



MONASH University

Exploring the understanding and practice of school readiness and transition to school in the Yogyakarta Province in Indonesia

Wahyu Nurhayati

Bachelor of Psychology,
Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia

Master of Applied Health Psychology
University of Indonesia, Indonesia

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Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia

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Declaration

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the most important person in my life: my mother.

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Abstract

This study focuses on the understandings and practices of school readiness and transition to school in Indonesian. The thesis contributes to a vibrant conversation in the education of children about the challenging nature of school readiness and transition to school in the Indonesian cultural context. It explores the perceptions and practices that are currently in place in kindergartens and elementary schools to support children's readiness and transitions. First, the study explored the perspectives of teachers, parents, and local policy makers in terms of how they conceptualised school readiness and transition and the kinds of support they provided for children. Second, the study investigated Kindergarten children's experiences towards going to school and the experiences of first graders in elementary school regarding their first day of starting school. An explanatory mixed-method consisting of two phases was applied to generate data. In the first phase, a survey was conducted to determine teachers' perspectives on the dimensions and characteristics of school readiness and transition to school.

In the second phase, interviews were conducted to explore children's, parents', teachers' and government personnel's opinions. Children's interviews were accompanied with drawing activities to demonstrate their experiences. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological concepts of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem were used to frame the study and to discuss the contributions to knowledge for supporting school readiness and transition to school. The findings indicated that parents, teachers, and government personnel believed that age 7 is a reasonable standard for school readiness.

The findings further suggested that there was a strong awareness of the importance of kindergarten due to Indonesian government policy and educational initiatives on early childhood education. However, the study found there were no specific transition programs for

supporting transition to elementary schools. As a result, some children in this study reported that they experienced negative feelings on their first day of starting elementary school. Other children who were about to enter elementary school expressed anxiety about going to formal school. Children mentioned that having friends and family supports could help them adjust to school routines.

Collectively, the novels in this study articulate the complexities about the unclear and discontinuities in professional role of teachers in the early childhood and elementary school sectors, and the physically and emotionally challenging work of school readiness and transition to school practices. Based on these findings, the study proposes a transition model for use in Indonesia to develop resources and support programs to minimise children's negative feelings and experiences when they transition from kindergarten to elementary school. The findings of this study highlight a need for further improvements in school readiness and transition to school policies in Indonesia.

Chapter I.

Introduction.

The overall participation rates of children in early childhood education has increased markedly in the last two decades worldwide, as attention is drawn by researchers to the economic, social, cognitive and health benefits of early childhood education (Caspi & Blau, 2011; Heckman, 2006; McEwan, 2013; Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2000). The benefits of early childhood education are explained in terms of the contributions they make to children's readiness and transition to school (Dockett & Perry, 2013). Although school readiness and transition to school is not a new phenomenon, researchers continue to raise concerns that many children are not receiving adequate preparation and support to transition positively to school (Margetts & Kienig, 2013; Petriwskyj, Thorpe, & Tayler, 2005). To this end, many studies have investigated school readiness and transition to school to identify how best teachers, families and policy makers can work together to support children's learning and development (Dockett & Perry, 2013; Petriwskyj et al., 2005). In spite of the growing number of studies in this area, the majority of these studies have been conducted in Western-European countries. These include countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, and New Zealand, and few studies on school readiness and transition to school can be found in countries such as Africa, Asia, and Scandinavia (Britto, 2012b; Dockett & Perry, 2013; Woodhead & Moss, 2007).

This study is about school readiness and transition to school in the Indonesian context. Indonesia in recent times has embarked on policies and programs to bring early childhood education to many children across the country, however, studies examining school readiness and transition to school in the Indonesian context are limited. The purpose of this study was to

explore the perspectives and practices of school readiness and transition to school practices that reflect the Indonesian local context. The focus was to explore the understandings and practices of school readiness and transition to school in Indonesia from the perspectives of early childhood teachers, parents, children and local education policy makers.

Early childhood education practices differ in many countries in view of the different theories, policies and funding issues (Margetts & Kienig, 2013). The diversity in practice also complicates the issue of school readiness and transition to school. Readiness and transition to school are concepts informed by various traditions, values, and theories (see Chapter 2). Maturation theories, for example, believe that children's readiness and transition to school have more to do with children's biological characteristics (Damon, 1998; Lerner, 1998; Piaget, 1929). This view is opposed to current conceptualisations that link school readiness and transition to school to the dynamic relationship between child, family, peer and community factors (Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2000). From this perspective, there is the need for empirical studies to investigate the whole network surrounding the child, such as parents, teachers, and the community in which the child lives, learns and develops, rather than understanding the child's readiness only in terms of their genetic dispositions, skills, and competencies.

Research findings suggest that the nature of understanding school readiness and transition to school contributes to the practices that professionals apply in preparing children for school. Professionals who think of school readiness in terms of children's physical and mental maturation may use genetic dispositions and chronological age to determine a child's readiness for school. Some researchers have argued that school readiness and children's age should not be considered synonymous because children with the same age are often different in their developmental capabilities (Dockett, Perry, Howard, Whitton, & Cusack, 2002). This means physical maturation and genetic markers cannot exclusively provide a comprehensive view of school readiness.

School readiness and transition to school are broader than children's skills and competencies. Perspectives on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) of school readiness and transition to school demonstrate that children's readiness to school is more than just a child's abilities and skills - it is shaped by the relationships and interconnections formed between key stakeholders, such as family, school, and community. In this study, I used the concepts of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework which emphasises looking at the individual in a holistic context. According to (Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2006), the developmental and educational signs of progress of children are influenced by the interactions and transactions among persons (parents, teachers, children), settings (home, school, child care), and institutions (community, governments).

In Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, child, family, school, peer, and community factors are interconnected and interdependent with one another throughout the developmental period (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). This perspective illustrates the dynamic relationships among the child, school, family and community as the child moves into formal schooling. Starting school leads to new experiences for a child. The new environment, friends, and activities for some children are an enjoyable experience; however, it could be a negative experience for others (Chun, 2003; Di Santo & Berman, 2012; Dockett & Perry, 1999; Ebbeck, Saidon, Rajalachime, & Teo, 2013). There is currently little information and research written from children's viewpoints about their experiences when they first entered school.

Previous studies on school readiness and transition to school generally focused either on the perspectives of teachers and parents, or use quantitative measures of children's school readiness to produce numerical scores for policy making purposes (Dockett & Perry, 2009; Doucet & Tudge, 2007; Marie Hirst, Noni Jervis, Karen Visagie, Victor Sojo, & Sarah Cavanagh, 2011; Muhajarine, Puchala, & Janus, 2011; Noble et al., 2012; Raver & Knitzer, 2002). To address this limitation, there is a need for further investigation to include stakeholder

voices: parents, teachers, policy makers and children's opinions in terms of their perceptions and experiences concerning starting school. These combined perspectives can provide significant information regarding how current kindergarten programs support children's school readiness and positive transitioning to elementary school in Indonesia.

Previous research on the importance of school readiness and positive transition to school.

School readiness and transition to school constitute important components in early childhood education (Doucet & Tudge, 2007; Krakouer, 2016; Sorin & Markotsis, 2008). Researchers indicate that transition to school constitutes a critical developmental milestone that presents both exciting and challenging experiences for children, families, and teachers (Dockett & Perry, 2009; Doucet & Tudge, 2007; Snow, 2006). The transition from home to kindergarten, and from kindergarten to elementary school are processes which involve many changes, such as changes in physical settings, activities, and behaviours (Krakouer, 2016). For several children, being ready to go to school is a huge challenge because the changes during the transition to school can lead to negative experiences and feelings, which may influence their social and academic outcomes (Hirst et al., 2011; Wong, 2015). Some previous researchers found that the issues, which frequently arise from the transition to school, include how to cope with the changes and discontinuities, as well as which strategies might be effective to support children's adjustment (Dockett & Perry, 2009; Doucet & Tudge, 2007).

Therefore, during transition periods, the involvement of families and reciprocal relationship between children, peers and teachers at school are identified by research as very important in supporting children to adjust to the changes and promote positive transition to

school (Dockett & Perry, 2004b; Fabian, 2000; Krakouer, 2016; Margetts, 2008; Peters, 2010). To fully understand children's readiness and their transition to school, it is important to highlight the connection between children, families, peers, and teachers as suggested by Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006b). The relationship among the stakeholders serves as resources for familiarity and security which promote comfort and positive feelings in the new school environment (Ahtola et al., 2011; Fabian, 2000).

Readiness and positive transition to school have been recognised as critical factors of children's academic and social success in school (Ahtola et al., 2011; Dockett & Perry, 2004b; Fabian & Dunlop, 2007). Children's success in school can be promoted by establishing quality early childhood education and transition to school programs which focus on helping children and their families to become more familiar with the school environment, school activities, managing separation anxiety, and developing independent skills (Giallo, Treyvaud, Matthews, & Kienhuis, 2010). The aims of transition to school practices are to bridge the gaps between home and school by organising and encouraging reciprocal connectivity and cooperation between families and schools. Such programs have been found to assist parents in helping their children to make a successful transition to school (Woodhead & Moss, 2007). Research findings indicate that readiness and positive transition to school practices are characterised by positive relationships, and frequent communications with the intention to support children's adjustment to a new school setting (Ahtola et al., 2011; CEIEC, 2008). It is important to understand the conceptualisations of school readiness and positive transition to school from each stakeholder because different expectations for school readiness and transition to school will influence the kinds of practices that are implemented for children (Dockett & Perry, 2004b).

School readiness and transition to school have become a subject of interest and concern to researchers in various countries. Some international studies investigated young children's, parents', and teachers' opinions regarding their readiness and transition to school practices. A study conducted by Einarsdóttir (2002) explored Icelandic children's views, attitudes, and expectations pertaining to elementary school. In Australia, Dockett and Perry (2004a) interviewed kindergarten children to reflect on children's experiences of their first year at kindergarten. McIntyre, Eckert, Fiese, DiGennaro, and Wildenger (2007) distributed questionnaires to 132 parents/caregivers in the United States to investigate family experiences and involvement in kindergarten transition. Wong (2015) examined Hongkong's children, parents' and teachers' perceptions of stress factors and coping strategies during the transition to primary school. The results of these studies reflect current practices of transition to school in each country and indicate a need to investigate the views of children, parents, and teachers regarding a positive transition to school, more specifically, in the Asian context. To address these needs, my study explored the opinions and experiences of Indonesian children, teachers, parents, and government personnel pertaining to readiness and transition from kindergarten to elementary school.

Personal motivation for this research.

My interest in school readiness and positive transition to school emerged from my work as a researcher in Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. As a government staff member, I have responsibility for evaluating and collecting National data on Indonesian students and teachers, such as National Exam Competency Test (NECT) for teachers and developing instruments to assess the early childhood education provision for children and teachers. For example, since 2010, I was involved in a study on school readiness with the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia on a project to develop school readiness

instruments for 4 to 6 year-old children. The project was an attempt to validate and identify a reliable instrument for collecting data to map school readiness in Indonesia. It is through that project when it became clear to me that school readiness and a positive transition to school is more complex than I first thought, and that, a single instrument cannot effectively validate what it means to be ready for a positive transition to school. This situation sparked a new desire to pursue an advanced study in this area to find out how best Indonesia can support children to develop the characteristics and competencies needed for successful further learning in elementary school.

Given the range and variety of different practices that are occurring in early childhood education, it is becoming increasingly important for practitioners to design procedures to support teachers in their work towards enhancing children's school readiness and transition to school. In my work, I became curious as to how my contribution to the Ministry of Education and Culture can lead to performance enhancement related to children's education ensuring these are on par with the best practices worldwide. While it can be acknowledged that Indonesia is unique in terms of culture, education policy formulation and the nature of support given to teachers, parents and children, it is useful from a theoretical perspective to first consider how research can best illuminate and contribute to resolving some of the problems associated with the early education of children. My previous work has uncovered many problems which has driven my current ambition to conduct research that yields a variety of new insights to drive new policy reform and practices in early childhood education in Indonesia.

Statement of the problem.

Bronfenbrenner (1986) states that starting kindergarten, for most children, is the first and major bioecological and ecological transition in their educational life (Chun, 2003; Ebbeck

et al., 2013; Lam & Pollard, 2006). Children experience different environmental conditions of home and kindergarten. The same applies to transition to school from kindergarten to elementary school as each child has their own ways of coping with and adapting to transition to school. To adjust and adapt successfully, children need social, emotional, intellectual, and language skills (Bates, Mastrianni, Mintzer, Nicholas, & et al., 2006; Ebbeck et al., 2013; Raver & Knitzer, 2002). This dynamic and continuous process of adjustment is critical for children's future academic success.

A plethora of studies have shown a positive association between children who have attended a preschool and their improved academic and social success once these children start formal school (Ahtola et al., 2011; Al-Hassan & Lansford, 2009; Hair, Halle, Terry-Humen, Lavelle, & Calkins, 2006; Janus & Duku, 2007; Luo et al., 2012). The understandings of school readiness and what constitutes a positive transition to school may be different in various settings (Grace & Brandt, 2005; Mollborn & Dennis, 2012; Scott-Little, Kagan, & Frelow, 2006; Winter, Zurcher, Hernandez, & Yin, 2007), because of the established cultural and contextual nature of different types of schools (McTurk, Lea, Robinson, Nutton, & Carapetis, 2011; Noel, 2010; Wesley & Buysse, 2003). Previous studies have suggested that policymakers, parents, and teachers are different in their understanding regarding what children should know and be able to do before beginning elementary school (Diamond, Reagan, & Bandyk, 2000; Hatcher, Nuner, & Paulsel, 2012; Lin, Lawrence, & Gorrell, 2003). Other research findings indicated that some parents tended to view academic skills as being significantly more important than other areas of children's development in relation to their readiness to attend school (Barbarin et al., 2008; Puccioni, 2015; Smith, 2012).

Since 2003, a number of programs have been implemented all over Indonesia, to prepare children for school, for example, making kindergarten and preschool programs available to all children ages 4 to 6 years. The Ministry of Education and Culture in

collaboration with United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) and WorldBank evaluated early childhood education programs throughout the 33 provinces of Indonesia and found that teachers mainly instructed children to memorise numbers and letters in order to pass school readiness tests so as to attend better elementary schools (Hasan, Hyson, & Chang, 2013; ILO, 2012; UNESCO, 2005). A study by Fridani and Agbenyega (2014) on school readiness and transition to school in Jakarta, Indonesia, found that kindergarten children were pressured to learn subjects by rote in order to pass readiness tests for entry into specific public elementary schools which were designated as 'favourite schools'. The researchers recommended further research to investigate school readiness and transition to school issues outside of the capital Jakarta and include children's voices. Therefore, it is important to conduct an explanatory mixed method research to develop further understandings of school readiness and transition to school in order to assist families, kindergartens, elementary schools, and policy makers in recognising the characteristics and factors that support holistic and harmonised early childhood education to prepare children for school in Indonesia.

Purpose of the study.

The present study had four specific purposes:

1. To understand how teachers, parents, and local government personnel in Yogyakarta Province in Indonesia conceptualise school readiness and transition to school.
2. To determine existing practices that are currently utilised by teachers, parents, and local government to prepare children to transition to school.
3. To determine programs or policies that facilitate school readiness and transition to school practices.

4. To find out the experiences of children who are about to enter elementary school and those who are already in first grade in elementary school, and identify ways to better improve future children's experiences.

Research questions.

This study explored the following main question:

- What do Indonesian kindergarten teachers, parents and local government personnel elucidate they are doing to guide and educate children to enter elementary school with skills to be successful?

In addition to the main question above, the research investigated two additional research questions:

1. What factors of early learning experiences do early childhood teachers, parents and local policy personnel believe to be important for children's school readiness and transition to school?
2. What are the experiences and feelings of:
 - a) first grade of elementary school children in terms of their first day of starting?
 - b) children in kindergarten who are preparing to go to school?

Significance of the study.

This study contributes information that can be used in professional practice, theoretical understanding and policy development for early childhood education.

Professional practice.

Results of this study contain relevant information that can be used for developing customised training programs for reception teachers, elementary school principals, and

kindergarten teachers to enhance their understanding, development, and the implementation of relevant programs to support children's school readiness and transition to school. In addition, practitioners may draw on some of the key ideas espoused in this study to develop resources to enhance and improve children's personal and social skills. Of critical importance are the findings related to how teachers can observe children's emotions, provide ongoing support and collaborate with parents in the education of the children. The findings also point to curriculum planning and how effective assessment can be incorporated into the everyday routines of children to efficiently monitor their learning and development.

Theoretical understanding.

As Britto (2012b) suggested, school readiness requires a culturally and contextually relevant meaning and measures outside those adopted by Western-European countries. Unfortunately, there is little data available on current school readiness practices that are being implemented in Indonesia. The findings of this study extend insights into Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory and its relevance to developing a holistic perspective and practices related to children's readiness and positive transition to school.

In-depth theoretical understanding of school readiness and transition to school would ensure that teachers and policy makers are able to develop programs that respond to the unique differences and capabilities of children. Teachers and policy makers need to understand how theories employ a unique concept to articulate the specific factors that are important to enhance readiness and provide a positive experience of transition to school. As theories vary in the extent to which they have been conceptually developed and empirically tested, the current study will further validate the social determinants of readiness and transition to school by engaging in critical discussion of the many social, cultural, and economic factors that contribute to the development of children.

Policy development.

Policy makers need empirical evidence upon which they are able to develop effective policies for children. The results of this study include key recommendations for policy makers based on empirical evidence gleaned from the data collected in Indonesia for use as guiding principles for developing a positive transition to school resources and policies. This would guide academic and social practices experiences of children at kindergarten and first grade of elementary school.

Indonesian policy brief on the framework for early childhood.

The goal of ensuring that all children have access to pre-primary education is supported with many early childhood education and care policies, both locally and internationally. Indonesia has recognised the importance of making investments in early childhood education as a strategy for poverty reduction. The Dakar Forum 2015 task governments worldwide to give more attention to early childhood education and care services for children 0-6-year-olds. Within this international call for early childhood expansion and quality for 0-6-year-olds, Indonesia's strategic goal was to ensure 75% access and coverage for all children within this age group by 2015. According to (Musthafa, 2007), this policy goal is not new. Indonesia since 2000 has been developing several major policy initiatives to ensure "integration of education services program with care program for young children" (p. 28). The policy outlined several measures by which to achieve the stated objectives.

- optimise the existing care services by incorporating it into existing early childhood education programs.
- optimise the existing early childhood education programs by complementing it with care program for young children.
- develop service models for education services that are integrated with care services.

- develop pilot programs most suitable to meet local needs.

The Indonesian government outlined three key policies and strategic priorities under each of these key policies. Firstly, *there should be equal distribution and expansion of integrated care and education services for young children by way of:*

- developing and utilising various facilities/infrastructures existing in the community for various activities for early childhood care and education;
- developing and initiating various models for early childhood care and education (Day Care Centre, Play Group, Kindergarten, Integrated Care (*Posyandu*) and *Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini/PAUD* (Early Childhood Care and Education/ECCE), *Bina Keluarga Balita/BKB* (mother-child rearing program) integrated with PAUD) to meet the needs of local communities;
- developing referral centres for care and education services for young children in every province of Indonesia;
- improving public awareness on the importance of early childhood care and education through socialisation, advocacy, guidance and elucidation and through direct involvement of the community in program management in early childhood care and education activities;
- exploring various funding sources from local and central governments, the public, and business community for assurance of equal distribution and expansion of early childhood care and education services;
- providing of support and assistance to institutions, organisations which are concerned with early childhood care and education to improve accesses to services; and
- developing various institutions for early childhood care and education service (i.e., “from, by and for the community”).

Secondly, *there should be improvements in the quality and relevance of early childhood care and education services. Formulation and development of various standards for personnel, facilities, infrastructure, curriculum for early childhood care and education services by way of:*

- improving the qualifications and competency of educators, counsellors and program managers for early childhood care and education services;
- providing support and assistance to the institutions related to early childhood care and education services;
- executing programs for development, evaluating and procuring various materials for learning, guidelines, curriculum and facilities and infrastructure in line with program needs for early childhood care and education services;
- developing policy for collaboration with other relevant institutions including higher learning institutions, technical departments and other organisations to ensure smooth implementation of early childhood care and education services;
- providing technical assistance, guidance and encouragement, especially to the institutions concerned with early childhood care and education services; and
- exploring various financial sources from central and local governments, the community and private sector towards the improvement of early childhood care and education services.

Thirdly, the policy aimed at the *improvement of governance and accountability in early childhood care and education services by:*

- providing sustainable guidance, monitoring and evaluation of the institutions concerned with early childhood care and education services;

- developing collaboration and partnership networks and coordinating various institutions, organisations and related sectors by way of-- among others—establishing consortiums, forums and professional organisations for *PAUD* (ECCE) educators;
- collecting and consolidating target group and/or target programs of ECCE services;
- assuring smooth flow of communications, information and education materials on ECCE services through printed and electronic media;
- developing and disseminating various standards and procedures related to ECCE services; and upgrading and improving the management of ECCE services both at central and local levels (Musthafa, 2007, pp. 48-49).

Surprisingly, a World Bank report in 2015 (Denboba, Hasan, & Wodon, 2015) found that “when compared to other countries where the SABER-ECD module has been applied, Indonesia was performing less well in three areas: program coverage, equity, and compliance with standards” (p. xvii). The report recommended among other things for the government of Indonesia to mandate attendance in pre-primary education for children ages 3–6 years old to ensure a positive transition to school.

Context of the study.

While many elements of school readiness are potentially identical across cultural contexts, education systems are generally dependent on national and local policies and practices (Al-Hassan & Lansford, 2009). To examine the role of culture and local policy on school readiness, the present study was conducted in Sleman, a district of Yogyakarta provinces (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map of Indonesia (van Klinken, 2012).



Indonesia is an archipelago consisting of an estimated total of 17,500 islands, of which only about 6,000 are inhabited (UNESCO, 2011). Indonesia is divided into 33 provinces, and as an agricultural country, more than 70% of the population work as farmers. According to the Indonesia Demographic and Health Survey 2012, Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous country, with more than 230 million people (Statistics Indonesia, 2013). There are about 500 languages and dialects spoken in more than 300 different ethnic groups of the population. Bahasa Indonesia is the national language which is common to Malay. The Indonesian government officially recognises six religions: Islam, Roman Catholic, Christian, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. The majority of Islamic communities are found in the Western region of Indonesia such as Java and Sumatra, while in Eastern Indonesia, a large percentage of the communities are Christians.

Early childhood education in Indonesia.

This section provides a brief account of the early childhood and the school context in Indonesia. In 2003, The Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia started several programs to provide opportunities for families to enhance early childhood education (Perizade

& Suhery, 2012). The publication of the Law of National Education System, No. 20/2003 gave the impetus to early childhood education for children 0-6 years of age (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). This policy includes the provision of formal, informal, and non-formal early childhood programs that mainly focus on providing education and health care (Perizade & Suhery, 2012). The summary of the early childhood services in Indonesia is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Early childhood education in Indonesia (UNICEF, 2012).

Early Childhood Service	Objective	Target age	Administered by
Playgroup, BKB, Day-care, and PAUD	Play-based education for kindergarten preparation	2-3 years	Ministry of Social Welfare Ministry of Health Ministry of Education and Culture
Non-Islamic kindergarten and Islamic kindergarten	Pre-primary education -Kindergarten A -Kindergarten B	4-5 years 5-6 years	Ministry of Education and Culture Ministry of Religious Affair

Early childhood education in Indonesia is not compulsory. The Indonesian government set up a 10-year plan in 2005 for early childhood education to reach 21.3 million or 72.6 % of young children by 2015, however, a Ministry of Education and Culture accountability report in 2013 found that a large number of children were not attending playgroups or kindergarten prior to entering the first grade of elementary school. The report noted that only approximately, 35.5% of the 32 million children were enrolled in 2012 (PAUDNI, 2013).

The lack of access to early childhood education has been attributed partly to a lack of qualified early childhood teachers, particularly in remote regions of Indonesia to deliver quality services. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2013), the academic requirement for early childhood teachers in Indonesia is a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. However, in rural and remote areas the majority of early childhood teachers do not meet this requirement. Research into this staffing problem found that children in rural areas

were mostly taught by teachers with lower qualifications (less than a Bachelor's degree) (Purwadi & Muljoatmodjo, 2012). Whilst a small number of parents were concerned that their children were being taught by unqualified teachers, the majority 90% of the parents in the rural area surveyed argued that as long as the teachers know how to take care of the children and able to introduce alphabets to them, their lower qualification did not matter (Perizade & Suhery, 2012). The Ministry of Education and Culture has set up different training measures to address early childhood teacher qualification and quality. Some of these measures include sponsoring Indonesian policy makers as well as teachers to study overseas to obtain relevant early childhood education. In addition, universities in Indonesia are being supported to develop courses in early childhood programs to address these teacher workforce issues (PAUDNI, 2013).

Elementary education in Indonesia.

As this study considers the transition to elementary school, it is important that a brief information on elementary education be provided. In Indonesia, education is centrally managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. According to the National Education System Law No.2 enacted in 2003, the education system in Indonesia is organised into three levels: basic education, middle or secondary education, and higher education. The basic education consists of six years of Elementary School (*Sekolah Dasar/SD*) and three years of Junior High School (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama/SMP*). The middle or secondary education consists of three years of schooling at Senior High School (*Sekolah Menengah Atas/SMA*) or Senior Vocational School (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/SMK*).

