining that they built the curriculum that meets children's every need. The curriculum is designed to support every developmental domain. TTK1 explained how she helped her students develop their fine motor skills. She stated, "I provided them with a lot of tools and their [own] at-home kit so that they are able to participate in fine motor skills and we've done all the things that help develop their fine motor." TPK3 elaborated on the story time with her students. She said:

> We have journal time. Sometimes we have storytelling which is when we take their journals, we pick a journal, and we ask them to pick a story or a picture that they've drawn in their journal, and we recreate it live through story acting.
> TPK3 explained:
> The children and the teachers are all learning this. The children can learn as much from the teachers as the teachers can learn from the children, so while we are the more experienced ones so are the children. So, there's a whole bunch of learning and scaffolding happening at the children's level themselves and teachers are just facilitating.

Theme 4 from Synthesis of RQ1 and RQ2: School Leaders' Roles

Some teachers agreed that they valued school leaders' roles in supporting their students' development of readiness skills and fostering their successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers mentioned that both parents' and students' level of anxiety had been very high due to the uncertainty of life, possible

sickness in the family, possible deaths in the family, and financial instability. Moreover, since virtual learning in the manner it was presented was new to most families and there was not enough information on the success rate of this method, parents were worried and skeptical. All participants found building trust and creating a safe and secure environment for families and children was one of their most important responsibilities during the pandemic and relied on those in leadership and decision-making positions to take the lead. Teachers communicated that school leaders had a critical role in preparing teachers and school staff for new and sudden changes that occurred due to the pandemic. Participants had to go through special trainings to learn how to navigate the virtual classrooms. The ones who were teaching on campus had to make several changes to the structure of the classroom and their teaching models to comply with the health department's guidelines. School leaders communicated all the requirements set forth by the federal, state, and local government to teachers and families. Several teachers mentioned working as a team with the school leaders and other teachers to overcome daily challenges and share best practices. School leaders' and teachers' priorities were to ensure students and their families felt a sense of safety, security, and trust.

In answering RQ1 (How do PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?), TTK6 explained how her district and school leaders assigned her to support other teachers. She said:

I'm very comfortable with technology. I am very comfortable with computers. We have a lot of new technology this year that our district has been able to purchase

and so I've been able to act in that support role for a lot of the teachers to be able

to go in and help them [learn how to use the computers].

TTK8 stated "It's my team that we really work together we built-in social stories

and we built in a lot of time for them (the students)" to interact and have a social

experience virtually. TK2 explained that they work as a team at her school to exchange

ideas and support each other. TK2 said. "We, as a kindergarten team, really like to see

what we look for" in creating a safe, secure, and healthy learning environment for

students. TTK1 shared her experience with her leadership team and colleagues. TTK1

said:

We have three kindergarten teachers in my school and me, the TK teacher. We

have one young teacher in our team, and she knows how to do technology stuff

and we all worked like 10 hours a day on spring break. I'm not exaggerating we

work like 10 hours a day and she taught us how to do everything [for the online

classroom].

TK5 elaborated on her leadership team's guidance on keeping children safe

stating:

It's something I always strive for anyway and my team has really pushed to keep

kindergarten as much kindergarten as we can while still meeting the requirements

that are put upon us by the district and by the state and everything else, but I think

it was a good reminder to just slow down a little bit and breathe and let them be

children.

Theme 5 from Synthesis of RQ1 and RQ2: Technology's Role

All participants unanimously stated that they acknowledged technology's role in supporting their students' development of readiness skills and fostering their successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. All teachers mentioned that they embraced technology's role in addressing virtual and traditional learning modes. They mentioned using several apps and websites in teaching and assessing. All of them mentioned the usage of YouTube. Some teachers used ClassDojo for assignments and communication with parents.

In answering RQ1 (How do PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?), TK5 stated that her classroom "spent the first week of school if not even a little bit longer just practicing mute and unmute skills that I never ever imagined kindergarteners would need or be able to do." Later she added "The kids troubleshoot technology when something's not working, they say "I'm going to sign out and back in" so they've really I think this year they mature even more than I would ever expect a kindergartner." TPK2 elaborated on how she used technology to assess her students' improvements. She said when a student completes their assignment the parent "sends it to me through ClassDojo and that way I'm able to see how they are developing as far as academically or physically."