Elementary school is part of 9 years of compulsory education. There are 2 kinds of elementary schools: Islamic elementary schools which are administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and Public Elementary schools which are supervised by the Ministry of

Education and Culture. As a policy requirement, children are expected to start elementary school at age 7. As kindergarten education is not available in all the villages and remote locations of Indonesia, children are not required to attend kindergarten before they obtain admission into an elementary school. Children who enter elementary school spend 6 years before proceeding to Junior High School. At the end of the elementary school (grade 6) children take the final examination to obtain a graduation certificate.

The national curriculum for elementary school is developed by the Curriculum Development Center in collaboration with the Directorate General of Basic and Secondary Education, supervised by the Ministry of Education and Culture. According to the National Education System Law (2003), the curriculum for basic and secondary education must include religious education; civic education; language; mathematics; science; social sciences; art and culture; physical education and sports; vocational skills; and local content. Since 1970's, the curriculum for elementary school has been modified six times based on the criticisms concerning curriculum overload, which determines that teachers are more concerned with completing curricular targets than encouraging children to learn through play.

Definition of terms.

For the purpose of this study, the following descriptions of terms will apply:

Elementary school refers to first grade of compulsory school (PAUDNI, 2013)

Kindergarten refers to school primarily for 4-6-year-olds prior to first grade (PAUDNI, 2013).

Feelings refer to positive and negative emotions related to the transition to school.

Government personnel refers to the official employee in the local and central office of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture.

Parent refers to mother or father of the kindergarten and elementary school child.

Teacher refers to the educator in kindergarten and elementary school.

Practice refers to a way of doing things and carrying out ideas and plans.

School readiness in this study is defined as the preparation of children for formal school experiences and learning. The definition encompasses three dimensions: children's readiness for school, schools' readiness for children, as well as families and communities' readiness for school (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Dockett & Perry, 2013)

Transition to school is defined as the movement from home and early childhood education and care settings into the early years of school (Petriwskyj et al., 2005).

Structure of the thesis.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter One provides a contextual information on education policy and the sociocultural environment in which this study was undertaken. Previous research related to kindergarten education, school readiness and transition to elementary school was used to frame the problem statement of the study. Included in this chapter, are also the researcher's personal and professional experiences, motivation and interest in researching school readiness and transition to school. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of child development was selected to guide the discussion pertaining to the contribution of each layer of environmental systems in supporting school readiness and positive transition to school. Furthermore, the chapter presents the purpose of the study and the research questions.

Chapter Two consists of two sections. The first section is a review of relevant literature to provide insights into the conceptualisation of school readiness, including various factors and practices that contribute to a child's readiness for school. The second section reviews research related to the transition to school and associated issues. This chapter also includes the Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework, which was used to guide the study as well as a lens

to interpret the interconnection between the child, parents, teachers and policy makers in promoting school readiness and transition to school.

Chapter Three describes the method of this study by presenting the rationale and descriptions of the research design. An explanatory mixed-method study was selected as design for data collection. The mixed-method design combined quantitative and qualitative methods to facilitate the collection of data from parents, teachers government personnel, and children pertaining to school readiness and transition to school. This chapter also discusses the details of the participants and settings, data collection, and the data analysis procedures.

Chapter Four presents the results of data analysis. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents the quantitative data obtained from the teacher surveys. The survey questionnaire contains information on demographic data such as gender, educational background of the teachers, work experiences, and teacher's perceptions of factors and characteristics that they believed are important for children to be ready for a positive transition to school. Descriptive analysis was used to analyse and summarise teacher's responses to the questionnaire. The second section presents the qualitative data generated from the interviews with children, parents, teachers, and government personnel. The interview data provides an in-depth understanding regarding children, parents, teachers, and government personnel's experiences, ideas, opinions, and feelings related school readiness and transition to school. The qualitative data analysis consists of categorising, coding and theming the responses of the participants using Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) framework approach.

Chapter Five provides a discussion of the findings in relation to the three research questions. The research questions are discussed in three sections: *school readiness and transition to school practices*, *school readiness and transition to school factors*, and *children experiences in transitioning to school*. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory and related literature are used to guide the discussion of the findings.

Chapter Six, which is the final chapter, summarises the findings of this study, discusses the limitations and provide some recommendation for school readiness and positive transition to school in Indonesia. In addition, it details the contribution of this study to practice, theory, and policy.

Chapter summary.

Chapter One of this thesis has provided the background of this research. It discussed the important role of early childhood education in preparing children for formal school. The chapter also briefly described some of the early childhood education policies of Indonesia to provide an analytical framework for the thesis. Included in this chapter, was also the problem statements, research questions, significance of the study and the overall organisation of the thesis. The next chapter focuses on the review of relevant literature and the theoretical framework that formed the foundation of the thesis.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

Introduction.

This chapter reviews relevant literature on school readiness and transition to school in order to build the empirical and theoretical foundation for the study. The chapter covered many topical areas including the importance of early childhood, definitions and analysis of school readiness and transition to school, the theoretical explication of the key concepts framing school readiness and transition to school, assessment practices as well as contemporary issues and factors that contribute to school readiness and transition to school.

Linking early childhood education to school readiness and positive transition to school.

When children start school, they are expected to satisfy a number of teacher requirements and interact with peers appropriately to indicate that they can adjust to the school environment. Studies have found that children who were enrolled in early childhood education programs, such as kindergarten, encountered fewer adjustment problems in their first grade of elementary school (LoCasale-Crouch, Mashburn, Downer, & Pianta, 2008; Malaspina & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008; Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005). In other words, when children have access to quality early childhood education, they learn numerous skills that support them in making a successful adjustment to a new environment such as a school.

Children are born ready to learn, thus the provision of early childhood education prior to school entry helps them to begin to learn how to learn (Malaspina & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008). Learning how to learn is an important component of education, and is particularly important for young children. Participation in early childhood programs support children's fast

developing brain as well as equip them with skills to socialise with their peers and adults (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Children draw on the skills they develop in kindergarten when they enter school and demonstrate better academic social and behavioural outcomes. In the United States, for example, community concerns regarding early childhood education have led to the development of public awareness of the importance of preparing children for school (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Many parents wish their child could go to school as early as possible, however, their understanding of preparing a child for the transition to school is still at the developing stage (Diezmann, Watters, & Fox, 2001; McTurk, Lea, Robinson, Nutton, & Carapetis, 2011; Scott-Little, Kagan, & Frelow, 2006). A study conducted by the National Centre for Early Development and Learning based on teachers' judgments on children's transition to school indicated that almost half of the children entering school experienced some difficulty with the transition to school to kindergarten and from kindergarten to school (Rimm-Kaufman, 2004).

Other research findings indicate that children who are developmentally unprepared to cope with new school routines may develop problems in their academic and socialisation skills (Duncan et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2006). Preschool experiences have beneficial effects on improving children's academic performance in school in the future when they are organised around children's specific needs. Magnuson and Waldfogel (2005) in their study found that parents and teachers believed children with preschool experience were better prepared for school than those who did not attend kindergarten. In another study in Cambodia, Nonoyama-Tarumi and Bredenberg (2009) found that children with day-care experience interacted more with their peers than children without day-care experiences. The study further revealed that children who received School Readiness Program (SRP) have longer-term achievement in the formal curriculum than children who did not participate in the School Readiness Program (SRP). Barnett et al. (2005) compared receptive vocabulary, early literacy and math skills of

five state-funded (Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and West Virginia) preschool programs. The results suggested that the state-funded preschool programs provided statistically significant and meaningful impacts on children's early language, literacy and mathematical development which supported children's overall adjustment to school. The findings further noted that the groups of students with preschool experience demonstrated significantly greater social and emotional maturity and significantly greater conformity to successful school related behaviours than the comparison group of students without preschool experience (Barnett et al., 2005).

Defining school readiness.

The ways researchers, families, policy makers and teachers understand and define school readiness differ in terms of the dimensions they consider important. Definitions of educational concepts are important because they guide the nature of practice. There are close to 50 definitions of school readiness suggested by the scholarly literature (Britto, 2012). Traditional conceptualisations of school readiness refer to skills, childhood competencies and attributes that researchers and practitioners consider important for later academic achievement (Kagan, 2003). Generally, the term "readiness" has been divided into two dimensions: readiness to learn and readiness for school (Britto, 2012; Choi, Kim, & Murdock, 2005; Diamond et al., 2000; Kagan, 2003; McTurk et al., 2011; Scott-Little et al., 2006). Readiness to learn relates to the developmental processes that establish the fundamentals for learning a particular subject or skill (Choi et al., 2005; Mollborn & Dennis, 2012; Rimm-Kaufman, 2004). It includes the child's characteristics, such as skills, knowledge, and dispositions required for success in school. Therefore, all children, at all ages, are 'ready to learn' and have been doing so since birth. The concept of readiness for school emphasises specific set of competencies children should obtain before they enter school (Choi et al., 2005;

Diamond et al., 2000). For some early childhood researchers, readiness for school is a finite construct and implies a fixed standard of physical, intellectual, and social development that enables children to meet school requirements and cope with the school curriculum, typically embracing specific cognitive and linguistic skills (Fabian & Dunlop, 2007).

Chronological age is also a traditional concept that has often been used to determine a child's readiness for school under the assumption that age indicates the presence of the competencies required for success in school (Scott-Little et al., 2006). Some studies indicated that the impact of age factor when starting school and adjustment are inconsistent with some researchers highlighting that younger children who are provided with efficient support make rapid progress in their first year of schooling (Stipek & Byler, 2001 as cited in Dockett & Perry, 2009). Other studies showed that older children at school entry may do better academically in the short term, however, there is a high tendency for them to slow down if continuous support is not provided (Lin, Freeman, & Chu, 2009). These divisive findings suggest that the complexity of school readiness and transition to school reach far beyond the school's environment.

Contemporary definitions of school readiness point to holistic approaches, suggesting that effective preparation for school emerges from the quality of interaction between children and their environment including cultural experiences that promote their developmental outcomes (Britto, 2012; Dockett & Perry, 2013). In this sense, school readiness is regarded as the complex interaction of the child and various contextual factors that influence the child's learning at home and school (Dockett & Perry, 2009). Researchers argued that by focusing on and addressing socio-cultural and teacher factors, children can be supported towards healthy social, emotional, academic and school adjustment as well as be equipped with emotional strength to manage mental health difficulties associated with readiness and transition to school (Scott-Little et al., 2006).

Historical framework of school readiness

It can be argued that theoretical frameworks or perspectives that researchers adopt in studying school readiness predispose the ways they approach the definitions of school readiness. Mehaffie and McCall (2002) and Dockett et al. (2002) pointed to four broad theories or conceptions of school readiness:

1. maturational or nativist view,
2. environmental or empiricist view,
3. social constructivist view, and
4. interactionist view.

Arnold Gesell, an American educator, medical doctor, and psychologist, first developed a maturational view of child development around the beginning of 1925. Gesell's studies in child psychology were primarily focused on the biological maturation and how it is related to the overall development of the child (Berk, 2006; Gesell & Ilg, 1949; White, Hayes, & Livesey, 2010). The main assumption within this theoretical perspective is that children's development are determined by their genetic compositions. In this way, the child is believed to swing between good and bad years in development with their biological body types sharing a connection with their personality development (Gesell & Ilg, 1949).

In addition, the maturational theory focuses on physical and mental development. Gesell argued that children's developmental patterns are determined by their hereditary traits. As the maturational theory gives no recognition to environmental effects on a child's development, any developmental problems or delays are blamed exclusively on the child (Daniels, 2001). Gesell's maturational theory is similar in many respects to the Piagetian theory of cognitive development, which perceives biological maturity as an indicator of readiness to learn certain concepts (Vogler, Crivello, & Woodhead, 2008).

In terms of children's learning and development, maturationists believed that the problem of learning capabilities or deficiencies lie within the individual child and is not the result of the child's environment and learning circumstances. Within the maturational theory of child development, an emphasis is placed on children's genetic dispositions. In this way, children are expected to exhibit certain behaviours according to a maturational timetable and the absence of this can be used to classify the child as deficient (Agbenyega, 2009). This conceptualisation can create problems for children whose learning and development are constrained by several environmental factors and teacher behaviours (Agbenyega, 2009). Biological maturity suggests that children of a certain chronological age are ready to succeed in school (Dockett & Perry, 2002; Mollborn & Dennis, 2012). Many countries that continue to conceptualise school readiness based on chronological age usually arrange school entry ages ranging from five to eight years (Friedman, Gill, & Winters, 2006). Indonesia is one of the countries which adopted a maturational view by applying children's ages as school entry requirement. The centrality of age as a criterion for readiness and transition to school could lead to a disregard for children who might be cognitively ready for school because the focus is on the outward appearance of the physical body. Teachers or parents may consider young children too fragile to go to school (Dockett & Perry, 2002). The biological perspective also has the potential to appraise children as immature to take part in age-related activities thus setting a precedent for exclusion even if the children are cognitively ready for understanding complex learning tasks (Agbenyega, 2009).

The second view, which is known as the environmental or empiricist perspective, is contrary to age-related readiness for learning. The focus of the environmental or empiricist view is on the skills and knowledge that the child needs to have in order to be considered ready for school (Dockett & Perry, 2002). This includes the ability to identify colours, shapes, and alphabets. In other words, school readiness for transition is

characterised by mastery of skills and knowledge, in which intermediate tasks cannot be mastered before earlier targets are achieved (Meisels, 1998). In this perspective, children can be taught skills even if they are not considered biologically ready. Teachers who focus on the empiricist view often use direct scripted approach to engage children in memorising academic content to make them eligible to transition to school. Usually, this form of learning comes with no meaning to children because the goal is on getting a pass in pre-determined tests.

Social constructivist perspective, on the other hand, is different from the empiricist and maturational views of child development in the sense that it considers the social and cultural contexts as important contributors to the ways children, families, and teachers construct knowledge that influence school readiness and transition to school (NSW Parenting Center, 2003). School readiness programs that adopt constructivist perspective encourage the child to learn through engaging play-based activities where the child is allowed to determine his own path of knowledge and understanding process (Fleer, 2010; Vygotsky, 1987). In the constructivist perspective, each child is different and special, and their learning process is nurtured in terms of their potential development (Barab, Dodge, Thomas, Jackson, & Tuzun, 2007; Fleer, 2015). This is based on the idea that humans have the capability and urge to construct knowledge and their own interpretation of the world in which they live.

Early childhood programs that are built on constructivists ideas do not subject young children to rigid worksheets and standardised tests to determine their readiness for school (Corden, 2001; Nystrand, 2006; Reznitskaya et al., 2001; Schunk, 2000; Weber, Maher, Powell, & Lee, 2008). Instead, the child is provided with rich learning resources and supported to follow his/her interests and create his/her own knowledge and strategies for understanding and building knowledge (Schunk, 2000). Constructivists early childhood programs for preparing children for school are more focused on the process of learning rather than classroom-based learning with an exclusive focus on textbooks. In this perspective, children

are supported to engage in activities within their sociocultural environment and use all their senses for learning (Derry, 1999; McMahon, 1997).

By taking a social constructivist perspective, the diversity in culture, families, children, and schools are taken into consideration when planning for children's learning and development related to school readiness and transition to school (Dockett & Perry, 2002). In this way, the perspectives of families, children, and teachers are jointly considered in the early education process. This co-construction suggests that children have the potential and capability to co-construct their own readiness and transition to school with adults, and as such are recognised as important players in their own learning and development (Vygotsky, 1987).

Another school of thought is the interactionist approach which suggests that readiness cannot be assessed by considering the child alone (Mollborn & Dennis, 2012). This perspective combines information about the child and the environments in which the child is developing and learning. By focusing on readiness as a bi-directional concept, teachers and families work together on how to collaboratively support children's learning and meet their learning and developmental needs (Dockett et al., 2002). Due to several perspectives on school readiness and transition to school, a variety of instruments has been developed to assess school readiness. These include skill-based tests, developmental assessment checklists, quick samplings, and performance-based assessments (Dockett et al., 2002; Mollborn & Dennis, 2012). Some of these assessment tools failed to recognise the complexity and the multi-dimensional nature of children's development.

School readiness is a multi-dimensional relational concept hence, educators need to consider multiple factors in order to facilitate a child's smooth transition to school (Dockett & Perry, 2009). Current thinking of school readiness focuses on a broader framework instead of exclusively on within child factors as the predictors of school readiness. Pianta and Rimm-Kaufman (2000) noted that, in a developmental-ecological model, child, family, school, peer,

and community factors are interconnected and interdependent in promoting children's readiness for school. In this sense, a teamwork approach is needed to support children's adjustment during their transition to school.

Parents and teachers' understandings of school readiness.

The ways parents and teachers understand school readiness and transition to school determine how they support and are involved in the process. Dockett and Perry (2009) state that a child is a part of a family, community, cultural and peer group. Each of the groups has a series of expectations that influence their definitions and often lead to different views in the practice of school readiness and transition. Teachers' and parents' perceptions regarding school readiness have been explored in a variety of contexts (Hatcher et al., 2012). According to Hatcher and his colleagues, the beliefs and perceptions regarding school readiness are often formed within the context of local communities surrounding children, schools, and families (Hatcher et al., 2012). Teachers' and parent's values, beliefs and perceptions will determine the practices they will apply when promoting school readiness and transition to school.

Several factors are associated with how teacher's and parent's view and define school readiness and transition to school, such as educational background, age, income, and ethnicity (Choi et al., 2005; Rimm-Kaufman, 2004; Snow, 2006). In particular, some researchers found that parents from affluent families put pressure on teachers to do more for their children academically to be competitive at school (Choi et al., 2005; Rimm-Kaufman, 2004). Alternatively, socioeconomically disadvantaged families believe that it is the teachers' responsibility to nurture their children hence, they do not have to interrupt teachers in the preparation of their children for school (Choi et al., 2005). These mixed expectations are significant sources of influence on children's readiness for school and positive transition.

When parents and teachers hold similar beliefs and expectations, there is a greater possibility for congruity between the skills parents encourage their children to have and the skills teachers may actually teach in their classrooms. By collaboratively developing goals for school readiness and transition programs, teachers and parents can contribute to children's experience of a successful early school entry (Hatcher et al., 2012).

Early childhood professionals have come to the consensus that the notion of readiness is complex and relational, depending on various factors such as geographic location and the families or communities within which the child develops (Rimm-Kaufman, 2004; Scott-Little et al., 2006). Generally, parents and teachers agree that children's readiness for school depends on physical well-being, motor development, social and emotional maturity, language and cognitive development (Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani, & Merali, 2007; Barbarin et al., 2008; Belfield & Garcia, 2013; DiBello & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2008; Saluja, Scott-Little, & Clifford, 2000a). Despite new support systems have been developed by many early childhood teachers to support children, parents frequently wondered whether their children were ready or not ready to start school at a particular age (Snow, 2006).

Currently, parents, teachers, and local government personnel in many countries are still confronted with the challenge of establishing appropriate and comprehensive criteria for school readiness (Diamond et al., 2000; Fridani & Agbenyega, 2014). Findings from previous studies indicate that the beliefs parents and teachers have about childhood, in particular, play critical roles in children's early education. For example, a qualitative study conducted by Hatcher et al. (2012) examined the beliefs in terms of the meanings of kindergarten readiness and the role of preschool in preparing children for kindergarten. The study involved 16 parents and 13 teachers in Northeastern and Southwestern of United States. The findings indicated that both teachers and parents associated kindergarten readiness with social-emotional maturity, the accomplishment of literacy skills, familiarity with school routines and

the ability to socialised successfully with peers and teachers. The study further elucidated that parents were more likely to mention specific competencies such as literacy and numeracy as indicators of readiness than the teachers were. This study revealed that parents and teachers had different beliefs regarding children's readiness for school. It can be argued that the inconsistencies in what is expected also might confuse children, causing stress and maladaptive behaviours at school entry (Piotrkowski, Botsko, & Matthews, 2000).

Another study was conducted by Saluja et al. (2000a) using phone interviews to examine the understandings and assessment of school readiness in 50 states of the United States. The findings indicated that the definition in each state was different and no state had a formal state-wide definition of readiness. This study revealed that on a national scale, variations in the definitions of school readiness also appeared. Furthermore, measurement of school readiness in 50 states also varied. Although The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) in the US has determined five domains (physical well-being, language, cognitive, motor, and social-emotional development) as a measurement guide, assessing school readiness is still dissimilar (National Education Goals Panel, 1995). This finding is supported by Dockett and Perry (2009) who stated that in Australian schools, each teacher, region, and school developed different general checklists to understand the areas that are important in making a successful start to school.

Components of school readiness.

Although it is important for parents, teachers, and policy makers to have a similar understanding of school readiness, this is not possible because of different values, expectations and cultural factors. Saluja, Scott-Little, and Clifford's (2000b) arguments are still relevant today and that traditionally, the most common indicators of school readiness across most countries are the child's chronological age and skills associated with their age. In

this perspective, children are assumed ready for school when they reach the chronological age indicated by regulation on national education (de Lemos, 2008; Dockett & Perry, 2009; Scott-Little et al., 2006). Research on the maturational view of readiness for school suggests that chronological age is no guarantee that children will be ready for school (Evans, 2013; High, 2008). This view asserts that making reference to a child's readiness for school in terms of his or her own biological timetable, varies greatly from one child to another and thus, is limiting.

In the United States, the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) developed a broader definition of school readiness that is supported by five domains or pillars of readiness that together form the basis of children's readiness for school (Janus & Offord, 2007; Kagan, 2003; National Education Goals Panel, 1995). These domains provide a more holistic approach to looking at school readiness and transition to school. This means, personal skills, such as language, cognitive, motor and socio-emotional development, and social skills, such as self-help, the ability to cooperate, and to separate from their parents in school activities must be critically considered (Burke & Burke, 2005; DiBello & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2008; Prior, Bavin, & Ong, 2011; Rimm-Kaufman, 2004). These five domains of school readiness have become widely accepted in the educational community (Dockett & Perry, 2009):

1. Physical well-being and motor development, including health status, growth, and disability.
2. Social and emotional development, including turn-taking, cooperation, empathy, and the ability to express one's own emotions.
3. Approaches to learning, including enthusiasm, curiosity, temperament, culture, and values.
4. Language development, including listening, speaking, and vocabulary, as well as literacy skills, including print awareness, story sense, and writing and drawing processes.

5. General knowledge and cognition, including sound-letter association, spatial relations, and number concepts.

Physical well-being and motor development.

The conceptualisation of children's physical well-being vary in different contexts because it can be viewed from policy-related purposes, the underlying factors that create well-being, and the interrelationship between different components of children's well-being (Bradshaw, Hoelscher, & Richardson, 2007). The World Health Organization (1945) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Whereas, the National Education Goals Panel (1995) conceptualised a child's physical well-being as general health pertaining to physical development, such as the absence of physical illnesses and rate of growth; along with physical abilities, such as gross motor skills, fine motor skills, sensorimotor skills, and oral motor skills. Furthermore, according to the Early Development Instrument (EDI) developed by Dan Offord and Magdalena Janus (Janus & Offord, 2007), the domain of physical health and well-being is distributed into three subdomains, including physical readiness for school, physical independence, and gross and fine motor skills. For the purpose of this study, children's physical well-being refers to a physically healthy child with the potential for learning. This is indicated by the absence of physical illnesses, well-rested and well-nourished children.

Improvements in child health and nutrition are prioritised by international organisations, such as World Bank, Unicef, and WHO, because it plays an essential role in supporting children's learning and development (Brunner, 2009; Currie, 2005; Glewwe & Miguel, 2007). According to Pivik (2012), nutrition and physical health are connected to learning, because good nutrition and health in early years influence early brain growth and development which can affect children's ability to learn. A better physical well-being in early

years has benefits for children's development and school achievement (ACECQA, 2017). On the other hand, health risks, such as poor nutrition and chronic physical illness may directly or indirectly interfere with children's development and school outcomes (Currie, 2005; Glewwe & Miguel, 2007; Ross & Anderson, 2010).

It is crucial that child health is not considered as a separate part of school readiness strategy (Brunner, 2009). As one component of school readiness, physical health and well-being cover a number of important indicators, such as healthy food and adequate sleep. To maximise the learning experiences within an educational setting, children should not be left hungry or tired. Information pertaining to a child's health history is essential to understanding their condition before they start school with the intention to provide appropriate support for children's learning and development (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016). A child's fine and gross motor skill development also can be affected by their health in terms of school readiness. For example, a child with poor physical health will not be able to hold a pencil properly, which may affect later writing skills. Therefore, to optimise school readiness, physical health and well-being should be viewed as an integrated part of the overall school readiness strategy because when children are physically healthy, well rested and well nourished, they are ready to learn and achieve to their maximum potential.

A number of factors are involved in a child's physical well-being. Risk factors associated with hereditary illnesses, maternal pregnancy, and childbirth and environmental factors are especially important (Axelsson, Bustreo, & Harding, 2003). Family plays an important role in providing a healthy and safe environment, as well as ensuring that children receive good nutrition and comprehensive health supports services (Brunner, 2009). Family education pertaining to children's health is essential to promoting a healthy and safe environment for learning and development. This means collaboration with nutrition and health

experts is important for promoting children's physical health and well-being for school readiness and supporting their positive transition to school.

Social and emotional development.

School readiness and the transition to school incorporate social and emotional development in children, that is, how children feel about themselves, how they behave, and how they connect to others (Shala, 2013). Studies in early childhood education have been conducted to investigate children's adjustment to school and predict their later academic outcomes. The results showed that children who cannot control negative emotions of anger and distress tend to have difficulties in school and perform less well. On the other hand, positive social emotional development positively correlates with positive educational outcomes (La Paro & Pianta, 2000; McClellan & Katz, 2001).

Healthy social and emotional development in early years can create a solid foundation for children's academic success (Waltz, 2013). Social skills refer to children's ability to build positive relationships with teachers and peers. Emotional skills include aspects of self-concept and self-efficacy, the ability to express feelings appropriately, and sensitivity to others' feelings (Hair, Halle, Terry-Humen, Lavelle, & Calkins, 2006). Social emotional development refers to children's self-confidence, trust, and empathy (Waltz, 2013). Children who are socially competent and emotionally healthy tend to obtain better academic achievement, easily interact with others, able to express their feelings and develop positive relationships with peers and adults (Hutter-Pishgahi, 2006). A positive sense of well-being does contribute greatly to a child's school readiness, increase self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-concept (Bryant et al., 2005). As children start school, social and emotional development is fostered in reciprocal and cooperative play (e.g., turn taking, sharing, dramatic play, games with rules), reading and discussion of stories (Shala, 2013).

The majority of early childhood educational practices focus on developing children's cognitive skills (Waltz, 2013). A previous research found that children's emotional and social skills are associated with their early academic achievement (Wentzel & Asher, 1995). It is argued that children with social emotional skills deficits will experience lower academic achievement if early intervention programs are not developed to address emotional deficit needs (La Paro & Pianta, 2000). Another study reiterated that children who experience difficulties in social emotional development have a greater chance of experiencing academic difficulties (Denham, 2006). Waltz (2013) suggests that social emotional skills including confidence, curiosity, intentionality, self-control, relatedness, capacity to communicate, and cooperativeness can facilitate children's school readiness. There is ample evidence to suggest that young children who are emotionally well adjusted will significantly develop greater chance of early school success, while children who experience serious emotional difficulty may experience grave risks of early school difficulties (Denham, 2006; Raver, 2003; Waltz, 2013).

Approaches to learning.

Approaches to learning is a domain of school readiness which does not focus on children's skills. This construct was proposed by (Kagan, Moore, & Bredekamp, 1995), which reflects the ways children are involved and achieve academic tasks. These include, learning process, learning styles, habits, motivation, attitudes, openness, attention, curiosity to tasks and challenges, task persistence, imagination, eagerness, persistence in task, and attentiveness (Barbu, Yaden Jr, Levine-Donnerstein, & Marx, 2015; Hair et al., 2006; Musu-Gillette, Barofsky, & List, 2015). According to Barbu et al. (2015), approaches to learning is a combination of traits and attitudes, such as gender, temperament, and learning styles. While McWayne, Fantuzzo, and McDermott (2004) suggested four dimensions

underlying the construct of approaches to learning: (1) the competence motivation which refers to curiosity and motivation for academic tasks, (2) attention/persistence, (3) strategy/flexibility which refers to children's problem solving capacity, and attitude toward learning which refers to children engagement with adults and peers in task completion. In this study, approaches to learning refer to enthusiasm, curiosity, temperament, culture, expectations, and values that teachers articulate as important for children's readiness.

Self-regulation, such as children's ability to manage their emotion, flexibility, and follow the rules are components of approaches to learning (Migrant, 2012). When children are able to regulate their emotions, they can effectively use different learning approaches. Every child has different approaches to learning. It may be influenced by their temperament, cultural patterns, community values, and gender expectations (Barbu et al., 2015; Powers, 2006). Self-regulation is a key contributor in school readiness and transition to school because it promotes children's competence to adjust to academic learning and academic environment (Fantuzzo, Bulotsky-Shearer, McDermott, & McWayne, 2007). According to Li-Grining, Votruba-Drzal, Maldonado-Carreño, and Haas (2010) and Graziano et al. (2006), when children experience a transition to school, they encounter a number of expectations which serve as a challenge for several children which may generate various emotions, such as anxiety, excitement, and fear. Children are expected to adjust to school demands and the ability to fulfill the demands will indicate whether a child is able to adjust to the new school environment or not (Graziano et al., 2006; Petriwskyj, Thorpe, & Tayler, 2005).

Previous studies have investigated the correlation between approaches to learning and children's early achievement and found that the correlation between approaches to learning, such as attentiveness and persistence have been positively associated with academic competence (Graziano et al., 2006; McWayne, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004); better vocabulary, literacy, and math skills (Fantuzzo et al., 2007; McWayne et al., 2004). The

findings of those studies showed that children's early approaches to learning can be used to predict academic trajectories. Children whose approach to learning is collaborative are more likely to attain higher achievement than those children who find it difficult to learn with others (Li-Grining et al., 2010). Children can use various approaches to learning to achieve success in academic outcomes.

There are limited studies in early childhood education that examined the relationship between approaches to learning and later academic outcomes. The majority of studies rather focused on approaches to learning in first grade, rather than at kindergarten contexts. For example, a study by Kurdek and Sinclair (2000) investigated the aspects of cognitive self-control in the first grade of school and found that self-control predicted scores on tests of reading and math in the fifth grade of school. This finding points to the importance of incorporating approaches to learning when researching school readiness and transition to school.

Language development.

Language skills constitute important aspects of cognitive development. Language skills provide the opportunity for children to participate in both cognitive and affective components of the educational program, interact with others and express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Hair et al., 2006). The majority of children develop verbal language by hearing and observing other people's communication patterns (Shultz & Vouloumanos, 2010). Verbal language includes children's competence in listening, speaking, using language in social convention and manners, and using vocabulary (Hair et al., 2006). Shultz and Vouloumanos (2010) found that 3-month-old infants prefer listening to speech over many other environmental sounds. The development of language skills begins when a child speaks his/her first words. Language development in each child depends on the quantity and quality

of exposure to a variety of sounds and discourses (Weigel, Lowman, & Martin, 2007). For example, learning materials such as books and educational toys, have been shown to support young children's language growth and learning (Tamis-LeMonda & Rodriguez, 2008).

Children need numerous skills including language skills to make a successful transition to school. Parents have an essential role in fostering young children's language development through frequent and positive interaction (Tamis-LeMonda & Rodriguez, 2008). Parental responsiveness during a baby's first year is associated with better language comprehension (Goodman-Bryan, Breland, Devlin, & Imig, 2009). As language represents social processes, parents need to provide a foundation for children's early language and literacy development by engaging them in the cultural practices in which they develop, which in turn, will support children's school readiness. Previous research has found that children's early cognitive and language development can predict later academic outcomes (Walker, Greenwood, Hart, & Carta, 1994).

Although speech and language development are considered critical indicators of children's overall development, cognitive ability, and school success, several children continue to experience language delay (Goodman-Bryan, Breland, Devlin, & Imig, 2009). Language delay during preschool is commonly prevalent in socially disadvantaged communities (Law, Mensah, Westrupp, & Reilly, 2015). The etiology of language delay is still unknown, however, a number of risk factors have been identified. Frequently mentioned variable risk factors include genetic or family history factors, socioeconomic disadvantage, and sometimes, lower parental language skills (Campbell et al., 2003). Language delay often threatens children's school readiness, lower academic performance, as well as poor reading and writing skills. It is argued that quality early childhood can provide intervention to promote language development for children and their families and support children's readiness for school (Goodman-Bryan, Breland, Devlin, & Imig, 2009).

General knowledge and cognition.

When children encounter new environment or new experiences, their knowledge repertoire expands. General knowledge can be distributed in two components. The first relates to the details about the world and the social concept, such as understanding that “fire is hot”. The second aspect is concerned with the process of how things work, such as information about a job, such as “Doctor” (Cross, 2006). According to Kagan et al. (1995), knowledge can be divided into three types: (1) knowledge of the properties of objects (color, weight, and movement); (2) an understanding of the relationships between objects, events, or people (being able to determine how two objects are different); and (3) the acquisition of the conventions of society or school-learned knowledge (knowing one’s name and address, or being able to count by rote). Cognition refers to what children know, learn and remember. Cognitive skills enable children to create meanings, patterns, and the relationship between objects, such as counting objects and recognising colour and shapes (Cross, 2006).

Furthermore, Cross (2006) suggested three basic cognitive skills: perceptions, attentions, and imitations. With these three skills, children are enabled to make observations, understand cause and effect, use symbolic representations, and develop other skills such as problem-solving, and reasoning. It can be argued that it is the exposure that teachers and parents provide to children, which will facilitate rapid development of cognition. For the purpose of this study, the above five domains of school readiness were used to develop a questionnaire for teachers. According to Dockett and Perry (2009), there are complex interactions between the five domains and the environment surrounding the child (including home, school, and the community) that can influence readiness, transition, and adjustment to school.

Conceptualising positive transition to school.

School readiness and transition to school are intertwined. No discussion of the school readiness concept would be complete without addressing the concept of transition to school. Some elements of readiness link to the processes of transition to school (Wallis & Dockett, 2015). A key to the successful transition to school is children's readiness (Woodhead & Moss, 2007). This section of the review will provide insights into the concept of positive transition to school. According to Fabian (2006), generally, the term 'transition' to school in educational terms refers to the process of moving from one setting to another, often accompanied by a move from one phase of education to another. For the purpose of this study, the term transition to school refers to the period when a child moves into elementary school, either from home or from an early childhood education (Arnold et al., 2007).

The transition to school from home or preschool to elementary school may involve changes in physical settings, schedules, activities and behavioural expectations for the child (Hirst et al., 2011). Given the nature of the changes, it can lead to uncertainty and anxiety for both children and parents that require emotional and social adjustment support (Hirst et al., 2011; McIntyre et al., 2007; Vogler et al., 2008). Research findings suggest that children who have a positive transition to school are more likely to actively engage in learning than children who have negative experiences (Eckert et al., 2008; Hirst et al., 2011; Rimm-Kaufman, 2004; Steen, 2011).

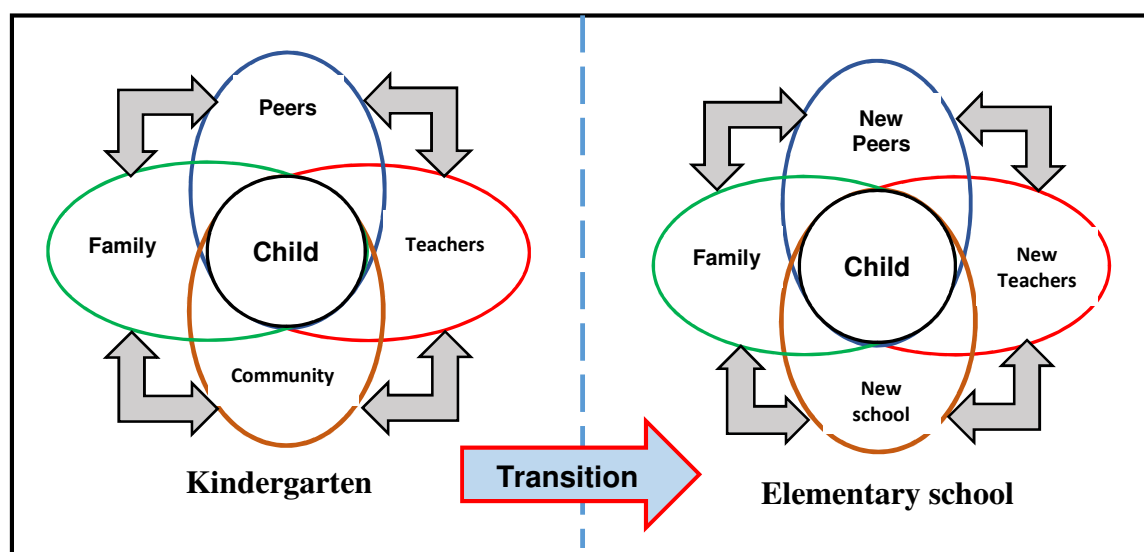
The ecological and dynamic model of positive transition to school.

In order to fully understand the concept of transition to school, Pianta, Cox, and Rimm-Kaufman (1999) suggested the Ecological and Dynamic Model of Transition to school (Figure 2). This model illustrates the complex interactions and transaction between multiple systems in supporting the transition to school process (Rous, Hallam, Harbin, McCormick, & Jung, 2007).

The model is built upon an assumption that a positive transition to school is an interaction and transaction between a child, family, peer, school, and community (Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2006a). Therefore, to provide a regular and intense support for the child during the possibly difficult period of transition to school, building positive relationships between the key stakeholders is considered as an essential element of the framework (LoCasale-Crouch, Mashburn, Downer, & Pianta, 2008).

Transition to school can be considered as a process rather than an event (Dockett & Perry, 2007; Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, & Cox, 2000). Therefore, establishing strong relationships through frequent communication with other key stakeholders is important. This relationship will influence children's adjustment to the changes during the transition to school process. The ecological and dynamic model of transition to school (see Figure 2) represents an organised system of connection and relationship among child, family, peers, teachers, and community that aimed as a bridge to support adjustment process during the transition from kindergarten to elementary school.

Figure 2. An ecological and dynamic model of transition to school (Pianta, Cox, and Rimm-Kaufman, 1999).



As a child transitions from the old setting (kindergarten) to the new school setting (elementary school), there are new demands placed on the child. The child needs to make new friends, meet and adjust to new teachers' behaviours, methods of teaching and new school community practices (see Figure 2). The relationship between a child and his or her family, teachers, peers, and the community develop over time and influence how the child will adjust in school (Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000). Successful relationships between families and schools are characterised by frequent contact and communication during the transition to school period to promote the child's adjustment. This relationship provides a foundation for further activities that aim to familiarise the child with the school environment and to address learning and/or social problems (Dockett, Perry, & Kearney, 2012; Wallis & Dockett, 2015).

The ecological and dynamic model of transition to school recommends that the conceptualisation, measurement, and research on the transition to school should be based on the combined influence of the family, teachers, peers, and community. As indicated in Figure 2, it is important that the child be regularly supported to make a positive adjustment to the new conditions evoked by the new environment.

The most important point illustrated by the model in Figure 2 is that the movement of children from kindergarten to elementary school as indicated by the blue arrow is not sufficient to help them adjust to school. This is because there is no reciprocal collaboration between kindergarten and elementary schools. This idea of two separate entities can create serious adjustment problems for children. Research indicates that the lack of support often produces environmental and emotional stress for children due to the differences between their previous and new environments (Dockett, Perry, & Kearney, 2012; Laverick, 2008). This model is revised into a new integrated model in Chapter 6 of this thesis to provide a better understanding of reciprocal transition programs for children in kindergarten who are about to transition to school.

Transition to school practices.

Based on the ecological and dynamic model, researchers have proposed a number of practices for establishing a smooth transition to school experience for children and positive relationships among the key stakeholders of the transition to school (La Paro, Kraft-Sayre, & Pianta, 2003; Laverick, 2008; Rous, Rena, McCormick, & Cox, 2010). According to Wildenger (2011), empirical studies that investigated transition practices are limited. The transition to school practices and activities typically address child, family, school, and community activities. According to Kraft-Sayre and Pianta (2000), the practices of transition to school can be organised into four broad categories that emphasise the importance of establishing a strong relationship between key stakeholders.

Family-school relationships.

An important component of the transition to school practice is the quality of family-school relationships. The relationship between family (parents, siblings, grandparents, extended family members) and school is substantial in supporting positive school outcomes. Family involvement has been identified as a critical element for accomplishing a successful transition to school (Dockett & Perry, 2001; McIntyre et al., 2007). Parents implement several activities at home to prepare their child for school. These include teaching school-related skills, talking with other parents, talking about the expectations held for kindergarten, telling stories and letting children watch educational television programs.

In order to promote family-school connections, Kraft-Sayre and Pianta (2000) have suggested that a positive transition to school practice should include frequent contacts with families during the first few days of school, regular meeting with families, and encouragement of family participation in home-learning activities. Some early childhood education programs and elementary schools send home flyers, organise open days

or invite children and families to visit the school and be introduced to classrooms routines (Barnett, Lamy, & Jung, 2005).

It was also identified by research that the least common practices teachers use to engage families included home visits, calling the child, or inviting parents to visit preschools regularly (Eckert et al., 2008). When implemented well, the transition to school practices can bring teachers and families together to develop programs that result in positive outcomes for children and their families, for example, better academic outcomes. According to Bohan-Baker and Little (2004), family involvement in early childhood transitions prior to the first day of kindergarten can lead to a collaborative practice where problems and successes regarding the transition to school are shared. A study by Schulting et al. (2005) confirmed that parental involvement is an important component in bringing a two-way communication between home and school to promote children's adjustment during their transition to school.

Parental participation in school activities during transition programs may bring a sense of security to children who have developed separation anxiety (Malaspina & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008). Research evidence further suggests that the participation of parents in children's transition program can provide children with a sense of comfort, emotional stability and positive attribution (Xu, 2006). This is because, when parents participate actively in transition programs, there is reciprocal sharing of relevant information on children's learning and development that teachers can use to enhance their adjustment in the transition process (Broström, 2000). It is important that schools develop a range of activities jointly with families to facilitate their engagement, for example, inviting children and their families to visit the class before schools starts, talking with parents after school and allowing parents to do some school activities with their children (La Paro, Kraft-Sayre, & Pianta, 2003; Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005; Broström, Einarsdottir, Vrinoti, 2010).

Child-school relationships.

Children's belonging to school is crucial to their educational success and readiness for school, which is facilitated through child-school relations. Kraft-Sayre and Pianta (2000) have argued that familiarising a child with the school environment such as the classroom and the playground, teachers, and learning activities can simplify the transition to school process. Visiting school environment can provide relevant information regarding school activities and decrease the feelings of stress and fear imposed on children by unfamiliar environments.

Other transition to school practices such as inviting parents and children to visit the school and introducing children to their classrooms before school starts are significant predictors for parental involvement (Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005). In their study, Barnett et al. (2005) found that visiting school contributed in eliminating children's anxiety on their first day of school and enhanced the excitement about school. The best practices in schools to facilitate the transition process are characterised by strategies to increase communication between home and school contexts (Wildenger, 2011).

Peer relationships.

Peer-to-peer support strategies encourage children to interact with their peers inside and outside of the classroom. Peers can assist children to be more comfortable in their new environment by acting as critical friends (Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000). Having friends may improve adjustment to school and educational engagement. For example, Vygotsky's (1987) idea of social participation is relevant here.

The interactions with peers can generate friendship and provoke new behaviours, such as problem-solving, emotional regulations, and how to work together in group situations. In addition, the continuous contact with peers can be beneficial for children to learn

from other children's experiences in adapting to the new learning environment (Vygotsky's, 1987). Children who are usually afraid of school may use supportive peer relations to overcome anxieties that develop from social exclusion.

Community relationships.

Kraft-Sayre and Pianta (2000) suggested that integrating elementary school and kindergarten with the preschool or daycare program can facilitate the transition to school. The practices consisted of inter-school collaboration about programs and classroom practices, common orientation weeks, and the promotion of awareness in the community about the importance of the transition to school process (Schulting, Malone, & Dodge, 2005). For example, a collaboration between kindergarten and first grade of an elementary school on placement, screening, and registering process is important for alleviating parental stress.

There is potential for utilising effective communication for increasing the participation of teachers from kindergartens in schools and vice versa. The research found that effective communication between kindergarten teachers and first-grade teachers regarding children's characteristics and background might assist teachers in helping children's transition from kindergarten to the first grade of elementary school (Eckert et al., 2008). This is accomplished by building trust and relationships where elementary teachers have the opportunity to view the teaching and activities of kindergarten teachers. Similarly, kindergarten teachers can also observe elementary teachers in action after which both teacher groups can share feedback on their experiences.

Factors promoting school readiness and positive transition to school.

Researchers have identified a range of school, cultural, social and demographic factors that can contribute to children's readiness and positive transition to school (Daily,

Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010; Dockett & Perry, 2009). These factors include teacher quality, a child's age, gender, the nature of early childhood education and care experiences (Dockett & Perry, 2009; Fabian & Dunlop, 2007). In addition, the quality of child care, primary language spoken at home, socioeconomic status, parental employment and income, parenting practices, access to health care and community conditions, and the provision of safe and supportive neighbourhood environments have been found to affect school readiness and transition to school (Barnett & Taylor, 2009; Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010; Dockett & Perry, 2009; Fabian & Dunlop, 2007; Lapointe, Ford, & Zumbo, 2007). Furthermore, a range of social policies has also been found to have a direct or indirect impact on children's early education (Britto, Yoshikawa, & Boller, 2011; Kamerman, 2002). For example, a government's national social policies, which guide the decisions and actions on social issues or problems related to people's welfare, public access, and social programs, can influence access to education services for families or determine a school's curricula and resources (Maxwell & Clifford, 2004).

Several other factors have been found by researchers to inform positive transition to school (Eckert et al., 2008). Sorin and Markotsis (2008) stated that positive transition to school involves partnerships between children, families, teachers, school personnel, and community. The primary goal of transition practices is to ensure children's successful adjustment in school so that they can achieve academic and social success. Early, Pianta, Taylor, and Cox (2001) investigated transition practices by conducting a national survey in the United States to describe the characteristics of kindergarten teachers who implemented transition programs. The findings indicated that less than 25% of the respondents had received information about strategies for improving children's transition to kindergarten, and less than 25% of the respondents reported receiving training in practices to improve children's transition to kindergarten. The report concluded that teachers who received

training in transition program development incorporated a range of activities that supported parents and children. On the other hand, those who did not receive training had difficulty in engaging parents during the transition process for their children. The next section of the literature expanded on some of these relevant factors.

Teacher quality.

Teachers are at the centre of the school readiness and transition to school process. It is expected that teachers who teach your children have relevant knowledge about how children learn and develop. In addition, there is a need for teachers in kindergarten and elementary schools to understand the transition to school process to support children's continuity in learning and development. Early et al.'s (2001) study concluded that teacher training in transition practices must be a priority, especially for those teachers working in multi-ethnic or low-income settings. Training of teachers regarding the importance of the transition to school practices will enhance their knowledge and skills pertaining to the needs of children. Despite evidence suggesting the importance of teacher knowledge in transition to school programs, some studies found that many programs for training early childhood educators did not feature transition to school-related courses (Luschei & Zubaedah, 2012; Early et al., 2007). The effectiveness of the early childhood teacher is important in the transition to school practice because effective teachers know and use a variety of tools to conduct needs assessments on children and use the results to develop programs that respond to children's specific needs (Guo, Justice, Sawyer, & Tompkins, 2011).

Transition to school cannot be facilitated by teacher training alone, teachers with best intentions to adopt research-led practices in transition to school need the support and resources from their peers, school administrators, community, and families of their students (Eckert et al., 2008). A ready school is a place where teachers use relevant knowledge to promote child

development and school success. This knowledge takes into account the stakeholders that influence children's learning and development, where collaboration is key to promoting readiness and transition to school. In this regard, teachers' dispositions play a significant influence on how young children will adjust to school and engage with learning (Limlingan, Britto, Rana, Pasic, & Mannathoko, 2012).

It is commonly assumed that teachers with higher qualifications will provide better performance in teaching young children. Research indicates that the practices teachers use to implement curriculum are based on multiple factors such as their knowledge, values and beliefs about children (Chang et al., 2014; Early et al., 2007; Guo, Justice, Sawyer, & Tompkins, 2011; McDonald Connor, Son, Hindman, & Morrison, 2005). In addition, a teacher's personal qualities, technical skills, and motivation are significant factors that influence a teacher's performance in terms of the programs they organise for young children to develop capabilities for further learning (Guo, Justice, Sawyer, & Tompkins, 2011).

Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani, and Shallwani (2008) explained that teacher's professional development will help to upgrade their professional knowledge on how to promote children's social and emotional development and learning, organise, manage and teach the diverse characteristics of children in their classrooms. Indeed, teachers' professional qualifications and training have been correlated with the quality of overall pedagogy (Limlingan et al., 2012). For example, teachers with early childhood training have been found to perform better in applying the theories of child development to appropriate practices in the early years' settings (Guo et al., 2011; McDonald Connor et al., 2005). In addition, it is argued that school readiness and positive transition to school will be positive when qualified teachers have adequate knowledge of the cultural context and work with families to support children's social and emotional functioning in the classroom (Limlingan et al., 2012).

Quality teaching.

Quality teachers are associated with quality teaching. Hall (1998) as cited by Pandis (2001) defined teaching as an interaction between the teacher and child where the teacher serves as the mediator between the learner and the learning matter. A teacher's ability to support and organise the learning process and play a role as a mediator will enable children to learn much from the teaching process. According to Pandis (2001), a teacher's readiness to teach consists of two aspects:

- a. Training on child development and special needs as the basis for understanding child's difficulties and problems as well as their talents and strengths.
- b. Training on teaching methodologies as the basis for evaluating the situation as well as seeking and selecting appropriate teaching solutions.

Teacher education has been correlated to classroom quality, however one study in the United State's pre-kindergarten conducted by Early et al. (2007) found that there was no correlation. Despite this finding, researchers have indicated that fully prepared and certified teachers generally have better teaching performance and are more successful with students than teachers without preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teachers who are fully prepared feel more confident and also have a better understanding of their students' needs and how to organise the learning process (Nolan, Hamm, McCartin, & Hunt, 2012).

Apart from teacher quality, current perspectives on school readiness and positive transition to school have identified that effective readiness and positive transition to school is catalysed by 'Ready Families, Ready Communities, Ready Services and Ready Schools (Farrar, Goldfeld, & Moore, 2007).

Ready families.