In answering RQ2 (How do PK-K teachers foster their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?), TTK1 shared how she used technology to invite experts from across the country to join the classroom to make the lessons more interactive and interesting for her students. She told me: "We had a brain

scientist and neurology professors from neurosciences, and they Skyped with us and we worked on a brain with a mix of mindfulness, and you know the power of growth mindset and how your brain works and how you know things you know." TTK5 explained:

I planned out the weeks ahead of time I let the parents know if we were going to do a science experiment that required certain supplies that they wanted to do it at home too, so I was prepared in that way because I wanted the kids to be able to participate in it not just watch me.

TTK9 elaborated:

Sending hands-on materials has been key with my kids. They have a kit at home that I put together, that's in a plastic shoebox. It's connecting cubes and play-doh and they've got binders with whiteboard activity things in them and frames that I laminated their names so they can practice tracing their names with dry-erase markers.

The five themes of the study emerged from synthesis of findings from RQ1 and RQ2. Themes are aligned with the conceptual framework (see Appendix).

Discrepant Data

Responses made by participants that do not support major themes are known as discrepant data. There were no discrepant responses by participants. Each of the 16 participants were eager to participate and share how they supported PK-K students' development of school readiness skills during the pandemic. Regardless of their settings, or socio-economic status of the students' families, teachers shared practices which were culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate. Although teachers who

participated in this study had diverse classroom types, teaching methods, experiences, and types of school or programs that they taught in, I identified no discrepancies in data collected from their interviews for this study.

Summary of Key Findings

Themes were identified based on each question. The themes that emerged from RQ1 (How do PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?) were building a relationship with the families and parents, building trust, and creating a safe and secure environment for the students and families, using emergent/ prepared curriculum, continued progress assessment of students, and teachers' practices. Themes that emerged from RQ2 (How do PK-K teachers foster their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?) were preparing for the day, partnering with families and other teachers, providing traditional guidance and support, creating new ways of teaching, guidance, and support. The results aligned with both RQs and the framework of the study (see Appendix).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this basic qualitative study was accomplished by the usage of a specific protocol. The processes of recruiting teacher volunteers, invitation, collection of consent, interviewing the participants, data collection, transcription, member checking, data management, coding, and data analysis were conducted by following the protocol. The main factors of trustworthiness, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are included in this section. The goal of the study and

its intention was clearly stated in the invitation and consent form, as well as

verbally explained at the beginning of each interview to ensure trustworthiness,

credibility, and conformability.

Credibility

I used a previously written script for the interviews. To ensure credibility I read

the script and the interview questions avoiding bias. One of the qualifying factors for

participants was to be fluent in English. To ensure credibility after asking each question I

asked if the question was clear to the participant. I digitally recorded the interviews and

listened to each interview a few times, taking notes. I transcribed all interviews

immediately after finishing them and summarized them for member checking. Responses

of participants were received via email and acted upon after the checking process was

completed.

Dependability

To ensure dependability of the study was achieved, I summarized the interviews

and reviewed them several times. I sent summaries to participants via email for member

checking and requested for them to reply by any additions, revisions or by simply stating

"it's accurate." I included a deadline of one week for each participant to respond. All

participants responded within 48 hours of receiving the summaries. I kept a copy of the

alphanumerically coded date. Data included digital recordings of the interviews,

transcripts, journal notes, summaries, commonly used phrases, and charts created for

each interview question.

Transferability

Transferability can only be achieved by the degree that the results of the study range through context (Burkholder et al., 2016). The sample size of this study was limited to 16 teachers. Data collected and analyzed represents the 16 teachers' practices within one large metropolitan school system in the southwestern United States.

Confirmability

The confirmability and objectivity of the study were established based on the interviews, the research questions, study data, and the findings. Research data were extracted from the responses received from 16 PK-K teachers with diverse experiences, from different types of schools, and teaching within diverse socioeconomic communities. Keeping alphanumeric records of the recordings, transcripts, summaries, and data contributed to credibility. All findings were in alignment with the research questions and the framework.