Ready families refer to children's family context and home environment that provide steady and supportive relationships, ensure safe and reliable environments, promote good health, and foster curiosity and excitement about learning and self-control (Limlingan et al., 2012). Research indicated that social factors such as a family's poverty level, low parental education, teen parenting, and lack of economic resources can have negative effects on children's health, development, as well as cause behavioural problems to compromise learning (Britto, 2012; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Bryant et al., 2003).

It is argued that the strongest predictors of readiness, successful transition to school and continued learning are supportive parenting and stimulating home environments (Bryant et al., 2003). In this way, parental attitudes and knowledge of working in partnership with teachers are critically important (Limlingan et al., 2012). Boethel (2004) identified four comprehensive roles that families can play in preparing their young children to be ready for the transition to school:

1. Families as nurturers and supporters - In this perspective families are expected to provide substantial support for nutrition, health, safety, and psychosocial condition of their children.
2. Families as Teachers - Parents by effectively interacting with their children provide cognitive and linguistic experiences through activities such as talking with children, singing, storytelling, looking at books and encouraging communication (Limlingan et al., 2012).
3. Families as intermediaries - Family members can safely assist a child to learn, observe, communicate, and socialise with their neighbours, friends, and the broader community.
4. Families as advocate – Families can help a child to obtain and advocate for services and opportunities, and mediate on their child's behalf when problems arise.

Ready services.

Ready services refer to available facilities and the quality of early childhood program and health services that promote child development. These services either contribute directly and indirectly to transition to school and readiness for school (Royal Children Hospital, 2008). For example, ready health services include access to prenatal care, child's health care, such as immunisation, physical and mental health in the early years, and good nutrition (Bryant et al., 2003). The quality in early childhood health care and education programs can enhance children's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development (Hirst et al., 2011). Quality health services are facilitated by skilled professionals who engage in family support and treatment and are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences (Dockett & Perry, 2007).

Ready communities.

School readiness and transition to school are the responsibility of parents, preschool teachers, and also communities. Ready communities, should provide high-quality health care and support services for families of young children and work to ensure that all families with young children have access to high-quality care and education (Maxwell & Clifford, 2004). Ready communities refer to both informal and formal community-based resources and support available to families with young children (Farrar et al., 2007; Limlingan et al., 2012; Royal Children Hospital, 2008).

Informal community-based resources include public areas such as parks, to serve social networking opportunities for families and their children to socialise with other families. Formal community-based resources include public health services and libraries. Children whose families have easy access to such resources have better

developmental outcomes than those children whose families lacked such access (McTurk et al., 2011).

Policies and programs.

Recently, in the global context, government investment in early childhood education has increased (Britto et al., 2011). In many countries, these programs integrate with health service, nutrition, child welfare and parents' economic well-being. One of the policies regarding early childhood education is school readiness and transition to school program. Policies and programs that establish mechanisms for networking among different institutions on readiness and transition to school are found to be effective in assisting parents, teachers, and others in preparing children for school success (Kamerman, 2002). It is argued that networking among different childhood organisations can make it easier to determine what support each child needs to succeed in their transition to school (Arnold et al., 2007).

In addition, policy and programs that solicit input from teachers and the community are more effective in addressing children and educators' needs than policies and programs that are centrally developed and forced down on teachers (Boethel, 2004). Quality early childhood program demonstrate better support for children to start school healthier with emotional balance and socially responsible behaviours (Woodhead & Moss, 2007). Programs that promote family education are also important in building parents' self-efficacy to better participate in their children's education (McTurk et al., 2011).

Continuity of children's learning and development.

The Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006b) suggests that the key factor of human development is the *proximal process* that operates over time. The proximal process is a function of the

environmental *context*, the characteristic of the *person*, and the *time* periods in which the individual resides. The proximal process has bi-directional influence. The continuity and change will influence the process. From this perspective, the transition to school constitutes a dynamic process of continuity and change which occur over time (Dockett & Perry, 2014). Learning is a continuous process, therefore children need continuity of learning to achieve better academic outcomes.

A study conducted by Barblett, Barratt-Pugh, Kilgallon, and Maloney (2011) in which early childhood teachers' were interviewed to define the term 'continuity of learning' produced some interesting results. The answers of the participants indicated that 'continuity of learning' was related to a similar program, having a similar routine, similar expectation, and consistency in staff. According to the Victoria State Government of Australia (2017), the concept of continuity of learning refers to 1) the consistency of children's educational experience and care settings, and 2), the coordination of services and agencies. It can be concluded that when children transition from kindergarten to elementary school, the consistency between kindergarten and elementary school settings in the areas of pedagogy, curriculum, resources, support (Podmore, Sauvao, & Mapa, 2001), linguistic, and educators (Woodhead & Moss, 2007) are beneficial for promoting successful transition to school. The similarity between settings and continuity of learning and relationship generate more confidence to the children (Dockett & Perry, 2012). In contrast, discontinuity refers to two different and inconsistent environmental contexts, settings, routines, and expectations which lead to different experiences for children (Lam & Pollard, 2006).

Generally, the curriculum in elementary school is organised based on the subjects of learning, such as mathematics, reading, or science. The kindergarten curriculum, on the other hand, focuses on the domains of learning (cognitive, physical, or social domains). To overcome the discontinuity of the curriculum, countries like Australia, Sweden and Guyana

are using integrated and interlinked curricula for children from age 1 to 18 years (Dockett & Perry, 2012; Woodhead & Moss, 2007). The pedagogy in kindergarten is more child-centered and play-based learning, while in elementary school the focus is more on developing children's academic skills, such as literacy and numeracy skills under formalised instruction. Pedagogic continuity can be achieved by building closer ties with kindergarten and elementary school pedagogy through institutional and curriculum coordination (OECD, 2001). The curriculum frameworks need to connect with the two levels of education and strengthen the pedagogic continuity (Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani, & Merali, 2006).

In numerous countries, such as sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia, and the Arab States, teachers use mother-tongue instruction to be more effective in teaching young children (Bühmann & Trudell, 2008). This is because unfamiliar language usually generates difficulties for children to understand teachers' instruction at the early childhood education level. Linguistic continuity provides an effective method for improving children's learning outcomes. When children learn with their mother-tongue instruction, they perform better in academic assessments and increase their self-esteem (Woodhead & Moss, 2007). Additionally, with the current globalisation push for multilingual skills, some early education programs, and elementary schools are adopting multilingual instructions for young children to improve children's mastery in international and regional languages (UNESCO, 2003). The language discontinuity during the transition to school provides challenges for children and families because the language children learn in the first setting (home) may be inappropriate in the second setting (school).

In addition, the stability of educators is also important in promoting continuity of learning. Consistent and similarity of educators across time provides a sense of stability, security, and supportive learning for children because educators and children have opportunities to build ongoing relationships (Touhill, 2012; Peters, 2010; Veličković,

2013). Research indicates that frequent changes of teachers may generate adjustment problems, anxiety, and negative feelings for children (Wong, 2015; Xu, 2006; Harrison & Murray, 2015). Therefore, the connection and relationship between the two levels of education are important to diminish sudden changes and serve as a mediator for a successful transition to school. The continuity of learning can be achieved by developing providing stability for teachers, cooperation, and communication among children, families, and schools (Veličković, 2013).

Programming for children's transition to school.

A transition program is not the same as orientation program (NSW DET, 2006). The purpose of an orientation program is to help children and parents to become more familiar with a school's environment and programs. Generally, orientations are conducted over one or two visits to a school. In contrast, a transition program is broader than an orientation program because the transition to school requires collaborative planning and evaluation by all stakeholders (Veličković, 2013). It includes processes such as workshops for parents and continuing support for children (MacDonald, 2008). For the purpose of this study, a transition program refers to a prior to school process involving children, families, and teachers with the ultimate purpose of supporting children and their families during the transition from kindergarten to elementary school.

Planning the transition program.

During the transition to school process, children and parents need opportunities to familiarise with the school's environment, teachers, and school routines with the intention of developing a sense of security (Fabian & Dunlop, 2002). It is important to establish a comprehensive and coordinated transition planning processes that incorporate a

range of strategies. For example, buddy programs and reciprocal visits that involve the collaboration, cooperation, and participation of children, families, teachers, and other professionals can support the transition process (Atkinson & Lee, 2007). Some researchers have argued that transition planning programs that take into consideration the cultural practices of the community in which children develop are more effective in facilitating a positive transition from home to school, or school to school (Veličković, 2013; Victorian State Government, 2017). It is recommended that the transition to school support programs must adopt a continuous process that takes place throughout the year in which the child first enters school (Victorian State Government, 2017).

There are four steps in establishing and formulating transition plans: 1) developing a planning team, 2) generating goals and identifying problems, 3) developing strategies, 4) implementing and monitoring the transition program, 4) evaluating the transition program (Atkinson & Lee, 2007; Victorian State Government, 2017). The first step in planning the transition to school program is by building networks with schools and communities around the school. Locating and inviting families of the children to the school (MacDonald, 2008; Victorian State Government, 2017) can facilitate this. The purpose of this step is to raise awareness pertaining to the importance of the transition to school program to involve families and relevant people regarding the implementation of the program, identify local needs and establish a goal of the program (MacDonald, 2008). This stage also determines a key person who acts as a leader of the transition program. The next step occurs when program leaders jointly identify transition goals, select activities which are suitable for children and families' needs, plan the timelines for specific activities, develop implementation strategies and how to monitor the activities, timelines and the overall effectiveness of the programs. During the planning stage of the transition programs, it is important to select a clear, specific, realistic and manageable action, identify potential

barriers, organise a time to evaluate and review all of the actions that have been completed (Victorian State Government, 2017).

Transition programs provide many benefits for children, parents, teachers, and school members. One of the purposes of the transition to school program is to develop a sense of security and familiarity to a new school setting (Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani, & Merali, 2006; Barblett, Barratt-Pugh, Kilgalon, & Maloney, 2011; Broström, 2000). When children are familiar with the school setting, they feel more comfortable to engage in school activities (Fabian & Dunlop, 2007; Broström, 2000). Visiting school by parents and children as a part of transition programs provide opportunities for children, parents, and teachers to observe and find out about each other to build an initial connection (Fabian & Dunlop, 2002). Apart from enabling children to interact and socialise with other children, transition programs benefit teachers by enabling them to get information regarding children's needs and abilities (MacDonald, 2008).

Evaluating the effectiveness of the transition program.

Evaluation is an important component of the transition program. It is a strategy to review and improve the transition program and provide feedback to all of the participants involved in the program regarding the strengths, needs, and aspirations (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005). The focus of the evaluation depends on the goals of the transition program. Furthermore, it needs to determine the sources and ways to obtain feedback from the participants and the team, such as observation and brainstorming by the transition planning team (Kennedy & Stonehouse, 2012). The review of the transition planning outcomes can be conducted at least twice during the school year through interviews or by distributing questionnaires to teachers and families (McNeil, Harkins, Taylor, & Fillion, 2005). The feedback the reviews can be used

to revise the program and identify weaknesses, strengths, barriers, and needs of the transition program.

Assessing children's readiness and transition to school.

Every child has special and unique abilities and needs that influence their learning and developmental process (Kennedy & Stonehouse, 2012). A range of assessment techniques is used by early childhood professionals to gain each child's strengths, abilities, interests, and needs. Assessment practices involve collecting evidence based on what children write, draw, make, say and do, analysing and interpreting the information that has been collected through critical reflection and discussion the outcomes with colleagues, families, children and other professionals (Kennedy & Stonehouse, 2012). Combining professional knowledge and different perspectives contribute to a rich and more complete picture of the child's strengths, interests, abilities, and needs, which can help to ensure that the planning for learning is relevant and responsive to each child (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005).

Assessment of school readiness and transition to school typically refers to an assessment of young children's experiences on starting kindergarten and elementary school. School readiness has often been defined as a child's skills, behaviours, or attributes in relation to the expectations of individual classrooms or schools (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005). Usually, skills and knowledge are assessed in order to determine a child's 'readiness' level, which focuses on academic and behavioural skills. The instruments of school readiness assessments vary in their purpose and design. Shepard, Kagan, and Wurtz (1998) as cited by Myszak and Conn-Powers (2008) identified four main purposes for school readiness assessment as - to support learning, to identify children with special needs, to evaluate programs and monitor child trends, and to use for high-stakes decisions. It is important to

understand the different purposes of assessment because some instruments are typically developed for a single purpose and cannot easily be used for another purpose.

Ackerman and Barnett (2005) identified two key points to consider when using assessments. First, assessments should be used for their intended purpose, and should not be considered interchangeable. Second, it should be valid and reliable in order that it accurately reflects children's abilities. In the United States, for example, the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP, 1997), identified five domains of children's development and learning as indicators for school readiness assessment. These are physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge (Dockett et al., 2002).

Assessment in early childhood education is considered an important component informing children's learning. While there are many forms of assessments used within early childhood settings, some of these assessment practices are exclusive in the sense that they do not include the voices of the child and families. Effective inclusive assessments take the child's learning and family context seriously into consideration (State of Victoria, 2016). It also infers expanding what is typically included in assessments, such as going beyond just the teacher written comments and include perspectives from other staff, families and the child's peers (National Research Council, 2008). By not including multiple perspectives, the child is constructed from a single perspective of anything other than a "set of dull and dry skills" (Fleer, Agbenyega, Blaise, & Peers, 2008, p. 23).

Ongoing observations have now become a crucial method for early childhood educators to get to know about individual children's process of learning and development (State of Victoria, 2016). Ongoing observations utilise different approaches to capture children's learning and development including photographs and artifacts of children's work and asking children to describe their work and processes of learning (Flottman, Stewart, & Tayler,

2011). By this way, their voices are included in the assessment records. The documentations are further analysed to produce interpretations regarding the learning that is taking place.

A combination of assessment approaches build into a holistic practice can serve children well in early childhood education (Flottman, Stewart, & Tayler, 2011). Three different approaches currently in use that I allude to because of their inclusive nature and how they facilitate decision making about children's readiness for school are assessment as learning (AaL), assessment of learning (AoL), and assessment for learning (AfL) (Flottman, Stewart, & Tayler, 2011; Kennedy & Stonehouse, 2012).

Assessment 'AS' learning.

Assessment as learning (AaL) is a substantial aspect in early childhood assessment. It facilitates children's engagement and reflexivity, via self-assessment, exposing them to concepts of self-efficacy, metacognition, and feedback. One of the key components in AaL is feedback (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). It can be argued that feedback is highly important in assessment as it is making the child aware of their progress and achievements. Thus, it allows a child to take ownership in their learning. Dann (2012) promotes the concept of AaL, stating that "assessment is not merely an adjunct to teaching and learning but proposes a process through which student involvement in assessment can feature as part of learning – that is an assessment as learning" (p. 153).

When conducting assessing as learning with children, the use of open-ended questions can enable the teacher to gain insight into how children learn new knowledge and concepts, as well as use additional techniques to discover their ability and acquired knowledge. It is suggested by Earl (2012) that a reconfiguration of our understanding of assessment practices is necessary, placing AaL as an essential foundation for both assessments for learning and assessment of learning. The lesson that can be glean from the literature is that AaL is self-reflective and does not intimidate children (Dann, 2012).

Assessment ‘FOR’ learning.

Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, and Wiliam (2003) define Assessment for Learning (Afl) as “any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting students’ learning” (p.10). In practice, assessment for learning means children and educators collaborating to discern where children are in their learning, where they need to go and what the best way to get there is (Broadfoot et al., 2002). Blandford and Knowles (2012) discuss how AfL originated from the concept of collaborative and active learning. They discuss how it promotes a personalised approach to learning and a move towards teaching for independent learning.

Additionally, AfL is led by the following 10 vital principles: “helps learners know how to improve, engages children in self-assessment, is central to effective planning, addresses how children learn, is crucial to classroom practice, is a professional skill, is sensitive and constructive, fosters motivation, promotes understanding of objectives, and recognises educational achievement” (Broadfoot et al., 2002). Furthermore, Pang and Leng (2011) discuss how the purpose of implementing assessments in the curriculum evolves from authenticating learning to supporting learning, that is, Assessment for Learning. AfL being assessment which has learning as its object and through which children can understand where they are and what they can do next in the development of learning (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, & Dowsett, 1982). As Stiggins (2007) states, “rather than sorting students into winners and losers, assessment for learning can put all students on a winning streak” (p. 22). This concept has the ability to empower young children from their early years – involving them in the process, giving them a sense of achievement, making them agents in their own learning. This is supported by Pang and Leng (2011) who state that an important purpose of AfL is enabling students’ self-evaluation so to assist them in becoming independent learners in the future.

Assessment ‘OF’ learning.

Assessment of learning is an integral part of the documentation process in early childhood education. The information gathered through assessment of learning is essential for communicating the progress of children and determining what they know and can do, individually or collectively, at any point in time, before, during, or after instruction (Eliason & Jenkins, 2008; McLean, Bailey, & Wolery, 2004; Wortham & Hardin, 2015). To make an assessment of learning holistic and inclusive, however, is a challenge for some teachers. The decision of which assessment practices to use to assess learning, with so many options readily available, can be a complex one.

Dahlberg and Moss (2004) argue that the assessment of children’s learning and thinking through standardised testing cannot reflect the complex reality of children’s lives. These perspectives on assessment suggest that school readiness and the transition to school programs should place a variety of assessment practices at their core. The knowledge gain from effective assessment practices can be used to develop new programs and review existing ones to promote children’s learning and development.

Summary of the literature.

This chapter has reviewed the empirical literature on children’s readiness and transition to school. School readiness has often been defined in terms of a child’s skills, behaviours, or attributes in relation to the expectations of individual classrooms or schools (Barnett et al., 2005). Research has identified several factors related to social, demographic and policies which contribute to children’s school readiness and their positive transition to school process. These factors can be formulated as a school readiness equation: ‘Ready Families + Ready Communities + Ready Services + Ready Schools = Children Ready for School’ (Britto, 2012). To obtain a comprehensive understanding of school readiness and transition to

school, procedures related to teaching, assessment, and evaluation of school readiness should be considered as a process and not as a product. The same applies to transition to school because these concepts are interrelated. In conclusion, the literature review provides multiple lenses on researching aspects that promote strength-based school readiness and positive transition to school. However, it did not specifically address the cultural needs of children's readiness and transition to school in Indonesia. There is a significant gap to be filled here because what government, families, and teachers perceive as readiness and transition programs usually unfold through cultural practices which are evident in the results section of this thesis.

The Theoretical Framework of this Thesis

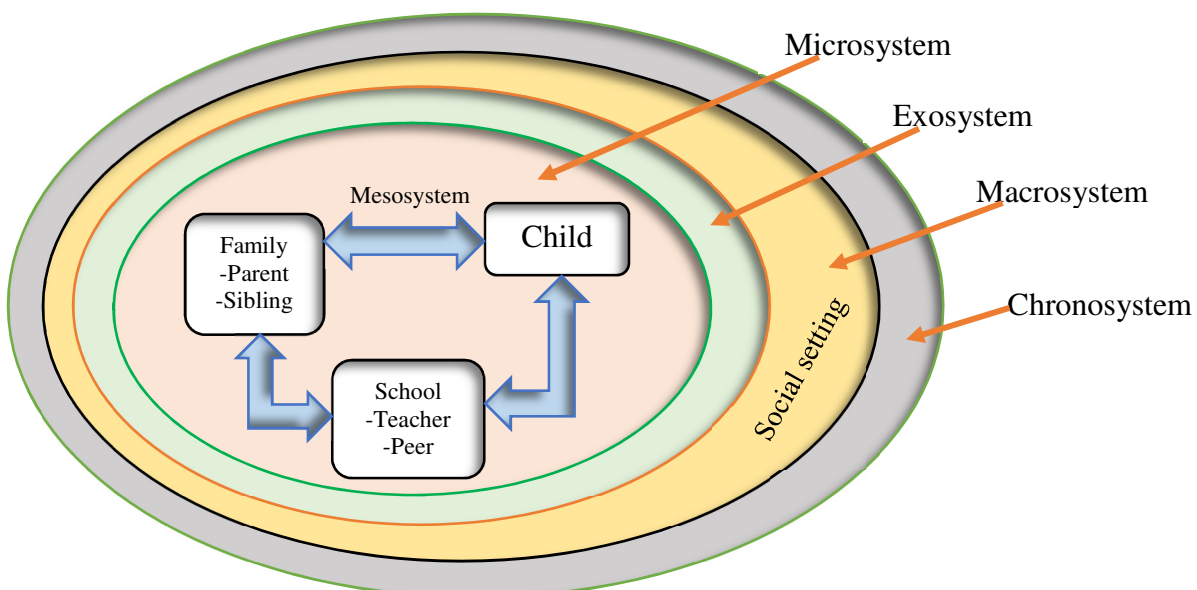
Theoretical frameworks are lenses or maps that guide researchers to explain and describe the phenomenon being studied (Dockett, Perry, & Petriwskyj, 2014). In other words, the theoretical framework of a study serves as the foundation for conceptual direction for gathering, analysing and illuminating the collected data. Previous researchers have used a variety of theories including postcolonial theory, cultural-historical theory, constructivism and poststructural theories to investigate children's learning, development and transition to school (Dockett, Perry, & Petriwskyj, 2014; Punch, 2009). The selection and use of a particular theory to formulate a theoretical framework in research is based on the purpose of the study and the research questions (Howe, 2009). In this study, the key concepts articulated by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological theory are used to develop a theoretical framework to study school readiness and children's transition to school. Urie Bronfenbrenner developed the ecological systems theory in 1979 and modified it as a bioecological theory in 1998 (Seung Lam & Pollard, 2006). Bronfenbrenner proposed five layers of the environment as a series of interacting systems of microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and

chronosystem that are implicated in the ways the biological and cultural child develops (Härkönen 2007; Phan, 2012).

In this study, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework was applied to conceptualise and interpret the interconnections between the child, parents, teachers, and policy makers in promoting school readiness and transition to school (Derksen, 2010; Dockett & Perry, 2009; McTurk et al., 2011; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). The application of this theory also influenced the methodological approach utilised in the study which sought the perceptions of parents, teachers, policy makers and children on school readiness and transition to school using quantitative (a questionnaire survey) and qualitative methods (interviews).

Many previous researchers have found Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework helpful for exploring school readiness and transitions to kindergarten or primary school. For example, Pianta and Rimm-Kaufman (2000), Fabian and Dunlop (2002), Bohan-Baker and Little (2004), Tudge and Hogan (2005) and Dockett & Perry (2009) have all used this theoretical approach to investigate child development and learning processes, and the factors that support a positive transition to school. The theoretical framework for this study is described in Figure 3.

Figure 3. A model of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development.



Microsystem and children's learning and development.

As described by Johnson (2008), the family in which the child develops is denoted as the microsystem. This system is where a child's early life development is determined by his or her experiences in relationship with all family members, especially parents and siblings (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Joe & Davis, 2009). Parents play a significant role in providing learning opportunities at home and connecting children to their social and cultural environment in their early life (Emerson, Fear, Fox, & Sanders, 2012). Parents' involvement in children's activities may influence their development and school readiness (Bulotsky-Shearer, Wen, Faria, Hahs-Vaughn, & Korfmacher, 2012; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Joe & Davis, 2009; Noble et al., 2012; Pelletier & Brent, 2002). For example, parents' engagement in storytelling, singing, drawing, everyday interaction in the home and community, and exposure to math concepts in real life, such as counting numbers, objects and exploring shapes and sizes, contribute to children's development. Interactions in the microsystem are not only from adults to children but also from children to adults. Children's progress in development might place a greater demand on parents requiring them to source additional resources to support their children's learning and development (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Joe & Davis, 2009). A good example can be seen in the ways children in contemporary societies are putting pressure on parents to purchase mobile technologies such as Ipads and iPhones, which they use as learning tools.

Parents serve as children's first teachers by providing knowledge and experiences that encourage skills, abilities, and attitudes consistent with their family and cultural heritage (Joe & Davis, 2009; Noble et al., 2012; Pelletier & Brent, 2002). Studies have indicated that cultural norms and values within families influence the ways parents participate in their children's education including their goals for school readiness and transition to school (Britto, 2012; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Devjak & Bercnik, 2009; Dockett & Perry, 2001; Ercetin &

Demirbulak, 2003; Rao & Sun, 2010). Children are not just spectators but active players within the microsystem whose contributions to knowledge drive decision-making and the nature of resources required within the microsystem to support their developmental trajectories (Devjak & Bercnik, 2009; Dockett & Perry, 2001). In this way, the microsystem is a bidirectional concept, and its application in this study provides a critical examination of the data in terms of the interactive voices of parents and children regarding school readiness and transition to school.

Mesosystem and children's learning and development.

Another important concept within the bioecological theory is the mesosystem. The mesosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place in two or more settings, for example, the relations between a child's home and school (Härkönen, 2007). In Bronfenbrenner's view, learning comes from the interactions between a child and the environment (Diamond et al., 2000). The mesosystem consists of the connections between teachers, parents, and peers. Positive relationships between school and a child's family will provide a positive support to a child's learning and development at school. Relationships that children develop with their teachers and their peers are important resources that facilitate children's school readiness and transition to school (Mashburn & Pianta, 2006).

Teachers' expectations regarding a child's skills, behaviours, and attributes that support academic success are important in determining appropriate instructional techniques for any child. Nevertheless, there is neither universal agreement nor a commonly held belief regarding school readiness. Perceptions of kindergarten teachers about school readiness are shaped by their sociocultural context (Lin et al., 2003), community needs and values (Wesley & Buysse, 2003), and external societal attitudes toward early childhood education (Voegler-lee, Kupersmidt, Field, & Willoughby, 2012).