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Summary

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The purpose of this basic qualitative study with interviews was to explore how PK-K teachers support the development of their students' school readiness skills to foster their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter 4 covered the research setting, interview protocol and process, data collection and recording, data management and analysis, as well as the findings and results. The interview process, data collection, coding process, and analysis helped me have a more in dept understanding of the practices that PK-K teachers use to support and foster development of school readiness skills of their students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The process of this study which included interviews with 16 PK-K teachers was detailed in this chapter. All 16 teachers were interviewed individually over the phone. The interviews were digitally recorded. The recordings were reviewed a few times and transcribed. Transcripts and recordings were used to summarize the information. All participants were sent a summary of their interviews via email and asked to confirm the accuracy by responding to the emails. After all summaries were confirmed by the participants the coding process was conducted and several codes, patterns, and categories were recognized.

In Chapter 5, findings of the study, its limitations, researcher's recommendations, implications for positive social change, and conclusion of this study will be discussed. The five overarching themes that emerged from a synthesis of RQ1 and RQ2 were: (1) recognizing parents' roles in children's readiness for school; (2) supporting students' roles in school readiness from a whole child paradigm; (3) reflecting on teachers' roles in emergent and prepared curriculum; (4) acknowledging school leaders' roles in safe, secure, and trustworthy environments; and (5) embracing technology's role in virtual and traditional learning modes. In Chapter 5, I discuss my interpretations of the findings of this study, present limitations of this study, and recommendations for further study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study with interviews was to explore how PK-K teachers support the development of their students' school readiness skills to foster their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The nature of this basic qualitative study was to explore how PK-K teachers support their students' development of school readiness skills to help them successfully transition into formal school during the COVID-19 pandemic using a basic qualitative methodology with interviews. This study was conducted to better understand the practices and tools that PK, TK, and K teachers used during the COVID-19 pandemic to support the development of their students' school readiness skills. I sought to uncover the specific challenges faced and creative methods used by PK, TK, and K teachers in developing student's school readiness skills while teaching virtually or on-campus with restrictions. I attempted to answer two RQs in the study:

RQ1: How do PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ2: How do PK-K teachers foster their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?

The data collection process began with semistructured, one on one, audio-recorded phone interviews. I interviewed 16 early education teachers with diverse backgrounds and from public and private schools from a metropolitan school system in the Southwestern United States. Interviews consisted of 12 open-ended questions about how PK-K teachers support the development of their students' school readiness skills to

foster their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. A basic qualitative methodology was determined to be the most suitable paradigm in supporting my role as the researcher.

Data collected from interviewing the 16 PK, TK, and K teachers was the basis for the findings of this study. The foundation of this study was based on the framework built on social development theory and school readiness theory. A literature review of relevant topics revealed that there is a need to explore and understand PK-K teachers' practices and challenges to support their students develop school readiness skills during the COVID-19 pandemic. While analyzing data, I found that teachers mentioned frequently how they used emergent or diverse curriculum to meet the needs of each individual student. They created new ways of social interactions for students to help them with social-emotional development. Participants stressed the importance of family involvement in children's success. Participants expressed how they had to learn more about technology and how important technology's role had been in preparing children for formal schooling. Teachers especially stressed on how important their collaboration and shared leadership with other colleagues had been during the pandemic. Although participants were informed that the interview should last between 30-45 minutes, each participating teacher was very enthusiastic and eager to share her experiences and knowledge, which resulted in most interviews lasting over an hour at the participants request.

Interpretation of the Findings

This section reveals on the key findings of the study in relation to Chapter 2 literature and conceptual framework. Findings from this research study confirm and extend knowledge about how PK-K teachers support the development of their students' school readiness skills to foster their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Collected data revealed the following five overarching themes:

1. Recognizing parents' roles in children's readiness for school

2. Supporting students' roles in school readiness from a whole child paradigm

3. Reflecting on teachers' roles in emergent and prepared curriculum

4. Acknowledging school leaders' roles in safe, secure, and trustworthy environments

5. Embracing technology's role in virtual and traditional learning modes

These overarching themes helped me answer the two RQs. I was able to frame recommendations for future research based on the findings and review of existing literature which is shared in a later section of this chapter.

Recognizing Parents' Roles in Children's Readiness for School

PK and K teachers revealed that they recognized parents' roles in supporting their children's development of readiness skills and fostering their children's successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants of the study emphasized the importance of parents' involvement, open communication, and presence in the development of student's school readiness skills and future academic success. Although participating teachers taught different classrooms, in different schools, within

different communities, and had diverse backgrounds and experiences, they all agreed that the most important component for a student's school readiness development is the collaboration and involvement of the parents. Bronfenbrenner (1989) explained that the microsystem is the most influential organism for the child's development, which usually consists of the family members and mainly parents. The research done by Choe et al. (2021) revealed that EF, which is directly related to student's successful transitioning to formal schooling, is positively affected by parents' involvement and home environment. One of the most effective ways to involve families in children's learning experiences was to get parents to participate as experts in classroom activities. Puccini (2018) uncovered that teachers' individual communication with parents and their innovative practices had a profound effect on children's academic success and their transition from PK to K. TPK2 and TPK3 stated that children's success in developing school readiness skills and academic success is a community effort between the parents and the teachers. Cook and Coley (2017) found that parental involvement is an essential component of school readiness skills development in young children. TK2 and TK3 stated that parents' role is essential in giving children the social experience and being a part of their literacy. Researchers' findings revealed that parental guidance improved transition practices that support children's academic success (Cook & Coley, 2017).

Supporting Students' Roles in School Readiness from a Whole Child Paradigm

All participating teachers acknowledged the importance of students' roles in development of readiness skills and successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers stressed the importance of the health

and safety of students, especially during the uncertain and stressful period of the

pandemic. Teachers mentioned that most children were anxious because of fear of

the unknown. Some families experienced sickness or loss of family members

which was difficult for children to cope with due to their age and development.

Researchers suggested students' developmental domains should be supported by positive

school environments that actively reduce stress and anxiety to optimize learning

(Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). Teachers mentioned that it was their most

important duty during the pandemic to create a safe, secure, healthy, and fun learning

environment for children by addressing every need of each child as a whole. Children

learn best when feeling safe and supported. Providing children with physically and

emotionally safe environments where there are opportunities of development of secure

attachments with caregivers, promotes health and wellbeing (Darling-Hammond & Cook-

Harvey, 2018; Soskil, 2021). Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2018) suggested

requirements to attend to the needs of the whole child include healthy nutrition,

appropriate physical activities, and a positive learning environment. Policymakers are

encouraged to create a unified and organized vision for educational establishments to

meet the needs of children as a whole and to develop and maintain safe and healthy

environments (Temkin et al., 2020). TPK2, TK4, and TK3 emphasized that school

readiness has very little to do with academic skills and more to do with fundamental

skills such as social-emotional skills, sense of community, and the ability to communicate

within a group. "The health and wellbeing of the learner, including the physical, social,

and emotional safety, is a requirement for learning" (Soskil, 2021; p. 99). TTK4

expressed that school readiness is more to do with student's ability to feel safe and secure, sit and focus on one task for a sustained period, listening and following directions, taking turns, and being patient. Cantor et al. (2021) posited that whole child development is an inclusive approach to children which values physical development, emotional conditions, and social skills such as relationships which impact children's learning directly. Vygotsky's theory links roles fulfilled by the teacher and the student. A balanced level of scaffolding is particularly important for formal schooling.

Reflecting on Teachers' Roles in Emergent and Prepared Curriculum

PK and K teachers recognized the importance of their own role in supporting their students' development of readiness skills and fostering their successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers stressed the importance of delivering an emergent and prepared curriculum to create safety and trust within the uncertainty of the pandemic. Teachers mentioned that it was more important during the pandemic to use an emergent and prepared curriculum than any other time. Participants shared that they tried to create the traditional classroom environment in their virtual classrooms. All teachers provided children with the stationery and material that they needed for learning called "grab and go". Holod (2020) suggested teachers should provide caregivers with tools and materials via mail or school picked up to be used at home to assist children with their academic education. Recommended resources included activity cards, markers, stickers, and other physical tools

(Holod, 2020). The participants stated that they planed each week ahead of time and informed the parents so that they can prepare the necessary material provided to them for each day. Teachers mentioned the importance of their relationship with students in students' learning and school readiness. Teacher-child relationships with low conflict help improve children's engagement and impact their expressive vocabulary development (Rojas & Abenavoli, 2021). Corbin et al. (2020) found that teachers who created a warm and supportive environment for their students had a higher success rate in maximizing children's learning and readiness skills. TK5 and TTK5 shared that they use a whole child philosophy and evaluated their own practices to make sure students understand their teachings. TTK1 and TPK3 explained how they tried to recreate the on-campus classroom online, by providing their students with a material kit to use in classroom. In social development theory, a child's social environment and the MKO become determining factors in a student's level of social development (Vygotsky et al., 1978) which impacts the child's readiness for formal schooling. Hedges (2020) found that long time effects of fostering children's interests during their early childhood years resulted in inspiration, success, joy, fulfilment, and resilience for the rest of their lives. Welsh et al. (2016) found that it was important for K teachers to be attentive to children's diverse behavioral patterns, which may be exhibited by children who lack positive early education experiences and have challenges adjusting to school at the beginning of K.