The relevance of the mesosystem can be seen in the different cultural values and school practices. Similarly, family cultural practices differ from one family to the other. Thus, when children from different families congregate in the same school this can be an opportunity for rich learning or a barrier (Lin et al., 2003). The concept of mesosystem within the bioecological theory, therefore, provides a conceptual tool for analysing and unpacking this complexity of cultural exchange, different support and the networking that is required to orchestrate a productive school readiness programs for positive transition to school.

Exosystem and children's development and learning.

The exosystem is conceptualised as environmental factors in which learning and development where a child may or may not always have direct contact, for example, mass media, parent's workplace, and legal or social services (Bulotsky-Shearer, et al., 2012). However, these indirectly affect the child in different ways and the nature of child development and learning in turn influence programs and services. The exosystem influences the microsystem where a child resides. Family income and parents' employment type have important implications to determine the nature of interactions and what parents consider to be quality time for their child. This includes a child's activities within the family (Härkönen 2007). These conditions in turn indirectly affect a child's school readiness and transition to school.

A study conducted by Lloyd and Hertzman (2009) indicated that social characteristics, such as socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic, immigration, social capital, civil society, community governance, and institutional performance influence children's longitudinal development. These factors serve as predictors for children's school readiness, for example, parents who work long hours or two or more jobs may have little time to spare for their children at home. Such parents are also more likely than others to miss parent-teacher meetings (Härkönen 2007). In this way, an important consideration in this study is to identify from parents' points of view

the factors that facilitate or inhibit their support and involvement in school readiness and transition to school programs.

Macrosystem and children's learning and development.

The outer layer of the bioecological systems theory is macrosystem. This includes government policies on education, laws governing the setting up of kindergartens and schools, cultural values, economic patterns and national customs (Härkönen 2007). Härkönen (2007) reiterated that the influences of the macrosystem would only be discovered after making a comparison between children, growing up in different societies. According to Bronfenbrenner's macrosystem concept, public policies in each country affect not only children but also family, schools, community and the nation as a whole (Johnson, 2008). National policies, government decisions and actions on children's issues and welfare provide an indirect impact on children's development. Policies on health and education systems have the most direct link to early childhood development and education (Press & Hayes, 2000). Such policies serve as the guiding principles for accessing education, developing protocols for quality programs, standards, certification, training of staff and resourcing the whole education system (ILO, 2012; UNESCO, 2005).

Policymakers and educators have attempted to understand which children are at risk of not being ready for school in order to provide guidance and direct additional resources to promote school readiness (Press & Hayes, 2000). In this way, the use of the macrosystem concept is important for gaining insights into the micro and macro-level Indonesian policies and programs by involving policy makers in this study.

Chronosystem and children's learning and development.

The chronosystem represents the time dimension that influences the operation of all levels of the bioecological systems (Johnson, 2008). The chronosystem of a child may be represented as the day-to-day and year-to-year developmental changes that happen to their microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. If conceptualised in its purest sense, the chronosystem is all the environmental events and transitions that occur throughout families and children's lives, which are informed by sociocultural, and sociohistorical events (Elder, 1995). The concept of the chronosystem provides a tool for analysing and comprehending differences in practices experienced by individuals and families which are informed by time.

Chronosystems are constitutive of both normative and non-normative events (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Normative events refer to times that children and families anticipate and relate to life occurrences such as the birth of a new child, entrance to childcare and kindergarten, the transition to school and much more. These normative events are structured by contextual factors such as culture and socioeconomic and socio-historic events within a particular time frame (Johnson, 2008). In this sense, children born in different generations, living in diverse cultural settings, or members of different religions, economic and policy periods will identify normative practices in different ways (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Transition to school is a normative event, which is tied to school, family and community traditions.

It can be argued that normative events often involves shared meanings relevant to the nature of family circumstances, values, and traditions (Johnson, 2008). Non-normative events within the chronosystem are sudden unusual events that have a significant impact on the life-course of children and families (Elder, 1995). For example, the introduction of a new school policy related to the age or knowledge requirements of starting elementary school, which is unexpected, can have a different implication for children and their families. All changes that

occur within a child's life span will influence learning opportunities and development processes that may affect school readiness and the transition to school outcomes.

Summary.

This chapter has reviewed the literature and explained the theoretical framework that influenced this study. In summary, the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological perspective explains that children's development is shaped by multiple systems, including the family, community, school, peers, government, culture, and time. The theory formalises five conceptual layers of systems in the environment that influence a child's readiness and transition to school (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006a; Härkönen 2007; Johnson, 2008). It captures a comprehensive model of human development and the relationships within and across the five systems. By using these conceptual ideas, it has been possible in this research to capture the important aspects of a child's environment and the relation of each aspect to the child's readiness and transition to school in Indonesia. The next chapter provides the specifics on the methodology, method and research design for this study.

Chapter III.

Methodology

Introduction

This study was developed with two purposes in mind. The first purpose was to explore the perspectives of Indonesian parents, teachers, and government personnel in relation to their understandings and practices of school readiness and transition to elementary school. The second purpose was to find out about the experiences of first-grade children of elementary school when they first entered elementary school and the feelings of final year kindergarten children who were about to enter elementary school. This chapter describes the methodology and methods used to undertake this study by presenting the reasons for, and a description of the research design, details about the participants and settings, data collection and sampling procedures, characteristics of the data collected and the data analysis processes that were employed. The research addressed the following questions:

- What do Indonesian kindergarten teachers, parents, and local government personnel elucidate they are doing to guide and educate children to enter elementary school with skills to be successful?

In addition to the main question above, two additional research questions were investigated:

1. What factors of early learning experiences do early childhood educators, parents, and local policy personnel believe to be important for children's school readiness and transition to school?
2. What are the experiences and feelings of:
 - a. first grade of elementary school children in terms of their first day of starting?
 - b. children in kindergarten who are preparing to go to school?

These questions necessitated that relevant research paradigms be chosen in order to sufficiently address the issue of school readiness and transition to school. There are several research paradigms for conducting educational research. These include positivism (naïve realism), post-positivism (critical realism), interpretivism (constructivism) and pragmatism (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Hallebone & Priest, 2009; Saunders et al., 2009, p.119; Wahyuni, 2012). The choice of a particular paradigm (s) depends on the purpose of the research and the nature of the research questions (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). On the one hand, ontologically, educational researchers may perceive reality in different ways, for example, pure positivists may perceive reality as external and independent of social actors (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark, & Smith, 2011; Howe, 2009). In this way, their interpretations of reality or data collected may be described as objective in nature (Neuman, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). On the other hand, interpretivists or constructivists adopt theories that believe reality is socially constructed or that individuals contribute to social phenomena in their everyday observations and interactions (Wahyuni, 2012).

My research questions stated in the introduction of this chapter warranted obtaining data on perceptions, which can be gathered through quantitative surveys, and feelings, which can be obtained through qualitative interviews. In view of my research questions, I needed a methodology that supports both qualitative and quantitative data gathering. Pragmatic methodology or pragmatism is relevant to this research because it is situated both in the positivist and interpretive paradigm as well as allows the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative approaches in research (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark, & Smith, 2011; Wahyuni, 2012). Epistemologically, what constitutes acceptable knowledge in social research depends upon the research questions (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In this research, I selected pragmatism as a methodological paradigm as it focuses on practical applied research, integrating both

qualitative and quantitative perspectives to help interpret data related to perspectives, feelings, and practices.

Traditionally, there have been many criticisms leveled against the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single research (Howe, 1988, 2003). These criticisms are based on the assumption that the philosophical basis of quantitative and qualitative research methods are incompatible with one another (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark, & Smith, 2011; Howe, 1985). However, current insights into educational research have it that there is an element of subjectivity and value in any type of research whether it is conducted in a positivist or interpretive tradition (Howe, 2009; Wahyuni, 2012). Values play significant roles in the ways researchers interpret the results of any research whether the researcher claims he/she is adopting objective and subjective points of view (Howe, 2009).

By ascribing to positivism as the tenable methodology, researchers may be isolating the empirical content of educational research from its humanly contributed conceptual content. According to Howe (2009), this pragmatic issue needs to be addressed in order to capture the holistic essence of a phenomenon. The pragmatic research can either be quantitative or qualitative or both and importantly, methodologies that foreground the use of qualitative methods can also illuminate important complexities, identify potentially hidden voices, and provide additional sources of evidence for supporting the research claims (NRC, 2002).

My choice of the pragmatic methodological approach, which blends both qualitative and quantitative approaches is that research context is of critical importance in educational research because of the interactive nature of research participants (Berliner, 2002). Several other variables come into play in educational research particularly, those involving different kinds of participants who bring their cultural values and levels of understanding into the research process (NRC, 2002). This methodological approach also recognises the competency

of young children and the nature of their minds in constructing knowledge, which can add value and richness to data (Berliner, 2002).

Research design.

The research design for this study featured a mixed method approach involving both qualitative and quantitative components. Table 1 identifies the data collection approaches to align the research questions with the methods. The purposes and research questions determine the design of a study (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark, & Smith, 2011; Weber et al., 2008). The research questions stated above require the collecting of both quantitative and qualitative data for this study, thus giving rise to a mixed-method design. The quantitative approach to data collection provides an opportunity for data to be gathered from a large number of teachers. On the other hand, qualitative methods, such as interviews can explore various perceptions of parents, children, and government personnel in depth. In the present study, teachers' perceptions of school readiness and transition generated through the survey served to complement data from the interviews (Creswell et al., 2011; Terrel, 2012; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016).

In this study, I used a mixed methods design, which is a procedure for collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study (Creswell et al., 2011; Terrel, 2012; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016). The purpose for this type of design is to understand the research problem of school readiness and transition to school in a more holistic way, as neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to capture the trends and details of the questions I posed. In relation to such a complex issue as understanding the perceptions and practices of teachers, parents, policy makers in terms of school readiness and transition to school coupled with children's experiences I need a mixed methods design for a deeper sense making of the

issues. The use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for more holistic and insightful analysis of a phenomenon (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010).

In the quantitative research aspect, as an investigator, I relied on numerical data using positivist claims for developing knowledge, such as factors that affect participants' thinking with regards to school readiness and transition to school, in addition to the use of measurement and observation. The purpose was to isolate variables and causally determine the magnitude and frequency of relationships based on the questionnaire instruments and yield numerical scores for analysis. Alternatively, in the qualitative research aspect, I engaged in the process of an inquiry to understand in-depth, the participants' perspectives and practices by developing a complex and holistic picture of the reported detailed views of participants which were documented in a natural setting (Creswell et al., 2011; Terrel, 2012; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016). This approach helped me to make knowledge claims based on the constructivist perspectives.

The qualitative aspect of the study facilitated data collection from Indonesians who immersed themselves in the everyday life of the setting in which the study was framed. Thus data analysis was based on the values that these participants perceived for their world in relation to school readiness and transition to school yielding a contextual and situational understanding of the problem based on multiple contextual factors (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

Creswell (2008a) argues that in a mixed methods approach, researchers build the knowledge on pragmatic grounds and that what counts as truth is what is reasonable. This means, researchers often select approaches as well as variables and units of analysis, which are most appropriate for finding answers to their research questions (Creswell et al., 2011; Terrel, 2012; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016). I would argue that the compatibility of quantitative and

qualitative approach in one study is grounded in pragmatism suggesting that both numerical and textual data, collected sequentially or concurrently, can help better understand the research problem of school readiness and transition to school.

While designing a mixed methods study, I carefully considered three issues - priority, implementation, and integration (Creswell et al., 2011). Priority refers to which approach, for example, either quantitative or qualitative, is given more emphasis or comes first in the study. Implementation refers to whether the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis come in chronological stages, one following another, or in parallel or concurrently. Integration refers to the phase in the research process where the mixing or combining quantitative and qualitative data occurs (Johnson & Christensen, 2010).

With the intention to obtain comprehensive data to explain the understandings and practices of school readiness and transition to school, the study applied an explanatory (QUAN + qual) mixed method study, in which the quantitative (QUAN) data is collected first followed by qualitative (qual) data to explain and extend insights into the quantitative data (Creswell et al., 2011). Mixed method design study allows for the collection of more than one type of data that give rise to rich information and broad description regarding the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2008a). In the case of this study, the mixed method design facilitated the collection of data on how parents, teachers and government personnel make sense of school readiness and transition to school, and procedures concerning school readiness and transition.

The research consisted of two phases. The first phase was a descriptive non-experimental design by conducting a survey to obtain quantitative data (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). The quantitative survey in the first phase of the research aimed to determine teachers' perception and experiences concerning school readiness and transition to school. The second phase, employed qualitative interviews to explore deeper information regarding the understanding and practices of school readiness and transition from the point of view of

parents, teachers, and government personnel. I also interviewed children to obtain their feelings and experiences of going to school and others about their first day of starting school.

Table 2. Summary of the research design.

Research question	Method	Data collection
What do Indonesian teachers, parents and local government personnel elucidate they are doing to guide and educate children to be ready for school and transition?	Quantitative and qualitative	Questionnaire and interview
What factors of early learning experiences do early childhood educators, parents, and local policy personnel believe to be important for children's school readiness and transition to school?	Qualitative	Interview
What are the experiences and feelings of:		
a) first grade of elementary school children in terms of their first day of starting?	Qualitative	Interview
b) children in kindergarten who are preparing to go to school?		

My role in the research process.

As Indonesian researching issues in my home country, I became positioned both as an insider and an outsider in the research process (Creswell et al., 2011). As an insider, the similarity in race, citizenship, cultural background and language made it easy for me to have flexible entry to the research site in Indonesia. In this study, I worked directly with participants and became a learner with key responsibilities to collect, describe and analyse data based on the experiences of the participants. I was aware that my interests, values, and positions in the Indonesian society did in some way influenced the decisions as to how the research process should proceed. During the interviews with teachers, parents, and government personnel, I was aware that my role in the interview might actually be perceived as one of an authority figure because of my status of being an Indonesian from the Ministry of Education researching educational issues.

This positioning required that I be mindful and conscious of my behaviours, language, and even attire during the interview process. The outsider positioning was the result of my western education and perspectives that in many ways consciously or unconsciously influenced the research process. Consequently, I needed to be attentive to my own subjectivities and biases throughout the interviews process and during data analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Although I tried to keep my personal views separated from the research by remaining neutral in my questions and comments, it was possible that some of my views might have biased or influenced the results to some extent.

Preparation for fieldwork.

Human Research Ethics approval and permission procedures.

Prior to the fieldwork, I obtained ethics approval from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC LR CF15/347 – 2015000168, see Appendix 11). To obtain approval, consent forms, explanatory statements, the questionnaire and interview questions were written in English and Indonesian. The English versions of all the documents were submitted to the committee to ensure that the research followed the established ethical protocol of Monash University to protect the rights and safety of all participants in the study. Once ethics approval was granted, I proceeded to the selection of schools and participants for the study.

Site selection

Indonesia is an archipelago consisting of an estimated total of 17,500 islands of which only about 6,000 are inhabited. More than 500 ethnic groups are scattered in 33 provinces (UNESCO, 2011). Previous research on school readiness and transition to school was conducted in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia in 2014 (Fridani & Agbenyega,

2014). Due to the lack of adequate and relevant research information on early childhood education and kindergartens for children living in small cities and remote areas of Indonesia, this study was designed and conducted in two provinces, Yogyakarta and Central Kalimantan. It was assumed that different cultures within the same country might have unique needs in terms of parenting styles, educational aspirations and school readiness practices (Britto, 2012b).

Yogyakarta, a province in Indonesia, is renowned for cultural diversity and is noted as the center of Javanese culture. It is located in the central part of Java Island. Although Java Island represents solely 7 percent of Indonesia's total geographical region, ethnic Javanese comprise about 45 percent of Indonesia's total residents. Javanese attitudes and philosophy totally permeate the Indonesian bureaucracy, government, and military, hence the great importance of understanding the Javanese perspectives when referring to Indonesia (UNESCO, 2011). Yogyakarta is also considered as leading in the education sector because of the high enrollment rates in formal and non-formal education (Unicef, 2007), and always obtaining the highest ranking in the national exams. On the other hand, Central Kalimantan is the third largest Indonesian province located in the central region of Borneo or Kalimantan Island. Most of the territory of Central Kalimantan is covered by forest. The indigenous inhabitants of Central Kalimantan are the Dayak tribe. The Dayak culture is influenced by Chinese, Malay, Muslim, Hindu, and Dutch (UNESCO, 2011).

Limited funds and time restricted this study to Sleman district in Yogyakarta. Originally, Yogyakarta province was divided into five districts: Sleman, Bantul, Gunung Kidul, Kulon Progo and Yogyakarta. Sleman district was selected as the research site because the gross enrollment rate in early childhood education was very high at 98.4% according to Nazarudin, Sofiah, Hakim, and Wahono (2013). The local Education authority

recommended four subdistricts out of seventeen sub-districts in Sleman as the research site - Ngaglik, Depok, Ngemplak, and Pakem.

Selecting schools and participants

Selection of schools

Once permission was obtained from Education authorities in Sleman district, school principals were contacted to obtain their permission to conduct the survey and interviews in their settings and to seek their cooperation in distributing consent forms to teachers and parents. Schools were selected from the four subdistricts based on purposive and convenience sampling (Creswell, 2008a). Potential schools were selected from those who indicated a willingness to participate. A letter stating the purpose of the study and seeking consent for participation in the study was sent to 102 schools. The principals of the schools who were willing to participate in the study signed the consent forms. Since most people in Indonesia cannot speak and read the English language, consent forms and information letters were written in Indonesian only. I personally picked up the consent forms a week after they were distributed. Fifty-three schools out of 102 schools within the four subdistricts were selected based on their approval to participate in the study.

Participant selection

Once approval to conduct research had been received from schools, participant selection began. The participants of this study were kindergarten and first-grade children, teachers, parents of kindergarten and first-grade children and government personnel within four subdistricts of Sleman. Each participant received two copies of the consent forms to be signed, one copy of the document was given to the participant, the other was kept by me.

Teachers

Kindergarten education in Indonesia is divided into two groups, group A and B. Group A for age four to five years old, and group B for children who are six years old. For the purposes of this study, kindergarten teachers were those who taught children in group B in public or private kindergartens. Furthermore, first-grade teachers were those who taught children who were in their first year of public or private elementary school. Most of the kindergartens and elementary schools in Sleman district have one class of group B kindergarten children and one class at the first-grade level. In all, 120 teachers agreed to participate.

Parents

Some difficulties were encountered in recruiting parents or guardians. I was not able to meet in person to distribute the consent forms without having permission from the school authorities. Parents were selected based on the recommendations of the school principals who also added their written comments on the consent forms to be signed by parents. Initially, five parents whose children were in kindergarten and five whose children were in the first grade of elementary school agreed to be interviewed, however, three of the parents whose children were in first grade canceled their participation. Eventually, five parents of kindergarten children and two parents of first-grade children agreed to be interviewed for this study.

Government personnel

Two government personnel were selected based on the recommendation of the superintendent in the local and central government office. One government personnel who was working in the Education authority of Sleman district at the time, and one personnel who from the Ministry of Education and Culture were recruited as

participants. The two government personnel have been working in the early childhood education division for more than five years.

Children

Children were selected from kindergarten and first-grade peers. Their participation in the study was approved through consent forms that were signed by their parents. The children consisted of 5 kindergarten children and 5 first graders who were selected based on their parents' willingness for their participation. In addition to parents consent, the children drew pictures to approve of their participation.

Table 3. Summary of the participants.

No.	Groups	Numbers	Data collection methods
1.	Teachers	120	Questionnaire interview
2.	Parents	7	Interview
3.	Local government personnel	2	Interview
4.	Children	10	Interview

Tools for data collection.

Questionnaire for teachers.

I constructed a questionnaire on school readiness and transition in collaboration with my thesis supervisors. The development of the questionnaire took place in three stages. First, I reviewed the literature on school readiness and transition using key indicators of school readiness and positive transition to school to develop the questionnaire. After I have completed

the first draft of the questionnaire items, I sent it for revision by my supervisors. After I was given the approval to proceed, I conducted a pilot run to review and test the validity and reliability of the items. The pilot study was followed by revision of items in the questionnaire for clarity of language.

The final questionnaire.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section consisted of seven questions investigating teachers' background information. Items in the second section were constructed by adapting three dimensions of school readiness suggested by Britto (2012b) which consisted of 1) *ready children* were referred to as children's learning and development; 2). *A ready family* was conceptualised as family involvement and attitudes toward children's early development and learning, and 3). *Ready schools* were referred to as school environments and practices that support learning for all children to experience quality learning. These dimensions of school readiness were applied as the foundation to developing policy on early childhood education in Indonesia (Purwadi & Muljoatmodjo, 2012). The second section consisted of 10 closed ended questions aimed at gathering teachers' perspectives on school readiness dimensions.

The third section of the questionnaire consisted of 15 items to obtain the characteristics of school readiness based on five domains formalised by the USA National Education Goal Panel (Dockett & Perry, 2009). The questionnaire covered the following areas: physical health and motor development, social-emotional maturity, language, approach to learning, and cognition. These five domains of school readiness have become widely accepted in the early childhood educational community (Dockett & Perry, 2009) as indicated below:

1. Physical well-being and motor development, including health status, growth, and disability.

2. Social and emotional development, including turn-taking, cooperation, empathy, and the ability to express one's own emotions.
3. Approaches to learning, including enthusiasm, curiosity, temperament, culture, and values.
4. Language development, including listening, speaking, and vocabulary, as well as literacy skills, including print awareness, story sense, and writing and drawing processes.
5. General knowledge and cognition, including sound-letter association, spatial relations, and number concepts.

Originally, the questionnaire was written in English but since the majority of the teachers in Indonesia cannot speak and read English, the questionnaire was translated into the Indonesian language by an expert bilingual translator.

Table 4. The dimension of school readiness.

No	Dimension	Indicators	Item Number
1	Ready children	Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten	1
		Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need.	5
		Readiness comes as children mature, you can't push it.	6
2	Ready Family	Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten.	3
		Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice school work.	8
		Homework should be given in kindergarten almost everyday	9
3	Ready School	Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school.	2
		A child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling.	4
		I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills	7
		I assume that the end of kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade.	10

Table 5. The characteristics of school readiness.

No	Domain	Indicators	Item Number
1	Physical well-being	Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished.	11
		Can count to 20 or more.	13
		Is able to use pencils on paint brushes.	17
2	General knowledge and Cognitive	Knows the letters of the alphabet.	22
		Identifies primary colors and basic shapes	24
3	Social - Emotional maturity	Takes turns and shares	14
		Is not disruptive of class.	18
		Child has good problem-solving skills	15
		Is not disruptive of the class	20
4	Language	Know the Indonesian language.	19
		Can follow directions	23
		Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language	25
5	Approaching to learning	Finished tasks.	12
		Sits still and pays attention	16
		Is enthusiastic and curious	21

Scoring of the questionnaire.

The responses in the questionnaire applied an agreement rating scale developed by Rensis Likert (Johnson & Christensen, 2010). In order to receive more detailed answers concerning teachers' perception, I applied five-point rating scale. Johnson and Christensen (2010) suggested that rating scales with less than four points or more than eleven points have poor reliability, whereas those with four to seven points are more reliable. Four and five point rating scales are the most widely used in educational research. Each Likert-scale item requested participants to respond with a range of five alternative answers which were "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", and "Strongly Disagree" (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2010). To quantify school readiness dimension, the responses included: 5 = "Strongly agree", 4 = "Agree", 3 = "Neutral", 2 = "Disagree", and 1 = "Strongly

disagree”. Furthermore, to assess school readiness characteristics, the alternative answers consisted of: 1 = “not important”, 2 = “somewhat important”, 3 = “important”, 4 = “very important”, and 5 = “essential”.

Pilot testing.

Creswell (2008b) suggested that in developing a reliable and valid instrument for research, much attention needs to be applied to the formulation of the items or questions. Furthermore, he stated that clear and unambiguous questions will provide meaningful answers. To ensure that all of the items in the questionnaire were easily understood and clear, the 25 initial items were reviewed by two independent Indonesian reviewers experienced in the areas of early childhood education. Expert reviewers have been used as a pretesting method to identify problematic linguistic structures in survey questions (Holbrook, Krosnick, Moore, & Tourangeau, 2007). These experts provided feedback on item number 1, by eliminating the word: “*childcare*”, as not only early childhood teachers would be filling out the questionnaires, and replacing some of the sentences that were unclear. Their feedback was then applied for revising the items. The pilot testing of the questionnaire was conducted by 20 kindergarten teachers in Indonesia to obtain the reliability of the questionnaire.

Validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

Validity and reliability refer to the meaning of scores from psychometric instruments (Cook & Beckman, 2006). Validity refers to the degree to which the instruments succeed to describe what it is designed to measure. Reliability is a consistency or stability of the measurement results over various conditions (Drost, 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2010; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). In positivists (quantitative) paradigm, data are often collected by questionnaires or surveys. Researchers need to establish validity and reliability in developing

their research instruments. Validity consists of internal and external validity (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). Internal validity refers to the accuracy of the instrument in interpreting the results. On the other hand, external validity is associated with the generalisation of the results to the populations, situations, and conditions (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). To be valid and reliable, the descriptions of the research procedures and conditions should be adequate and the reliability of an instrument's scores must be confirmed empirically.