Acknowledging School Leaders' Roles in Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Environments

Volunteering teachers agreed that they valued school leaders' roles in supporting their students' development of readiness skills and fostering their successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both children and families needed to feel safe and secure and trust the teachers. Creating trust and safety for children was essential for their school readiness skills development. School leaders who created a sense of community within their establishment and empowered teachers to take a leadership role were more successful in facing the unforeseen challenges and sudden changes caused by COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. Distant learning made it difficult for the principals to manage all requirements and keep everyone safe and secure if they were not utilizing their team to share some of the responsibilities. Principals who entrust teachers with shared decision making through open and honest communication, support teachers' development and built a community of teachers are effective in establishing and maintaining a successful school (Graham, 2018). TTK6 and TTK1 shared that one of the teachers who had more knowledge of technology took the lead in teaching the other teachers on how to teach online and navigate the system. Shared leadership promotes a sense of community, responsibility, and trust among teachers as well as collaboration, shared purpose, and shared ownership (Daniëls et al., 2019). TTK8, TK2, and TK5 mentioned that they all work as a team in their schools to help each other overcome challenges, exchange ideas, and keep students engaged and safe.

Fernandez and Shaw (2020) research showed that educational establishments that practiced shared leadership responded to the unexpected changes set forth by the COVID-19 pandemic faster and more efficiently.

Embracing Technology's Role in Virtual and Traditional Learning Modes

All participants unanimously stated that they acknowledged technology's role in supporting their students' development of readiness skills and fostering their successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants shared that at the beginning of the pandemic they had to learn how to use the technology, and some had to teach their very young students how to navigate their virtual classroom. Teachers mentioned that they tried to bring traditional classrooms feel and activities into their virtual classrooms. They used technology to communicate with parents, assess students' learning, evaluate their own practices, and create a community of students and families. Lapada et al. (2020) found that teachers' years of experience in teaching online demonstrated a direct relationship to their successes in supporting students with school readiness through online and distance learning during the pandemic. Under the best of circumstances, online learning presented both challenges and opportunities for skill development in cognitive, social-emotional, and physical domains of learning for young children (Cross, 2020; Gallagher & Cottingham, 2020; Holod, 2020). TTK1 Stated that she used technology to invite experts to talk in the classroom. TPK2 Said she used the technology to assess children's improvement and her own practice's effectiveness. Holod suggested that teachers should provide caregivers with tools and materials via mail or picked up in a school location to use at home to assist children with their academic

education. TTK5 and TTK9 explained that they provided their students with a supply kit called "grab and go" to be used in their distant learning classrooms. Participants mentioned that they will keep using technology in the future for teaching, assessing, and communicating with parents. Within the social development theory, the MKO typically is considered to be a teacher, a parent, older sibling, or a peer who knows more than the child. Today, technology can be considered a MKO as well.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted with 16 participants, who were PK-K teachers from a metropolitan area where various early childhood programs and school were located in the southwestern United States. Although participants had diverse backgrounds, experiences, and were teaching in public and private schools with several different teaching philosophies, this study was limited to one geographic area. The only participants of the study were volunteers who qualified to be part of the study. Participants were required to have a minimum of two years of experience in early childhood education and be teaching an early childhood classroom at the time of the interviews, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After receiving the approval to conduct the study from IRB, I sent the invitation/consent form to 36 teachers through individual emails that I obtained from the school system's websites and through search engines. I received 18 responses back within 24 hours out of which 16 confirmed that they would

participate in the study. The interviews were set up immediately and all 16 interviews were completed within 10 days.

As an early childhood educator in private practice, my opinion might have presented a bias. To avoid any opinion bias, I reviewed the recordings and transcripts of the interviews that I conducted carefully over the phone several times. To ensure accuracy I summarized all interviews within a couple of days and sent them to the participants via email for member checking.