The questionnaire was reviewed by my supervisors after the input from the Indonesian experts to obtain their evaluation of the items. The reliability alpha coefficient of the 10 items of the dimension of school readiness scale was $\alpha = .742$ and $\alpha = .915$ for the fifteen items of the characteristics of school readiness scale. This reliability coefficient indicated that the items were credible and valid to gather data on school readiness and transition to school. After pilot testing was completed, the questionnaires were distributed to the selected kindergarten and elementary school teachers in the Sleman district.

Interview questions

I developed interview questions to obtain a more in depth account of participant's opinions, perceptions, and ideas regarding school readiness and transition to school. The questions were constructed based on the literature review of Dockett, Perry, and Tracey's (1997) pilot studies which examined school readiness perceptions and beliefs. Sample modified questions administered to parents, teachers, and government personnel read:

- What do you understand by the term "school readiness"?
- What are the criteria you use to determine when children are ready for school?
- Who is responsible for getting children ready for school?

I decided to apply those questions in my study with the assumption that they could generate data regarding the understandings of teachers, parents, and government personnel on school

readiness and positive transition to school. Furthermore, interview questions for children were developed to identify children's feeling on the first day of starting school. Sample questions include: How did you feel on your first day of going to school? What happened when you first entered school? For those children in kindergarten who were about to enter school, the questions centred on their feelings toward going to formal school.

All the questions were translated from the English language into the Indonesian language by an expert translator. To ensure that all of the questions were easily understood and clear, the questions were reviewed by two kindergarten teachers who had experience with interviewing children. Their feedback was applied to revise the questions.

Validity and reliability of the qualitative interviews.

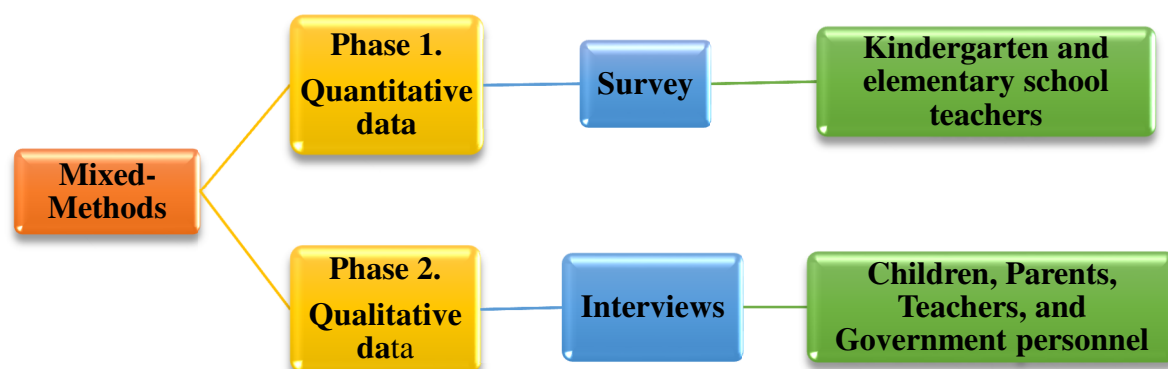
The term validity is usually associated with quantitative research (Johnson & Christensen, 2010). In qualitative data, some of the terminology for this form of research included terms such as trustworthiness, dependability, credibility, and transferability to evaluate the study (Golafshani, 2003). Trustworthiness aims to determine how accurate the data reflected the participants' responses to the questions. In this study, the field notes from the interviews were used to complement the interview data. To justify the credibility of the interview, I asked for more information in order to better record the participants' responses if the response was not clearly understood. Furthermore, since this study included a small sample, it allowed for a rigorous member-checking. A list of 10 questions was first developed for the interviews. Feedback was obtained from the three members of the research committee as well as expert feedback from members of the district; opinions and content validity were confirmed by committee members and members of the district. Inter-rater reliability was employed by having another doctoral student to code approximately 10 percent of the data to compare results.

The method of triangulation revealed that three samples from the participants' responses described similar perceptions and concurred with findings in the review of the literature. In the exception of the children, member checks were conducted by e-mailing each of the participants the transcribed text in order to assess the adequacy of data and preliminary results. This is also to confirm particular aspects of the data. Participants were provided a deadline date to ensure a timely return of the text to correct errors. The content of the email stated it would be assumed that if the text had not been returned by the specified date the participant was affirming the document to be an accurate representation of their responses.

Data collection process.

The processes adopted to collect data for the study are summarised in the diagram below.

Figure 4. Data collection process.



The data collection was organised in two stages. Quantitative data were collected in the first phase, followed by qualitative data. The timeline and activities are presented below.

Table 6. The timeline and activities.

Phase	Date	Activities
Phase 1.	March, 2015	Teachers survey
Phase 2	April – May, 2015	Interview with teachers, parents, government personnel and children

Phase one: Quantitative data collection.

Administration of the questionnaire.

I distributed the teacher's questionnaire to each teacher in person. Of 150 questionnaires distributed, I managed to collect 120 questionnaires. The participants were allowed three days to complete the questionnaire after which I returned to the research schools to collect the questionnaire. Each questionnaire was given a random number so that participants' identities were kept confidential. The entire survey required between 45-60 minutes to complete. The questionnaire was divided into three distinct sections that consisted of 25 closed-ended question, 10 demographic questions, and three open-ended questions. The open-ended questions requested from participants to elaborate on their own understandings and perceptions of school readiness and transition to school. The initial analyses of the quantitative data were conducted to identify high and low score (extreme cases) which guided the selection of participants for the qualitative phase to elaborate or to increase insights into the views and perceptions denoted in the questionnaires.

Phase Two: Qualitative data collection.

In the second phase, I conducted a semi-structured face to face interviews to gather data on what school readiness means to parents, teachers, government personnel and children who are experiencing it. Teachers whose responses indicated high and low scores in the quantitative phase were invited to participate in the interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of their

views. Three questions were asked to teachers, parents and government personnel to elucidate their perceptions regarding school readiness and transition to school. Children in the final year of kindergarten were asked to talk about their feelings and expectations regarding going to elementary school. Those children in the first grade included in the study were asked to describe their feelings and experiences on their first day of starting school. Children supplemented their verbal expressions with drawing activities. The actual drawings were not included in the body of this thesis but used to trigger further conversations with children to enrich the data. To obtain clearer answers, there were further probing questions during the process of the interviews.

Interview with teachers.

Interviews were conducted with 10 teachers who volunteered from the 120 participants in the teachers' survey. Five teachers who rated items highly and five teachers who rated items very low on the questionnaire were invited for the interviews. The rationale for selecting the highest and lowest scores was to further clarify their responses on the questionnaire. This approach extended insights into the responses on the questionnaire. All of the participants were living in Ngemplak subdistrict at the time of the interviews. Interviews were conducted in the visitors' room in each school.

Interview with parents.

Interviews were conducted with 7 parents located in a classroom of each school. Interviews were audio recorded for later transcription. Field notes were taken on paper to note things like mood and atmosphere and any other relevant issues that came up.

Interview with government personnel.

To gain a sense of the policy dimension regarding school readiness and transition to school in Indonesia, two government personnel were recruited through a purposive invitation

to participate in the study. One of the government personnel was the Early Childhood Development General Director officer in Sleman district and the other was from the Ministry of Education and Culture officer in Jakarta. Their interviews were conducted in their respective offices.

All the interviews were face-to-face with semi-structured questions to generate data from teachers, parents and government staff. Sample open-ended questions constructed for the study include:

1. What do you understand by the term “school readiness”?
2. What are the criteria to determine when children are ready for school?
3. Who is responsible for getting children ready for school?

Each interview lasted about 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded for later transcription by the researcher. Field notes were taken on paper to note things like mood and atmosphere. The recordings were played back to the participant so that they could review their information ensuring that they communicated what they have been intended.

Interview with children.

Starting school is considered as an event that requires children’s ability to adapt and manage their emotions, behaviours, and attitudes in their new school environment. Research has indicated that not all children go through this transition to school smoothly (Dockett & Perry, 2004; Fabian, 2006). Interviews with children in the first grade were conducted to determine how they felt on the first day of starting elementary school.

Children were recruited from two different educational settings. Five children were invited from final year in kindergarten who were preparing for elementary school entry the following year and five others from the first grade of elementary school. The purpose of including children from the final year of kindergarten was to find out about their feeling

towards going to elementary school while the inclusion of children in grade one of elementary school was to find out about their experiences of their first day at school.

Firstly, I distributed consent forms to parents in the kindergartens in Ngemplak subdistrict and elementary schools in Pakem subdistrict when they dropped off their children at school. The schools were selected based on their willingness of their children to participate in the interviews. After the consent forms have been signed by parents, I asked individual children who were willing to participate in the interviews to draw themselves to indicate agreement. Children who refused to draw were not included and only those who consented through drawing were selected as participants. In all, 10 children participated in the interviews comprising of four boys and six girls who were between five and seven years old.

Interviewing children in a group situation encourages collaborative discussion and alleviates any feeling of stress associated with one-to-one interviews which children usually found confronting (Irwin & Johnson, 2005). In order to build trust with the children and become familiar with the school routines, I visited the various school settings as a volunteer to support teachers. I had friendly interactions with the children and it was during my volunteering time that I introduced myself and explained how I would be spending time with them to talk more about their experiences. These pre-interview activities ensured that the children felt at ease with me when I returned to the school sites to conduct the interviews. The interviews were conducted in one of the empty classrooms in each school setting when the other children were outdoor playing. The interviews were organised in two groups with drawing activities to create a comfortable child-friendly environment.

In this study, children were requested to describe their feelings on the first day of starting school. To identify children's feelings, I used cards with faces on them depicting happy and sad. Children were asked to copy by drawing the expression that described their feelings. Questions asked included: "How did you feel on your first day of going to school?" or "What

happened when you first entered school?” “How do you feel about going to school next year?” The drawing activities triggered richer conversation during the interviews with the children (Irwin and Johnson, 2005).

Analysis of quantitative data.

In this research, the quantitative data generated from the survey was analysed using *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) Version 20 (2012) to calculate the percentage of agreement with the survey statements. To determine whether statistical differences can be found between kindergarten and first-grade teachers' perception on school readiness and transition to school on the measurable items, I applied an independent T-test as well as calculate error margins to find out the nature of the 'effect sizes'. Percentages were also calculated as appropriate to show how teachers responded to the various survey items.

Qualitative data analysis.

The qualitative data for this study came from interviews with children, teachers and policy personnel. There are various approaches to analysing qualitative data. The purpose of the analysis in this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of parents, children, teachers, and government personnel regarding school readiness and transition to school. Qualitative data analysis usually consists of organising and transcribing data, (2) coding the data, and (3) representing the data in a meaningful way (Creswell, 2008b).

Transcription of the interview data.

All interviews were conducted in the Indonesian language and were audio recorded. Firstly, the audio recording of the interviews was transcribed into Indonesian before being translated into English. The English version was used for coding and whenever necessary, I returned to the original Indonesian version for additional clarification. The interview transcripts along with memo writing, notes, and related documents were

organised and stored in folders on my computer. To engage in detailed analysis, I applied Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) framework approach to qualitative data analysis. This approach involved five crucial stages:

Stage 1: Familiarisation - The aim of this stage was getting to know my transcribed data in detail. I began the familiarisation by reading and re-reading through the transcripts to immerse myself in the data (Ritchie & Spencer 1994, p. 179). This approach enabled me to get a sense of what is going on in the interview data. By listening to the interviews repeatedly, gave me a sense of what was of importance or concern to the participants regarding school readiness and transition to school. This process also helped me to become aware of the emotional expressions of the participants, for example, the children's data when they talked about being scared to go to school.

Stage 2: Identifying a thematic framework – At this stage of the analysis, I organised the data in a meaningful and manageable way so that it became easier for me to retrieve, explore, and examine further any important information during the final mapping and interpretation stage. My approach was guided by Ritchie and Spencer (1994)'s suggestion that the process of developing a thematic framework categories must be informed both by a priori concerns as well as emergent issues arising from the earlier familiarisation step. My priority and emergent issues focused on the research questions and my interests, as well as on the issues that were pertinent to the research participants (Wood et al. 2010). Engaging in this process also involved trial and error, for example, moving forward and going back through the data (Parkinson, Eatough, Holmes, Stapley & Midgley, 2016).

The thematic process involved reviewing and coding the interview transcripts. Initially, the transcripts of interviews were read and closely examined. The coding process required searching through the data to find similarities and patterns in words and phrases throughout the

data. Each time particular words, phrases, and concepts were mentioned by an interviewee, I identified and placed them in a specific category that described one idea. I used open coding as a process of organising and reducing data (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009) including marking or labelling the segments of the qualitative data, such as ideas, events, descriptive words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs (Saldaña, 2012). Eventually, I realised the need to focus my framework initially on data reduction, rather than immediately thinking about how to interpret at this stage (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An example of the coding process is presented in Table 6.

Table 7. Categories of response.

Categories	Description	Examples
Knowledge of school readiness.	Ideas, facts or concepts that need to be known in order to start school.	write, know numbers, knowing the alphabet, counting, reading.
Adjustment during transition.	Adjustment to the school context, including interpersonal and organizational adjustment.	Can talk with children and adults at school, follows directions, school routines.
Skills depicting readiness.	Small units of action that could be observed or inferred from observable behaviour.	Drawing, toilets independently, identify own possessions.
Disposition of school readiness.	Attitudes towards, or feelings about school or learning.	Some friends are different, cried because scared and a little bit shy, excited about school.
Rules.	Fitting in with the school and school expectations	Wear a hat, lining up, coping with discipline
Physical aspects of readiness.	Physical attributes, personal needs or characteristics. Also includes issues of safety, health and age.	Brush the teeth, get dressed, to get ready for school, height, physical health, nutrition.
Family issues	Issues related to family functioning or involvement with the school.	Sister or brother told children the class and what to do, parent–school communications, cost, parent’s decision.
Educational environment	The nature and/or characteristics of the school and neighbourhood.	Quality and nature of Education provided. Quality and nature of the neighbourhood.

Stage 3: Indexing - Ritchie and Spencer (1994), explains the indexing as a stage where the researcher organises the transcripts into the framework categories. At this stage, I was involved in the systematic application of the framework to each interview transcript from teachers, parents, policy makers and children. In charting an interview, I worked through each framework category to summarise all data that have been indexed in that category. I did this

by providing a summary for each category for each participant, making it easy for me to move between the summaries and the original transcripts (Parkinson et al., 2016; Swallow et al. 2011). In order not to lose detail of participants' words, I provided whole sections of some of the interviews to support the codes. This led to the final two stages of the analysis.

Stage 4 & 5: Mapping and interpretation - The aim of this stage of framework analysis approach is to go beyond just reducing and managing data to looking for key components of the data for in-depth understanding (Parkinson et al., 2016). In Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) view, this approach enables the researcher to pull together key findings within the data for joint and holistic interpretation. At this stage, therefore, I begin to clarify and describe key concepts such as components of transition and readiness, criteria for transition, readiness, continuity, and discontinuity that represent the range and nature of important findings within the data. While doing this, I looked for patterns within the data to articulate my understanding of the findings by drawing on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory to explain further and present the findings in relations to the research questions (Parkinson, Eatough, Holmes, Stapley & Midgley, 2016).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided understanding into the methodology and methods used in this research. A mixed method perspective underpins the research process. For an in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives on school readiness and transition to school, a qualitative and interpretive approach complemented data generated from the quantitative phase of this study. Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses provided unique understandings into early childhood readiness and transition to school within a culturally diverse site in Sleman district in Indonesia. The next chapter presents the data and findings of the study.

Chapter IV.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Introduction.

This chapter presents the results of the study obtained through the data analysis. The data were collected and then analysed in response to the research questions presented in Chapter One of this thesis. Three research questions drove the collection of data and the subsequent data analysis. The research questions aimed to develop knowledge and understanding of the perceptions and practices of first-grade elementary teachers, kindergarten teachers, parents and policy makers regarding school readiness and transition to elementary school. The study also explored the perspectives of children who were in the first grade of an elementary school about their experiences when they first entered school, and children who were in the final year of kindergarten preparing for school entry about their feeling toward formal schooling.

The study was conducted in the Sleman district of Yogyakarta in Indonesia. The overall purpose of the study was to find out the best ways to support children's positive transition to Elementary School. The findings presented in this chapter are divided into two parts. The first part presents the study findings in the form of numerical data obtained from the quantitative phase of the study. The second part presents the findings from the qualitative data obtained in the second phase of the study.

Part One: Quantitative results.

Phase One of this mixed-method study utilised a descriptive survey approach to document teachers' perception concerning factors and characteristics that contribute to children's school readiness and positive transition to school. The survey was conducted with

kindergarten and first-grade teachers in the Sleman District of Yogyakarta in Indonesia from April 1 to 18, 2015 to generate numerical data. I distributed 150 questionnaires for teachers in 58 schools. A total of 120 teachers returned the questionnaire. The survey questions sought information on demographic data such as gender, educational background of the teachers, work experiences, and teachers' understanding of the factors they considered essential for children to be ready and experience a positive transition to school.

Creswell (2008b) proposed the following stages: scoring, composing a codebook, and determining a statistical software to managing quantitative data analysis. In light of this, each response category to the questionnaire was organised in numerical scores which have been pre-assigned on the questionnaire. All responses were recorded, exported into a spreadsheet, and transferred to SPSS statistical software package for analysis.

Demographic information of participants.

The first section of the questionnaire collected demographic information including gender, place of employment, teaching time, qualification, teaching experiences, educational status in the field of early childhood and membership in an Indonesian teachers' organisation. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 8. Demographic characteristics of participant teachers (n = 120).

Characteristics	Kindergarten		First grade of Elementary school	
	n	%	n	%
School level	95	79.1	25	20.8
Gender:				
Male	1	0.8	1	0.8
Female	94	78.3	24	20
Teaching time:				
Full time	6	5	5	4.2
Temporary	89	74.2	20	16.6
Education background:				
High school	30	25	-	-
Diploma certificate 1 or 2 years	4	3.3	2	1.6
Diploma certificate 3 or 4 years	5	4.2	3	2.5
Bachelor	56	46.6	20	16.6
Teaching experiences:				
Less than 5 years	28	23.3	3	2.5
5 years	28	23.3	6	5
More than 5 years	38	31.6	16	13.3
Early childhood education background:				
Has early childhood education background	60	50	24	20
Doesn't have early childhood education background	35	29.1	1	0.8
Teachers Association membership:				
Member	83	69.1	18	15
Non-member	12	10	7	5.8

Table 8 represents demographic information of the kindergarten and elementary school teachers who participated in the survey. Of those teachers who participated, 79.1% (n=95) were kindergarten teachers, and 20.8% (n=25) were the first grade of elementary school teachers. The disproportionate ratio between kindergarten teachers and elementary teachers is a consequence of the less number of elementary school teachers in each school. In the Sleman District, irrespective of the number of children enrolled in an elementary school, each class is taught by one teacher in the first grade. This pushes pressure on teachers in the reception years to find ways to accommodate and support the new comers from kindergartens. Nevertheless, in kindergartens, there was more than one teacher in each class (one main teacher and one assistant teacher) to support children. This demonstrates that children in kindergarten were considered as requiring more support than their counterparts in elementary schools.

The findings suggest that females were significantly over-represented (98.3% (n=118) in those who participated compared with their male participants 1.7% (n=2). The high ratio of female teachers to males can be explained in terms of the reluctance of males to take up early childhood education as a profession due to the stereotype that teaching in early childhood is a female dominated profession (Kelleher et al., 2011). Some people regard women as nurturers (Cooney & Bittner, 2001) and others think that women are more patient and painstaking in working with young children than men (Munawaroh, Sastriyani, & Prakoso, 2009). In addition, some societies attribute early childhood education to the traditional gender roles that previously considered women as competent caregivers (Drudy, 2008).

In addition, the proportion of teachers who worked full time (9.2%, n=11) was fewer than those who were employed on a temporary basis (90.8%, n=109). Teachers on temporary employment were on short-term contracts in their respective public or private schools. This finding is supported by previous data that in Sleman district in Indonesia, approximately 70.8% of the teachers were found to be working in private schools as temporary teachers in 2014 (Central Bureau Of Statistics, 2014). This is significant because temporary teachers may not have opportunities to establish ongoing relationships with children. An ongoing relationship with children is an important requirement for them to build trust and develop an attachment. In relation to the transition to school, the continuity and consistency of teachers are important in providing a sense of stability and security to kindergarten children (Touhill, 2012).

Furthermore, kindergarten and first grade of elementary school teachers need at least a Bachelor's degree or four years of Diploma qualification in early childhood education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). These qualifications are to ensure that teachers have achieved the essential knowledge and skills required of early childhood

teachers (Umayahara, Lanceta, & Krausz, 2016). However, the results of the survey indicated that a quarter of the kindergarten teachers (25%, n=30) held a high school diploma, suggesting that they did not meet the Indonesian Government minimum qualification requirement.

One of the indicators of a teacher quality is teaching experience (Akiba, LeTendre, & Scribner, 2007; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Rockoff, & Wyckoff, 2008). The survey found there was a total number of 23.3% (n=28) of kindergarten teachers and 2.5% (n=3) of the elementary school teachers who had less than 5 years of teaching experience. This revealed that more than a quarter of the teachers who participated in this study may be inexperienced teachers.

Kindergarten and elementary school teachers also require specialisation in childcare and early childhood development (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015a). The survey indicated that more than a quarter of the kindergarten teachers (29.1%, n=35) and a small percentage of the elementary teachers (0.8%, n=1) did not have early childhood education background. In addition, the Indonesian government regulation of 2015, No. 14 on the teaching profession, explicitly stated that a teacher should become a member of the association of teachers. Overall, there were 10% (n=12) of the kindergarten teachers, and 5.8% (n=7) of the elementary school teachers in this study that were not members of the Indonesian Teacher Association, of the Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia (PGRI). This is an important finding because being a member of the teachers association provides the opportunity for professional learning to improve practice.

Teacher perceptions on the dimensions of school readiness and transition to school.

To address the main research question, the second section of the questionnaire were analysed to investigate the dimensions of school readiness and transition to school. The various dimensions of school readiness and transition to school that were considered in this study consisted of ready children, ready family, and ready school (Britto, 2012b; Dockett & Perry,

2009; Sorin & Markotsis, 2008), and were divided into ten items. Each item was measured on a Likert-scale which requested participants to respond to each statement within a range of five alternative answers (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2010). The alternative responses in this section consist of: ‘Strongly Agree’, ‘Agree’, ‘Neutral’, ‘Disagree’, and ‘Strongly Disagree’. A descriptive statistical analysis, an independent sample t-test and a One-way ANOVA were conducted to analyse the variation of the teachers’ responses. For the purpose of the item analysis, the answers ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Agree’ are combined in a single category along with the answers ‘Disagree’ and ‘Strongly Disagree’.

Teacher perceptions related to ready children.

Ready children refer to readiness for learning at school (Scott-Little et al., 2006; Snow, 2006) which focuses on how a child is being prepared to succeed in formal learning situations (Britto, 2012b). This section presents three items to elucidate teacher perceptions in relation to children’s readiness constructs. (1) *Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten.* (2) *Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need.* (3) *Readiness comes as children mature, you can’t push it.* The distribution of teacher responses is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Teacher responses to ready children.

No	Items	Strongly disagree/Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree/Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
1.	Attending kindergarten is very important for success in elementary school.	5	4.2	13	10.8	102	85
5.	Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need.	38	31.7	17	14.1	65	54.2
6.	Readiness comes as children mature, you can’t push it.	12	10	11	9.2	97	80.8

Table 9 shows the majority of teachers (85%, n=102) agreed/strongly agreed, “attending *kindergarten is very important for success in elementary school*” (Item no.1). On the other hand, a small proportion of teachers (4.2%, n=5) disagreed/strongly disagreed that kindergarten promotes readiness for elementary school success. The National Education System Law of Indonesia No. 20/2003 for example, recognised that kindergarten had a significant role in the development of children’s personality, as well as preparing them for elementary school education. In Indonesia, attending kindergarten is not compulsory, therefore some children who enrol in the first grade of elementary school, do so without having kindergarten experiences.

Previous research supported this position that approximately 82% of the children in Papua province, and 41% in the Yogyakarta province did not participate in kindergarten education prior to entering elementary school (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015b). In response to Item No. 5, more than half of the teachers 54.2% (n=65) were in favour that children *with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need*. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture’s school entry regulation in Indonesia, which was enacted in 2014, children are eligible to enrol in the first grade of elementary school when they attain 7 years of age. Children under 7 years old are prohibited by law to be enrolled in public elementary schools. It can also be determined from the results that a large number of teachers (80.8%, n=97) agreed/strongly agreed to Item No. 6 that *school readiness, comes as children mature, you cannot push it*. On the other hand, a small percentage of teachers (10%, n=12) were not in favour of the maturational proposition. With the majority of participants favouring the maturity argument, suggests that children’s age can be set as a criterion for school readiness and transition to school.

Teachers' perceptions related to ready family.

Ready family refers to family supports and parent's involvement with child's activities (Britto, 2012b; Sorin & Markotsis, 2008). Three items were assigned to probe teacher opinions on ready family consisted of (1) *Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabets before they start kindergarten.* (2) *Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice school work.* (3) *Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day.* The distribution of teacher responses is presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Teacher responses to ready family items.

No.	Items	Strongly disagree/Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree/Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
3.	Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabets before they start kindergarten.	73	60.8	27	22.5	22	18.3
8.	Parents should set aside time everyday for their kindergarten children to practice school work.	29	24.2	13	10.8	78	65
9.	Homework should be given in kindergarten almost everyday.	90	75	14	11.7	16	13.3

Table 10 shows that approximately 60.8% (n=73) of the teachers who participated in this study disagreed/strongly disagreed that parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten. On the other hand, a small percentage of teachers (18.3%, n=22) were in favour of children *knowing their alphabets before they enter elementary school*. In relation to literacy and numeracy instruction in kindergartens, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia outlined regulations preventing children from completing academic worksheets in literacy and numeracy in kindergartens and that play should be used in teaching children (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). Despite these policy guidelines, the results further suggested that 78 participants, representing 65% of the

participants agreed/strongly agreed that *parents should set aside time everyday for their kindergarten children to practice school work* (Item No.8). Surprisingly, this contradicts teachers' response to Item No.9, which indicated that a great majority (75%, n=90) are not in favour of *homework being given to children in kindergarten on the everyday basis*. Homework refers to school assignments given by teachers to children which they must complete at home after school (Tam & Chan, 2009). Previous research found that usually, children are not able to complete these tasks consequently, some parents ended up completing the tasks for them instead of supervising and supporting to finish the homework (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001).

Teacher perceptions related to ready schools.

Each school has different expectations pertaining to school readiness and transition to school (Sorin & Markotsis, 2008). A ready school refers to aspects of the school environment, facilities, rules and learning programs that support school readiness and transition to school (Britto, 2012b). The aspects of ready school were measured with four items. (1) *Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school.* (2) *If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, he or she should wait a year before enrolling.* (3) *I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills.* (4) *I assume that the end of kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade.* The distribution of teacher responses is presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Teacher responses to ready school items.

No.	Items	Strongly disagree/Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree/Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
2.	Children who began formal reading and math instruction in kindergarten will do better in elementary school.	35	29.2	21	17.5	64	53.3
4.	If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling.	61	50.8	16	13.4	43	35.8
7.	I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills.	12	10	15	12.5	93	77.5
10.	I assume that the end of kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade.	25	20.8	26	21.7	69	57.5

Table 11 shows that slightly over half of the teachers who participated in the study (53.3%; n=64) agreed/strongly agreed that children who began formal reading and math instruction in kindergarten will do better in elementary school and therefore should be taught to memorise their readings and numerals (Item No.2) suggesting that the teachers are in favour of academic teacher directed instruction of maths and reading. This response contradicts Indonesian government policy which prevents rote learning of academic literacy and numeracy in kindergartens (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013).

The findings showed that (35.8%, n=43) of the participants would like children who are found to be academically weak to wait for an extra year before they are enrolled in an elementary school even if they reached the mandated school entry age of 7 years. On the contrary, about half of the teachers (50.8%; n=61) disagreed/strongly disagreed to delay children's enrollment if they are considered unready for school. In response to Item No. 7, more than three-quarters of the teachers (77.5%, n=93) agreed/strongly agreed that *teachers can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills*. In addition, there were 57.5% (n=69) of the teachers who expressed positive perspectives that *at the end of kindergarten year all children will be ready for their first grade of school*. These results signified the recognition of the important role of teachers in promoting school readiness and transition to school.

Variations in teacher responses on the dimensions of school readiness and transition to school.

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to examine the differences between kindergarten and elementary school teacher responses to the questionnaire on the dimension of school readiness. The responses for each group were normally distributed as assessed by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($p > .05$). Homogeneity was examined by Levene test of Homogeneity of Variances (Sig. = .445). The results of the *t*-test analysis are presented below.

The independent sample t-test analysis of the dimensions of school readiness based on school level.

Table 12. Test of Normality

		Tests of Normality					
Dimension	School	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
		.128	25	.200*	.964	25	.490
	Kindergarten	.071	95	.200*	.988	95	.580

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 13. Group Statistics

		Group Statistics			
Dimension	School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
		25	34.32	6.115	1.223
		95	32.48	5.554	.570

Table 14. Analysis of Independent Samples Test

		Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
										Lower	Upper
DIMENSION	Equal variances assumed	.104	.747	1.440	118	.153	1,836	1.275	-.689	4.361	

The results of the Independent Samples Test presented in Table 14 shows $t = 1.440$, $df = 118$, $p = .153$. It indicates that the result is not statistically significant at .05 level of significance. In terms of the significance between the two teacher groups (see Table 13). The survey identified that there were slight variations in the responses from the kindergarten teachers ($M=32.48$, $SD=5.554$) and the elementary school teachers ($M=34.32$, $SD=6.115$); $t = 1.44$, $df=118$, $p = .153$. Results in Table 13 suggested that the Means of elementary school teachers' responses on the dimension of school readiness were slightly higher than those of the kindergarten teachers. The Mean differences between kindergarten and elementary school teachers' responses were (1.83) and the effect size value suggested a small practical significance ($d=0.653$), therefore I failed to reject the null hypothesis that there was no difference in the response on the dimension of school readiness between kindergarten teachers and elementary school teachers. The Error Graph (Figure 5) demonstrated the standart error (SE) bars overlap, which indicated the differences between the two means was not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$).

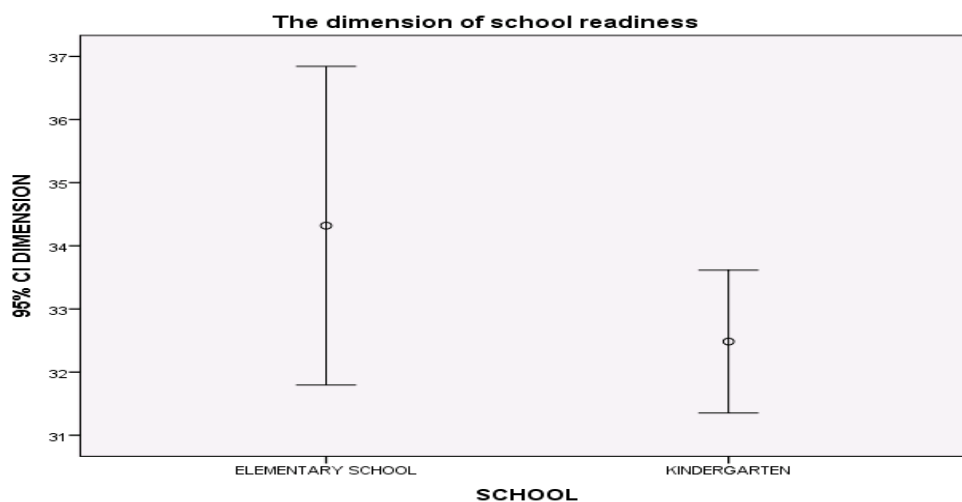


Figure 5: Error graph showing effect size on the dimensions of school readiness

The demographic data indicated that there were variations on teachers' education background. A one-way ANOVA was applied to analyse whether teachers' education

background would yield any significant differences in their responses to the questionnaire. The one-way ANOVA analysis determined that there were no statistically significant differences ($F(3,116) = 2.65, p = .425$) at .05 level of significance. The p value .425 is greater than .05 (the standard p value used in every research). A detailed analysis of the one-way ANOVA is presented below.

The One-Way ANOVA analysis of the dimensions of school readiness.

Table 15. The descriptive analysis

DIMENSION	Descriptives							
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
HIGH SCHOOL	30	33.07	5.258	.960	31.10	35.03	22	43
DIPLOMA 1/2	6	32.67	4.367	1.783	28.08	37.25	24	36
DIPLOMA 3/4	8	29.63	6.632	2.345	24.08	35.17	19	39
BACHELOR	76	33.14	5.851	.671	31.81	34.48	19	45
Total	120	32.87	5.698	.520	31.84	33.90	19	45

Table 16. The One-way ANOVA analysis

DIMENSION	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	91.384	3	30.461	.937	.425
Within Groups	3772.483	116	32.521		
Total	3863.867	119			

The results of the independent-samples t-test and the one-way ANOVA indicated there was not a lot of variations on the responses between kindergarten and elementary school teachers and between teachers with various education backgrounds (Bachelor, Diploma 3/4, Diploma 1/2, and high school). These variations represent the different perceptions regarding the dimension of school readiness and transition to school, in terms of ready children, ready family, and ready school. The results suggested that teachers with higher qualifications tended to response favourable to practices support the holistic development of the child than the less qualified teachers.

Teacher perceptions of the characteristics of school readiness and transition to school.

To address the first sub-research question, the third section of the questionnaire were analysed to examine the characteristics of school readiness and transition to school. It consisted of fifteen items which represent the five domains of school readiness and transition to school formalised by the USA National Education Goal Panel (National Education Goals Panel, 1995). The items investigated teacher perceptions in terms of the following areas: physical health and well-being, cognitive development and general knowledge, social and emotional development, language development and communication, and approaches towards learning. A five point Likert scale was applied to each item in order to identify and measure the degree of importance of each item in supporting school readiness and transition.

The alternative responses in this section consisted of: 'Essential', 'Very important', 'Important', 'Somewhat important', and 'Not at all important'. Items were formatted such that higher scores indicated either a higher level of importance of the item and lower scores indicated a lower level of importance of the item. For the purpose of item analysis, the answers 'Essential' and 'Very important' were combined in a single category along with the answers 'Somewhat important' and 'Not at all important'. The distributions of teachers' responses on each item of the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics to obtain the frequency on each alternative response.

Teacher perceptions on physical health and well-being.

Studies have found that health problems can influence a child's school readiness and transition to school directly or indirectly (Currie, 2005; Emel & Alkon, 2006). Physical health and well-being in this study refer to physical health status, well rested, and well-nourished children (Brunner, 2009; Bryant et al., 2005; Currie, 2005). The results of the descriptive analysis are presented in Table 17.

Table 17. Teachers' responses to physical health and well-being items.

No.	Items	Not at all /somewhat important		Important		Very important/Essential	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
1.	Physically healthy, well rested, and well nourished	-	-	17	14.2	103	85.8

Table 17 shows that the great majority of teachers (85.8%, n=103) believe that being *physically healthy, well rested, and well nourished* are very important/essential for child's school readiness and transition to school. None of the teachers responded to not at all important/somewhat important options. These results suggest that children's health is a critical factor that these teachers consider in their daily practice when implementing programs for school readiness. However, previous research suggests, the major challenge in relation to children's health in Indonesia is poor health status, unequal access to health services between urban and rural areas, and widespread malnutrition, especially in rural areas (Kamerman, 2002; Unicef, 2011).

Teachers' perceptions on cognitive development and general knowledge.

Cognitive development and general knowledge refer to school related knowledge such as the ability to recognise and write alphabets and numbers (Dockett & Perry, 2009). Four items represented these characteristics: *Can count to 20 or more*, *Is able to use pencils or paint brushes*, *Knows the letters of the alphabet*, and *Identifies primary colours and basic shapes*. The distribution of teachers' responses is displayed in Table 18.

Table 18. Teachers' responses to cognitive development and general knowledge.

No.	Items	Not at all /Somewhat Important		Important/Very important/Essential	
		n	%	n	%
13.	Can count to 20 or more	64	53.3	56	46.7
17.	Is able to use pencils or paint brushes	32	26.7	88	73.3
22.	Knows the letters of the alphabet	38	31.7	82	68.3
24.	Identifies primary colours and basic shapes.	24	20	96	80

Table 18 indicates that a little over half of the teachers (53.3%, n=64) believed that children's ability to *count up to 20 or more* was not at all important/somewhat important for school readiness and transition to school. There was a small proportion of teachers who categorised children *should be able to use pencils or paint brushes* (Item No. 17) as not at all important/somewhat important (26.7%, n=32). In terms of Item No. 17, the majority of teachers (73.3%, n=88) responded that it was important for children to be able to use pencil and paint brush. Furthermore, a total of 68.3% (n=82) teachers responded that *knowledge of the letters of the alphabet* (Item No. 22) was an important characteristic of school readiness and transition to school. Around 96 teachers representing 80% of the teachers confirmed that the ability to *identify primary colours and basic shapes* (Item No. 24) was important for a child's school readiness.

Teachers' perceptions on social and emotional development.

The concepts of social and emotional development refer to children's ability to establish a relationship with peers and participate in social interactions, cooperation with others, empathy, and the ability to express one's own emotions (Dockett & Perry, 2009). Four items represented the social and emotional development, consisted of: *Takes turn and shares, does not disrupt other in class, Has good problem-solving skills, and is Sensitive to other children's feelings*. The distributions of teacher responses are presented in Table 19.

Table 19. Teachers' responses to social and emotional development.

No.	Items	Not at all/ Somewhat important		Important/Very important/Essential	
		n	%	n	%
14.	Takes turn and shares	11	9.2	109	90.8
15.	Has good problem solving skills	28	23.3	92	76.7
18.	Does not disrupt other children in class	25	20.8	95	79.2
20.	Is sensitive to other children's feelings.	31	25.8	89	74.1

Table 19 shows over half of the teachers who participated in the study (90.8%, n=67) responded that it was important/very important/essential for children to be able to take *turns and share* items or toys with their peers (Item No.14). This characteristic was a component of social and emotional development that is beneficial in supporting children's adjustment with classroom activities. In responding to Item No.15: *Has good problem-solving skills*, 28 teachers representing 23.3% of the participants confirmed that it was not at all important/somewhat important for children. On the other hand, around 76.7% (n=57) considered children's problem-solving skills as important/very important/essential for school readiness and transition. Furthermore, teacher responses on item 18: *Does not disrupt other children in class* indicated that 20.8% (n=25) selected not at all important/somewhat important, and 79.2% important/very important/essential (n=95). In addition, more than half of the participants (74.1%, n=89) indicated that *sensitivity to other children's feeling* was an important component in supporting school readiness and transition to school. Overall, there were small percentages of teachers who declared that the four characteristics were not at all important.

One of the frequent problems that appeared in working with young children at kindergartens and first grade of elementary school relate to the social and emotional immaturity of the children. Some teachers were more tolerant to children's immature behaviour because they consider it the nature of children and thus try to make children feel comfortable at school.

Research indicates that when children feel comfortable at school, their social and emotional development are enhanced (Dockett & Perry, 2009).

Teachers' perceptions on language development and communication.

Language enables children to participate in social interaction with peers and adults. Language development and communication refer to children's ability to listen and speak, as well as engage in conversation. Three items representing these characteristics included: *Know the Indonesian language*, *Can follow directions*, and *Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language*. The distribution of teachers' responses is displayed in Table 20.

Table 20. Teachers' responses to language development and communication items in percentages.

No.	Items	Not at all/Somewhat Important		Important/Very important/Essential	
		n	%	n	%
19.	Able to speak in the Indonesian language.	34	28.4	86	71.6
23.	Can follow directions.	21	17.5	99	82.5
25.	Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language.	11	9.2	109	90.8

Table 20 shows that more than half of the participants in this study (71.6%, n=86) appraised that being *able to speak in Indonesian language* (Item No.19) was an important characteristic of school readiness and transition to school. In contrast, more than a quarter of the teachers (28.4, n=34) responded that to able to speak in the Indonesian language is not at all important/somewhat important. The explanation for this results was that the majority of residents in Sleman District where this study was conducted are Javanese ethnic group. Children's first language is the Javanese language. This perception may be because children in

Sleman District use Javanese as the first language at home but in kindergarten; they learn to speak Indonesian language and occasionally combines it with the Javanese language.

In responding to Item No. 23: *can follow direction*”, around 82.5% (n=99) teachers believed it was important that children can follow directions. Furthermore, approximately 90.8% (n=109) teachers confirmed that the ability to *communicate needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child’s primary language* (Item No. 25) was an important characteristic of school readiness and transition to school. However, a small percentage of teachers (9.2%, n=11) who selected not at all important/somewhat important to Item No. 25. This may be explained in terms of the Javanese culture where children are expected to be obedient to older people (mainly their parents and teachers) by being silent when adults speak to them. In view of this, children rarely express their needs, wants, and thought verbally because silence is seen as a sign of this form of respect.

Teachers’ perceptions on approaches towards learning.

Approaches towards learning refer to children’s enthusiasm, curiosity, dispositions, and learning styles (Powers, 2006). Three items representing these characteristics are: *Able to finish tasks*, *Enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities*, and *Able to sit and pay attention*. Table 18 represents the percentages of teachers’ responses to the survey.

Table 21. Teachers’ responses to the items of approaches towards learning.

No.	Items	Not at all /Somewhat Important		Important/Very important/Essential	
		n	%	n	%
12.	Able to finish tasks.	28	23.3	92	76.7
16.	Able to sit and pay attention.	7	5.8	113	94.2
21.	Enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities.	37	30.8	84	70

The results indicate that more than half of the teachers (76.7%, n = 92) claimed that the ability to *finish tasks* (Item No. 12) was an important characteristic of school readiness and

transition to school. A large number of teachers (94.2%, n=113) confirmed that children's ability to *sit still and pay attention* (Item No. 16) was very important/essential characteristic of school readiness. In addition, a total of 70% (n=84) teachers declared that *enthusiasm and curiosity in approaching new activities* were important for promoting school readiness. On the other hand, there were small percentages of the participants who specified that the three factors were not at all important for children's readiness. The variation in the responses was related to the findings on the social and emotional development characteristics. There were some teachers who were more tolerant of children's behaviour in the classroom because they believed that when children feel comfortable at school, they will work better during classroom activities.

Variations in teacher responses on the characteristics of school readiness and transition to school.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to identify the variations between the responses of kindergarten and elementary school teachers on the characteristics of school readiness. The responses on the characteristics of school readiness for each group were normally distributed as assessed by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($p > .05$). The independent samples *t*-test identified that there were slight variations in the responses for kindergarten teachers ($M=46.54$, $SD=9.295$) and elementary teachers ($M=49.00$, $SD=8.367$); $t = 1.202$, $df=118$, $p = .232$ is not statistically significant at .05 level of significance. It signified that the mean of the elementary school teachers' responses (Mean = 49.00) was slightly higher than the kindergarten teachers (Mean = 46.54). The mean difference between kindergarten and elementary school responses was (2.46) and the effect size value suggested a small practical significance ($d=0.719$). Therefore I failed to reject the null hypothesis that there was no difference in the response on the characteristics of school readiness between kindergarten teachers and elementary school teachers. The Error Graph (Figure 6) demonstrated the standart

error (SE) bars overlap, which indicated the differences between the two means was not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). Details of the independent sample *t*-test analysis were presented in the tables below.

The independent samples *t*-test analysis of the characteristics of school readiness

Table 22. Test of Normality

		Tests of Normality					
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Characteristics	Elementary School	.115	25	.200*	.971	25	.666
	Kindergarten	.078	95	.189	.990	95	.717

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 23. Group Statistics

		Group Statistics			
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Characteristics	Elementary School	25	49.00	8.367	1.673
	Kindergarten	95	46.54	9.295	.954

Table 24. The Independent Samples T-Test

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
CHARACTERISTICS	Equal variances assumed	.669	.415	1.202	118	.232	2.463	2.049	-1.594	6.520

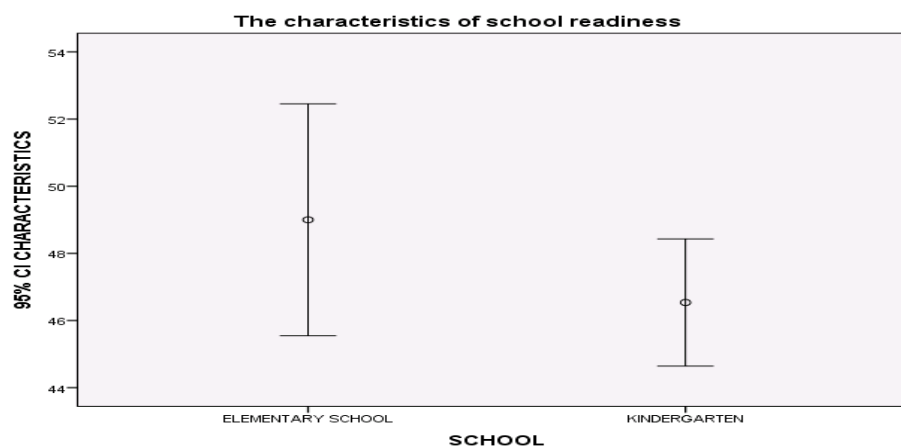


Figure 6: Error graph showing effect size on the characteristics of school readiness.

A one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to identify whether there were any significant differences in teacher responses to the characteristics of school readiness subscale based on their educational background. The results of the One-way ANOVA analysis determined that there were no statistically significant differences in teacher responses based on their education backgrounds ($F(3,116) = 2.65, p = .732$). Detailed analysis of the one-way ANOVA is presented below.

The One-Way ANOVA analysis of the characteristics of school readiness.

Table 25. The Descriptive analysis.

CHARACTERISTICS	Descriptives							
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
HIGH SCHOOL	30	47.50	9.387	1.714	43.99	51.01	30	66
DIPLOMA 1/2	6	43.50	3.782	1.544	39.53	47.47	36	46
DIPLOMA 3/4	8	48.88	9.234	3.265	41.16	56.59	30	61
BACHELOR	76	46.96	9.373	1.075	44.82	49.10	22	71
Total	120	47.05	9.131	.834	45.40	48.70	22	71

Table 26. The One-way ANOVA analysis

ANOVA					
CHARACTERISTICS	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	108.943	3	36.314	.429	.732
Within Groups	9812.757	116	84.593		
Total	9921.700	119			

The results of the independent-samples *t*-test and the one-way ANOVA suggested that there were no variations in the responses between kindergarten and elementary school teachers and between teachers with various education background (Bachelor, Diploma 3/4, Diploma 1/2, and high school). These variations represent the different perceptions regarding the characteristic of school readiness and transition to school.

Summary

The first part of this chapter has presented the quantitative results by detailing how the teachers responded to the school readiness and transition to school items in the questionnaire. As indicated in the methodology section of this study, there was the need to gain a deeper understanding into the perspectives of the teachers and other participants who participated in the study. The next section presents the qualitative results of the study.

Presentation of qualitative results.

Phase Two of the research consisted of semi structured interviews with parents, government employees, and children. The objectives of the interviews were to generate qualitative data to complement the quantitative data to answer the questions that aimed to understand what Indonesian teachers, parents and local government personnel elucidate they are doing to guide and educate children to enter elementary school and children's perspectives and experiences of starting elementary school. Sample questions during the interviews with teachers, parents, and government personnel include:

- What do you understand by the term “school readiness”?
- What is the criteria to determine when children are ready for school?
- Who is responsible for getting children ready for school?

Interviews with kindergarten and first-grade children included questions that asked them to share their feelings and experiences regarding starting elementary school. Children's interviews were organised as informal conversations accompanied by drawing activity. All the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. Sample questions included:

- How did you feel when you first went to primary school?
- How do you feel about going to elementary school?
- Draw the way you feel about going to school.

Description of participants.

Parents.

Initially, there were ten parents who agreed to be interviewed. However, three of the parents did not come on the day set for the interviews. Semistructured interviews were conducted with parents who agreed to be interviewed (N=7). A classification system whereby the parents were linked to the grade level of their children was developed. Parents whose children were attending grade one of elementary school at the time were labelled as (EP1, EP2); and those whose children were in Kindergarten were coded as (KP1, KP2, KP3, KP4, KP5). The demographic information of parents is summarised in Table 21.

Table 27. Demographic information of the parents.

Parents	Gender	Age	Education background	Employment	Children
KP1	Female	27	Highschool	housewife	6 years, girl, kindergarten
KP2	Female	32	Highschool	housewife	5½ years, boy, kindergarten
KP3	Female	35	3-year Diploma	housewife	6 years, girl, kindergarten
KP4	Female	41	Junior Highschool	housewife	6 years, boy, kindergarten
KP5	Female	32	Highschool	petty trader	6 years, girl, kindergarten
EP1	Female	43	Elementary school	housewife	6½ years, boy, first grade of Elementary school
EP2	Female	45	Junior Highschool	housewife	7½ years, girl, first grade of Elementary school

Three of the parents who participated in the interviews had children attending three different kindergartens. Two other parents had children in the first grade of elementary schools. These parents were selected from the Ngemplak subdistrict. The selection was based on a voluntary invitation to participate in the research. The majority of the parents were housewives, only one parent worked as a petty trader. All of the parents were from the Javanese ethnic group, therefore the interviews were conducted in the Javanese language. The interviews were conducted in the visitors' room in each school as agreed by the parents.

Teachers.

Interviews were conducted with 10 teachers who volunteered from the 120 participants in the teachers' survey (see Chapter 3). For the sake of clarity and anonymity, teachers were labelled by grade level of their school as follows: Grade One Elementary school teachers were labelled as (ET1, ET2, ET3, ET4, ET5) and Kindergarten teachers as (KT1, KT2, KT3, KT4, KT5). All of the teachers were Javanese female teachers. Detailed information on the teachers is presented in the table below.

Table 28. Demographic information of the teachers.

Teachers	Gender	Highest degree earned	Work experiences as teacher	Teaching
KT1	Female	High school	More than 10 years	Kindergarten
KT2	Female	Bachelor	Less than 5 years	Kindergarten
KT3	Female	Bachelor	More than 10 years	Kindergarten
KT4	Female	High school	Less than 5 years	Kindergarten
KT5	Female	High school	Less than 5 years	Kindergarten
ET1	Female	1-year Diploma	More than 10 years	First grade of Elementary school
ET2	Female	High school	10 years	First grade of Elementary school
ET3	Female	Bachelor	Less than 5 years	First grade of Elementary school
ET4	Female	Bachelor	More than 10 years	First grade of Elementary school
ET5	Female	Bachelor	More than 10 years	First grade of Elementary school

Government Personnel.