Recommendations

This study was conducted to explore how PK-K teachers developed their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of this study are based on the information collected from three PK teachers, seven TK teachers, four K teachers, and two double classrooms (TK and K) teachers. This study was conducted in a metropolitan area with several school systems located in the southwestern United States. Participants of the study were teachers from private and public schools with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Some of the teachers were teaching an online classroom and others were teaching on campus complying with social distancing guidelines. These participants were current with their trainings. COVID-19 pandemic presented the world with an unexpected sudden change in education which will have long-lasting effects, therefore I recommend that similar studies be conducted around the world. I also recommend further studies to be done in comparing distant learning and on-campus learning with social distancing restrictions, since this study did not compare the two. An additional recommendation

would be to further compare the public school and private school practices and teacher experiences during the pandemic. Further research on the benefits of shared leadership in promoting PK-K students' readiness skill development and fostering successful transitions to formal schooling is also needed. Although the participants of this study were from the diverse socio-economic backgrounds, the study did not compare the experiences of teachers from different socio-economic communities. Therefore, I recommend that a comparison study be conducted on PK-K teachers' experiences in addressing their student's school readiness skills development during the pandemic within different socio-economic communities.

This study focused on PK-K teachers, I would recommend that a similar study be conducted with family members and school leaders. Further studies are needed to explore PK-K teachers' experience with assessments and the effectiveness of the assessment in developing students' school readiness skills.

Implications

This study addressed a gap in practice about how PK-K teachers support the development of their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transition to formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings from this research can potentially contribute to positive social change in school readiness skills development especially within distant-learning classrooms. The information presented in this study may potentially impact the policy makers' and school leaders' views on the skills required for school readiness and practices that can affect these skills positively. Findings may potentially impact the usage

of technology in classrooms to develop students' school readiness skills to support their successful transition to formal schooling. Findings of the positive effects of shared leadership may also promote practices of shared leadership in schools.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore how PK-K teachers develop their students' school readiness skills to support their successful transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Synthesis of data revealed PK-K teachers supported students' readiness skill development and fostered students' successful transitions to formal schooling during the pandemic when teachers shared leadership and enacted the following practices: (a) recognized parents' roles in children's readiness for school; (b) supported students' roles in school readiness from a whole child paradigm; (c) reflected on teachers' roles in emergent and prepared curriculum; (d) acknowledged school leaders' roles in safe, secure, and trustworthy environments; and (e) embraced technology's role in virtual and traditional learning modes. My analysis and interpretation of data suggest that early childhood teachers believed that having strong relationships with the parents, building a sense of community with families, and creating a safe and trustworthy environment are pivotal to students' school readiness skills development and academic successes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers also believed that families, students, teachers, school leaders, and technology were essential MKOs for students' school readiness skills development during the COVID-19 pandemic and, therefore, made an effort to share leadership. Parents' involvement in students' whole child learning and teacher-student relationships improve students' school readiness skills.

Teachers' roles in shared leadership opportunities of the school created a successful

sudden shift from traditional classrooms to virtual classrooms for teaching and learning.

Teachers credited their successes to collaboration with other school staff and families.

Students' school readiness skills development during the COVID-19 pandemic which

required a community effort that emphasized the contributing roles of parents, students,

teachers, leaders, and technology.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol/Questions to PK-K Teachers/Script

Date:
Address:
Dear PK/K Teacher:

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to participate in this research study. My

name is Eileen Manoukian. I am enrolled at Walden University in the Richard W. Riley

College of Education to pursue a Doctoral Degree (EdD) in Early Childhood Education.

As a requirement of degree completion, I will be conducting a basic qualitative study

with interviews to help me arrive at a project that will help me to explore how PK-K

teachers develop their students' school readiness skills to support their successful

transitions into formal schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The working title of

my dissertation is "How Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Teachers Support Students'

School Readiness Skill Development During the Pandemic".

I would like to know your perspectives about this topic through your responses of

12 open-ended questions about your practices to help students develop school readiness

skills. The interview will not take longer than 30 minutes, and it will take place over the

phone. The interview questions are the following:

1. In your own words, please define the term *school readiness.*

2. Please share your perspectives on the children's developmental domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and formal school readiness skills.

3. In your opinion, which are the most important skills and/or developmental milestones that children need for learning?

4. Please give typical examples of ways you have supported your students' formal school readiness during COVID-19 Pandemic.

5. How have you involved families/ parents in their children's readiness skill development?

6. What tools do you use to measure students' formal school readiness?

7. What tools help you measure the impact of your practices on students' formal school readiness?

8. Please describe a typical day in your work with PK or K students or on behalf of your students during the pandemic.

9. Please describe your role and the roles of others as the more knowledgeable other during the pandemic.

10. What is the role of parents in developing children's readiness as the MKO?

11. Please identify and discuss transition practices that have emerged as a result of your response to the pandemic?

12. In what ways has the pandemic changed how you use formal school readiness measurement tools?

Your answers and your identity will be kept strictly confidential. I will need your permission to record your responses with a digital tape recorder. I will transcribe your responses and you will have an opportunity to review the responses and confirm or contest the accuracy of the transcript summary. This process is completely voluntary and withdrawing from the process will not have any impact at the school. Please contact me if you have any questions or need more information about the study.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eileen Manoukian

Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B: The Research Questions and the Qualitative Interview Questions

Two RQs Aligned with Qualitative Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
RQ1: How do PK-K teachers support development of school readiness skills in their students during the COVID-19 pandemic?	1. In your own words, please define the terms *school readiness.* 2. Please share your perspectives on the children's developmental domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and formal school readiness skills. 3. In your opinion, which are the most important skills and/or developmental milestones that children need for learning? 4. Please give typical examples of ways you have supported your students' formal school readiness during COVID-19 Pandemic. 5. How have you involved families/ parents in their children's readiness skill development? 6. What tools do you use to measure students' formal school readiness? 7. What tools help you measure the impact of your practices on students' formal school readiness?
RQ2: How do PK-K teachers support their students' successful transition to formal schooling during the pandemic?	8. Please describe a typical day in your work with PK or K students or on behalf of your students during the pandemic. 9. Please describe your role and the roles of others as the more knowledgeable other during the pandemic. 10. What is the role of parents in developing children's readiness as the MKO?) 11. Please identify and discuss transition practices that have emerged as a result of your response to the pandemic? 12. In what ways has the pandemic changed how you use formal school readiness measurement tools?

Appendix C: Alignment of Conceptual Framework and Themes

Child School Readiness During COVID 19 Pandemic

- **Microsystem**
  - MKO → Caregiver & siblings teachers
    - Parents' Role
    - Teachers' Role
    - Students' Role
  - ZPD
    - Developmental domains
      - Physical
      - Emotional
      - Social
      - Cognitve
    - School readiness skills
      - Communicative language
      - Able to seperate from parents
      - Sit for an extended time
      - Focus on a task
      - Take turns
      - Follow directins
      - Share with others
  - Social Systems → Classmates, family members, technology

- **Mesosystem**
  - MKO → Guest speakers
    - Experts
    - Parents
    - Other teachers
  - ZPD → Readiness skills
    - Able to sit and focus
    - Language and communication
    - Literacy
    - Fine and gross mtor skills
  - Social Systems
    - Family of classmates
    - School leaders → School Leaders' Role

- **Exosystem**
  - MKO → Media, technology → Technology's Role
  - ZPD → Self advocacy, salf care
  - Social Systems → Extended family, community

- **Macrosystem**
  - MKO → Community leaders, religious leaders
  - ZPD → Cultural and religious literacy
  - Social Systems → Cultural and religious rituals

Appendix D: The Research Questions 1 Codes, Patterns, Categories

Appendix E: The Research Questions 2 Codes, Patterns, Categories

Preparation, partnership and providing guidance and support

Preparation
- Consulted with colleages
- Get material ready for class
- Pirovided children with a kit
- Partner with parents and families
- Helped children and families feel safe, secure and built trust

Teach online or hybrid providing traditional support and guidance and creating new methods of guidance/support and teaching

Greeting and fun social activity
- Small group activity
- Morning song
- Calendar
- Talk about national days
- Student's share their news

Academics
- Purposful story reading (by teacher or youtube)
- Letter and number recognition
- Writing
- Math

Fine motor activities
- Writing
- Cutting and pasting

Arts
- Crafts
- Music

Physcal activities
- Dance and movements
- Yoga
- PE

Special activities
- Science project
- Travel around the world
- Bring your pet to class
- Expert speaker

Use technnology for teching/ assessing progress and communicating
- Digital story telling
- Youtube
- Homework/assess apps
- Used apps, email and text to communicate
- Conducted video parent conferences