The government personnel were labelled based on their institution as follows: the Early Childhood Development General Director officer (GP1) in Sleman district; and The Ministry of Education and Culture officer (GP2) in Jakarta. A detailed description of the government personnel is presented in the table below.

Table 29. Demographic information of the government personnel.

Government personnel	Gender	Occupation	Work experiences
GP1	Male	Education Superintendant	More than ten years
GP2	Male	Early Childhood Education Division officer	More than ten years

Kindergarten and first-grade children.

For presentation clarity the children involved in this study were labeled by grade level of their educational settings as follows: Grade One of Elementary School students are coded as (EC1, EC2, EC3, EC4, EC5) and the Kindergarten children as (KC1, KC2, KC3, KC4, KC5). The description of the participants is presented in Table 24.

Table 30. Demographic information of the children.

Child	Gender	Age	Educational Setting
KC1	Boy	6	Kindergarten
KC2	Girl	5	Kindergarten
KC3	Girl	6	Kindergarten
KC4	Boy	7	Kindergarten
KC5	Girl	5	Kindergarten
EC1	Girl	7	First grade Elementary school
EC2	Boy	7	First grade Elementary school
EC3	Girl	7	First grade Elementary school
EC4	Girl	7	First grade Elementary school
EC5	Boy	7	First grade Elementary school

Conceptualisations and criteria of school readiness.

When teachers, parents, and policy personnel were asked about their understandings of school readiness, their expressions demonstrated a variety of conceptualisations. Perceptions regarding school readiness may shape the way children are prepared for school. The participants explained school readiness in terms of various domains.

Knowledge.

The results showed that in terms of knowledge, parents were most concerned with their children's ability to:

I want my child to like a book then he can adjust well to school (KP1).

If the child can read, write, knows the alphabets then she is ready (KP3).

Yes, if they can read, write, count, and identify A, B, C... Then they are ready (EP2)

I think the ability to identify colours, count and match objects is important (KP5).

Teachers also emphasised some recognisable characteristics they consider for ready children should possess.

If children are ready for school then they should have adequate knowledge about how to recognise alphabets, colors, shapes, and numbers (ET5).

For me, it is important that they can hold a pencil correctly and recognise alphabets (KT4).

The two personnel from the government also reiterated the positions of teachers and parents by referring to within the child characteristics as determinants of school readiness.

I think readiness is about the children's ability to engage in sensory learning (GP2)...they should be able to read and write the alphabets and count at least 1-10 (GP1).

These perspectives demonstrate that teachers, parents and government personnel are not different in their opinion regarding their conceptualisation of things children should know to be considered ready for school.

Adjustment to school.

Regarding adjustment to school parents indicated that ready children should be able to:

... to be left alone in a new environment, and should not find it too difficult to socialise (KP3). Ready children should make many friends and adjust to school routine (EP1).

The first grade of elementary teachers perceived that readiness is more to do with children by suggesting that ready children should be able to “*easily accept friends and teachers and concentrate well in class*” (EC2, EC4). The focus for government personnel in terms of adjustment considered the ability of the children to adjust to school routines. They stated:

Knowing what to do at school is the most important readiness factor so that children are not confused (GP1).

Children going to elementary school need to know how different the rules are between kindergarten and elementary school (GP2).

Social skills.

Social skills are important for children's readiness and transition to school. Pertaining to social skills the findings indicated that parents were more concerned with their children's ability to *"wake up early in the morning, prepare for lessons (EP2) as well as being able to things independently (KP5)*. Elementary teachers perceived children's *"ability to manage their learning tasks (ET3) and time management (ET2)* as important components of school readiness. Two kindergarten teachers (KT3 and KT5) mentioned children's ability to *"manage simple conflicts"* as a critical components of readiness for school.

Rules and dispositions.

As children learn, develop and prepare for school entry they encounter both social and school rules to which they must adjust their values, knowledge dispositions and skills they gain from families and teachers. The findings of this study suggested that would want their children not to *"feels shy, lack self confident and cry when going to school" (KP1)* and be *"willingness to go to school" (KP3)*. Another parent whose child was in grade one of elementary school pointed out that being *"not familiar with teachers and friends frightened my child to go to school" (EP2)*.

Teachers on the other hand stated that children who are ready for school should be able to *"sit still" (ET2)*, have *"good personality" (ET3)*, *"feel comfortable during the*

lesson and class activity” (EKT4) and “not being afraid of new people” (KT2). Other teachers noted that children’s “ability to follow orders, rules and discipline” (KT1), “avoid disturbing behaviour in class” (ET1), and be able to take turns and share resources with others are signs of readiness (KT5). The government personnel pointed out that children who are ready should be able to “enjoy learning, follow school rules and school discipline procedures” (GP1).

Physical aspects and family issues.

The findings suggested that in terms of physical aspects all the participants mentioned age as a crucial component that needs to be considered for school readiness. They suggested that children who have not attained the required age often give problems to teachers. For example, some parents connected children’s refusal to go to school with being too young or too old.

Some children do not want to go because they are too young and they don’t understand what is going on (KP3).

Some of the older ones... when they look older than their class or peers in grade one, they don’t want to go, they are shy because they are teased for being bigger than the other children...my husband gets angry when our son did not go to school, although he rarely accompanies the child to school (EP1).

Government personnel, commenting on the physical and family issues noted:

Families need to understand school rules and teach their children to obey the rules (GP1). They must provide them with good meals nourish their physical body so that they can concentrate at school (GP2).

Teachers stated that there is need for more support for parenting in providing “*nutritious means to children to build their physical strength*” (KT4), and “*parental guidance on Indonesian social values and norms*” (ET3).

Educational environment.

Children spend a large portion of their time exploring their learning environment to build complex cognitive, social and emotional skills. In response to the educational environment, parents who participated in this study noted that it is “*teachers’ responsibility to provide a supportive learning environment and teach the children well*” (KP4). Other parents stated that children “*must not play not too much*” (EP2) because “*school is for learning*” (EP1). Teachers were of the view that ready children should be able to “*cope with their new environment*” (ET1), and “*schools must have sufficient resources for every child to use*” (ET4). The government personnel emphasised that “*schools must abide by government policy on how to set up the environment to support readiness*” (GP2), in addition to “*creative teachers who use multiple resources for the children*” (GP1). In addition, the government personnel referred to teacher training and the provision of suitable infrastructure as factors that can facilitate school readiness.

In summary, responses to the conceptualisations of school readiness from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and government personnel focused on knowledge, disposition, rules and physical attributes. The findings illustrated that school readiness from the participant’s perspective is related to knowledge, such as recognising alphabets and numbers, attitudes toward school and learning, the ability of the children to comply with school rules and expectations. It also included physical attributes such as the age of the child. The Indonesian government regulation uses age seven as the readiness marker for elementary

school entry. However, the irony is that some private elementary schools use basic reading and writing examinations to select their new students who may or may not attain the age of 7 years. This controversial issue is discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

Parents tended to focus more attention on skills such as children's ability to wake up early in the morning, prepare for their lessons and being independent as much as possible in their day-to-day activities. Teachers and government personnel mentioned resources and creativity of teachers as aspects of school readiness. For environmental factors, parents mentioned that readiness demands that teachers must teach the children well, and prohibit the children from playing all the time because school is for learning. This means parents do not have an understanding of how children learn through play. Teachers mentioned the importance of coping as an important element of environmental factors related to readiness. These perspectives jointly operate within the government policy of age-related readiness that is focused on visible within the child factors.

Parents placed less emphasis on the role of rules, family issues, and the learning environment as criteria of school readiness. Teachers, on the other hand, mentioned nearly all of the criteria. The government personnel did not consider adjustment and disposition as criteria of school readiness. These two factors were related to the social emotional characteristics of the children.

Responsibility for making children ready for school.

The perceptions of participants were explored concerning whom they perceived as being responsible for supporting children to be ready for school. This question is important as traditionally, school readiness is seen as the responsibility of teachers in Kindergarten. The ways children learn and what they learn to depend upon several responsible factors. The responses to this question from participants demonstrated perspectives that differ from

transitional views that focused exclusively on teachers as those who prepare children for school. Parents' explained that all family members (father, mother, sister, and grandmother), the school, the teacher, and the community must be responsible for supporting children in their preparation for formal schooling.

Parents must nurture quality relationships with children and teachers this will make them happy for school (KP4).

When we give the best care and have more time with the children they can learn many things from us, which can help them in school (KP1).

Children like rich resources... and a variety of experiences that...parents can take the children out and visit the local school or look at things around their house...it will build their knowledge (EP2).

Parents should not leave all the work for teachers...teachers do not know all the things about our children but we can work with teachers and tell them to help the children more (KP2).

Teachers also acknowledged that family, school, teachers, government, and community are important players for preparing children to be ready for school.

Those children who experience caring and responsive relationships from family, teachers and community ...you can see that...they do well...they do many stimulating things when they arrive at school (ET1).

Children who arrive at school without parent support feel stressed because they don't know what to do...their chances of coping and working with other children are very limited (KT3).

Parents are very important to give us information on their children but we also need support from the government for resources that children can use (KT2).

Government personnel perceived their contributory role in terms of developing policy and providing resources for teachers to teach children but outside of this, they think that “*policy and resources alone cannot facilitate school readiness unless community members, families and teachers are jointly committed to the process of children’s education*” (GP2).

In conclusion, these findings demonstrate new perspectives of school readiness that consider the important roles of families, teachers, school, and community can jointly play in supporting children’s school readiness and transition. The complexity of school readiness and transition can be minimised when there is a collaborative action for supporting all children’s development.

First-grade students’ experiences of the first day at elementary school.

Children are at the centre of school readiness and transition to school. Therefore, it is important to document their views to determine what concerns them about school readiness and transition to elementary school in Indonesia. Interviews with kindergarten and elementary school children were conducted in combination with a drawing activity. On the one hand, children in grade one of elementary school were asked to describe their feelings and experiences on their first day at school. Kindergarten children, on the other hand, were asked to describe their feelings toward going to elementary school. Previous research indicated that children’s feelings and experiences vary in different contexts hence care must be taken when interviewing them to elicit the best responses (Dockett & Perry, 2004a). The interviews and drawing activities were undertaken in an empty classroom when the other children were outdoor playing. Ten children consisting of five kindergartens (5-6 years) and five elementary children age 7 years were interviewed. The results of the interviews are summarised in Table 31.

Table 31. Elementary school children's experiences on their first day at school.

Participants				
1	2	3	4	5
<i>I was happy, but I felt scared and shy, I cried for a while. I was afraid of the teacher because I did not know her. My mother accompanied me to the class for two days and then the next day I went to school and class on my own. Now, I am not scared anymore. I feel happy now at school. I do not cry. Mom and Dad drive me to school, but then they leave me when the school begins. I have many new friends.</i>	<i>On the first day, my mother delivered me and my sister to school. I was scared because I was unfamiliar with the teacher. I cried for a while, my mother waited for me outside my class until the school closed. Now I feel happy because I like my teacher, she let me play a little. My mother does not need to wait anymore, but sometimes I still cry and feel shy when the teacher asks me to perform in front of the class. I went to the same school with my sister. I am not afraid anymore. Every morning, my Mom drives my sister and me to school, and pick us up after school. I have many friends.</i>	<i>On the first day, I cried because I was not familiar with the school. I did not have any friend and did not know the teacher. I did not want to be left by my mother. Now, I feel happy, because I already have many friends, and my teacher is very good and kind. My school is not far from my house. I just take a walk to school with my mother. I am not crying anymore because I am a big kid. When I was in kindergarten, I cried on the first day because I felt scared. Now I am not scared.</i>	<i>I felt scared and shy. I cried a lot because I was afraid that my mother would leave me alone in the class. I was afraid of the teacher because I have never met her. Now, I feel happy and no need for my mother to accompany me to school. Now, I am not crying anymore. I love math and I have many friends from the kindergarten. My Mom will pick me up after school</i>	<i>I cried, did not want to be left by my mother. I was afraid of the teacher because I was a new student with who knew nothing about the school. Sometimes, I felt afraid, sometimes I did not. I am still shy when my teacher ask me questions. I have many friends, so my mother would not take me to school, the school is close, and I walk with friends.</i>

The findings in the above table demonstrate mixed feelings regarding the children's first day at school. For those children who were unfamiliar with school routines and their teachers, their feelings were mostly negative. Children who were supported by their family members expressed the most positive feelings. The implications that could be glean from these findings is that children at any stage of their education need continuous support to adjust to school routines. Providing emotional and physical support can enhance children's attachment to school, which can lead to learning gains (Dockett and Perry (2004a).

Kindergarten children's feelings toward going to school.

The process of going to formal school for the first time constitute a major life change in a child's life and for families. While some may feel excited about going to school, many other

children express mixed feelings toward school. Obtaining the authentic voices and first person account provided valuable information for policy makers, teachers, and families as to how to support children transition to school positively. The table below shows a summary of kindergarten children who are preparing for entering elementary school. The findings were clustered around current knowledge, adjustment issues, skills and dispositions, family issues and school environment.

Table 32. The categories of kindergarten children's responses.

Categories	Participants				
	KC1	KC2	KC3	KC4	KC5
Knowledge	<i>I can write my name, I can say the colours</i>	<i>I cannot say all the alphabets, I can write 1, 2, and 3.</i>	<i>Teacher taught me how to sing and we also play with puzzles</i>	<i>I like drawing, I don't like reading</i>	<i>I write the numbers in my book, I can say the names of a dog, cat.</i>
Adjustment issues	<i>I do not know the teacher; I am afraid what will happen to me when I go to school.</i>	<i>I am not familiar with the schoolteacher; I do not want to be separated from my mother. My mother comes to the kindergarten to help me.</i>	<i>The school is different and is far. My mother said the school is difficult. I don't want to be left alone by mother, I don't have any friends in school</i>	<i>I am not happy, my mother will leave me alone in class, and I never met the teacher.</i>	<i>I do not know anything about school and teacher. If have friends in school, I will be happy.</i>
Skills	<i>I can draw for the teacher</i>	<i>Perform in front of the class</i>	<i>Teacher taught me how to say my name.</i>	<i>We make things with clay and paper.</i>	<i>I mix colour and paint the paper.</i>
Disposition	<i>Feel scared and shy, afraid of the teacher because I do not know her.</i>	<i>I will cry for a while, I feel shy to go.</i>	<i>I will cry</i>	<i>I am feeling scared and shy. I will cry if my mother did not go with me. I am afraid of the teacher, and afraid that mother will leave me alone in the class</i>	<i>I will not go alone if my mother did not go with me. I will cry because I am afraid of the teacher. I feel shy too.</i>
Family issues	<i>I want my mother to accompany me to class for two days</i>	<i>Mother should wait for me outside my class until school ends.</i>	<i>If I don't go my father will beat me</i>	<i>My mother and father will shout that go to school!</i>	<i>My mother will punish me if I don't go to school</i>
The educational environment	<i>I want the teacher to allow us to play.</i>	<i>If the teacher allows me to bring my ball from home I will be happy</i>	<i>Teacher should give us many toys and we can play and learn</i>	<i>I want to sleep if I am tired</i>	<i>I will have a big desk and many books</i>

Table 26 shows the diversity of responses from kindergarten children when describing their feelings toward starting school. It is common for mothers to stay in the classrooms with children in their kindergarten years but this is rarely the case in elementary school. The absence

of this continuity creates anxiety for many of the children. Many children also expressed negative feelings toward going to school because they were not familiar with their primary school teachers. This situation also demonstrates a lack of continuous collaboration between kindergartens and elementary schools. Children's anxiety of going to school is also associated with the unfamiliar school environment school expectations that are completely different from kindergarten practices. All the children KC1, KC2, KC3 and KC5 expressed that having friends, knowing the teacher and school, being left by their mother were important factors for their transition to school.

Some children, for example, KC2, perceived performing in front of class very distressing causing her to shy away from the teacher. Furthermore, KC3, KC4, and KC5 perceived school in a threatening way by referring to punishment from parents if they refused to go to school. In relation to personal dispositions, children mentioned crying, shyness being scared as adjustment issues related to the transition to elementary school. On school environmental issues, children would like to some flexibility where they can bring their own toys, have the chance to play and also sleep when they are tired.

These findings illustrate that different children have different feelings toward going to school. However, one thing is central in all the comments made by the children and that is, children need support from both families and schools to feel comfortable about going to school. They also need support to establish friendships with other children because having friends was seen by these children as making them comfortable in going to school. This is particularly important when kindergarten friends enrolled in the same elementary school. Also, it was noted that when the primary school is far away from children's home, this can create anxiety for children. The size of the school which is different from kindergarten also create fear and confusing for the children. These findings draw several implications for teachers, families and

policy makers as to how to provide ongoing support to children to curb their anxiety about going to school.

These findings also link to children's physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Children's anxiety about going to school can affect their overall well-being with serious implications for their learning. Positive feelings about going to school can build children's happiness which in turn, will contribute to their performance when they transition to school.

Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the data analysis. The data came from surveys and interviews. The findings detailed the participants' conceptualisations of school readiness and the factors they perceived as critical dimensions of school readiness and transition to school. It also showed what teachers, parents and policy makers elucidate they are doing in Indonesia to support children to be ready to transition to school. Furthermore, the views of children in the first grade of elementary school pertaining to their experiences and children in kindergarten who are preparing for the transition to school were presented. The next chapter discusses the findings by drawing on the previous research in the literature review section and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework to extend insights into the study and answer the research questions.

Chapter V.

Discussion of findings

Introduction

The present study had four specific purposes or objectives:

1. To understand how teachers, parents, and local government personnel in Yogyakarta Province in Indonesia conceptualise school readiness and transition to school.
2. To determine existing practices that are currently utilised by teachers, parents, and local government to prepare children to transition to school.
3. To determine programs or policies that facilitate school readiness and transition to school practices.
4. To find out the experiences of children who are about to enter elementary school and those who are already in first grade in elementary school, and identify ways to better improve future children's experiences of transitioning to school.

To address these objectives, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study. The main research question explored is:

What do Indonesian kindergarten teachers, parents and local government personnel elucidate they are doing to guide and educate children to enter elementary school with skills to be success?

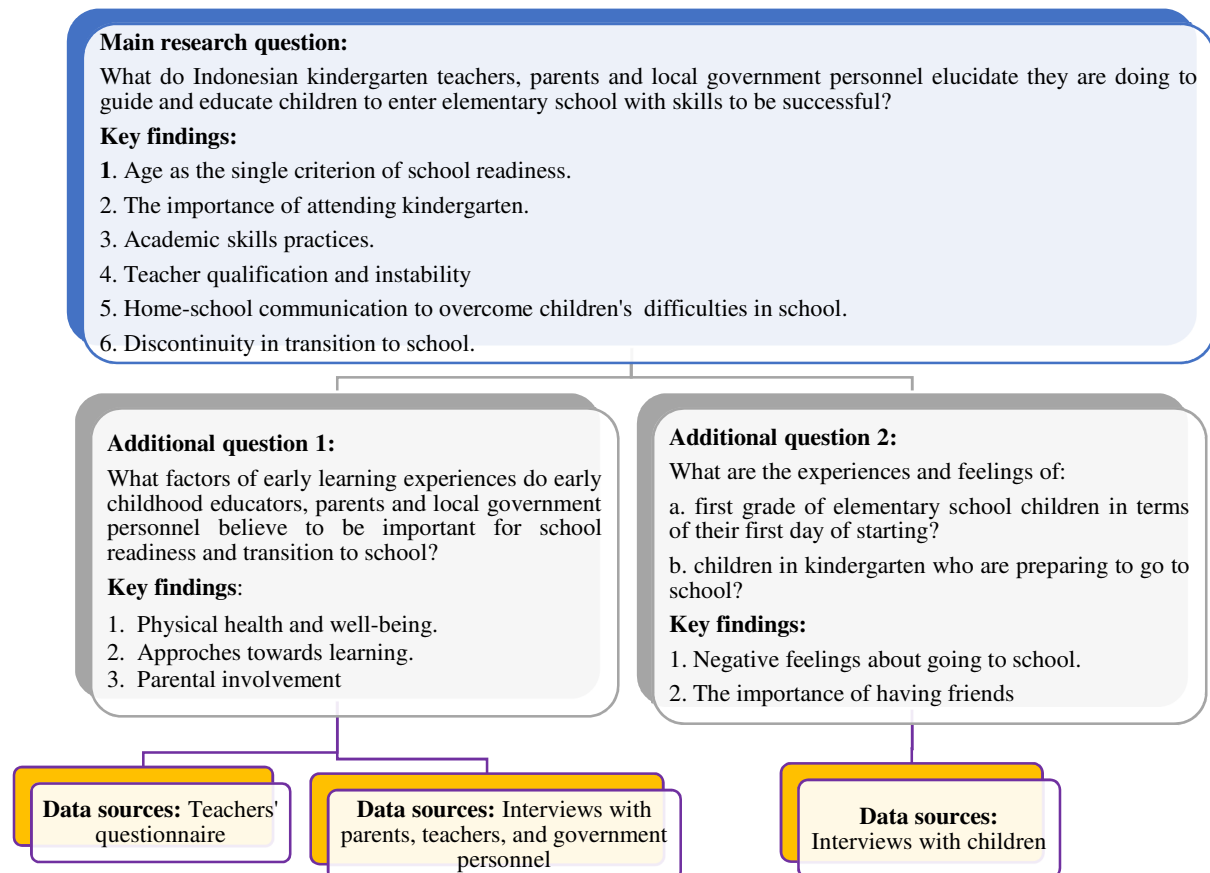
In addition to the main research question, two additional questions were investigated.

1. What factors of early learning experiences do early childhood teachers, parents and local policy personnel believe to be important for children's school readiness and transition to school?
2. What are the experiences and feelings of:

- a) first grade of elementary school children in terms of their first day of starting?
- b) children in kindergarten who are preparing to go to school?

These research questions are discussed in three sections: *school readiness and transition practices*, *school readiness and transition factors*, and *children's experiences of transition to school*. According to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006b, p. 794), a child's readiness for school and transition to school is complex, therefore viewing it from within the child perspective alone cannot give educators insights into ways to effectively support the child. This bioecological perspective invites educators to consider the role of the environment in children's development. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological theory is used to guide the discussion. Figure 7 shows the key findings pertaining to the research questions.

Figure 7. Research questions and data sources.



Discussion of findings

School readiness and transition to school practices.

The main research question asks: What do Indonesian kindergarten teachers, parents, and local government personnel elucidate they are doing to guide and educate children to enter elementary school with skills to be successful? This question addressed the current practices of Indonesian teachers, parents, and government personnel with regard to the education of children leading to readiness for elementary school. It also addresses how children are supported to experience a positive transition to elementary school. The findings are discussed under three themes: *Age as the single criterion of school readiness, academic readiness practice, communication to overcome children's difficulties at school, and discontinuity in transition to elementary school.*

Age as the single criterion of school readiness.

The findings presented in Table 9 from the quantitative results indicated that more than three-quarters of teacher participants in the survey (80.8%) considered that school readiness is related to children's maturity. The findings from the interview data showed that teachers associated maturity with children's chronological age:

Children are ready for school when they are 7 years old. Older children can easily absorb the lessons. Children under 7 years, usually experience difficulties to understand the lessons, especially reading. According to the government regulation, the minimum age to enrol in the first grade of elementary school is 7 years. (ET2).

Children are ready for school when they are old enough to go to school. The more mature they are the more ready they are to perform school tasks. Children who are not mature to this age of 7 have difficulty coping in school. (KT5).

Parents in the following comments also echoed a focus on chronological age as the criterion of school readiness:

I think it depends on the characteristics of each child. But their readiness requires mental readiness that relates to their age. (KT1).

The important characteristic of children who are ready for school is when they are older to think properly. Children should be 7 years old when they are starting elementary school because being older help them to think. (KP3).

The younger ones give many problems because they are not old enough to do what the teachers teach them. Children should be old enough for school so they can learn better. (EP1).

These perspectives illustrate that the government's requirement of a minimum age of 7 years to enrol in a public elementary school is supported by the majority of the participants. Teachers and parents use age as the single indicator to suggest that older children have the capacity to think better than the younger children. Further research needs to investigate this claim whether age at school entry is associated with better thinking. This finding is consistent with a previous study conducted by Fridani (2014) in Jakarta in Indonesia, who found that teachers and parents within the capital city of Indonesia conceptualised school readiness in terms of children's age.

The views expressed by these participants is reminiscent of Piaget's and Gesell's maturational theories which suggest that genes play a greater role in the development of intrinsically determined age-related changes in individual children making them ready for school (Agbenyega, 2009). Maturational perspectives fail to recognise the role of environmental and cultural factors in children's learning and development (White, Hayes & Livesay, 2005).

Historically, the maturational perspective acknowledges that children are ready for school when they have reached a certain age (Dockett & Perry, 2002; Mollborn & Dennis, 2012; Scott-Little, Kagan, & Frelow, 2006). The maturation view focuses on biological characteristics of the child as central indicators of school readiness, which is rooted in a Piagetian theory of cognitive development (Kagan, 2003; Rimm-Kaufman, 2004; Snow, 2006; Vogler, Crivello, & Woodhead, 2008). This notion of ages and stages of development has been adopted by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia into legislation enacted in 2014, which demands that parents enrol their children into the first grade of elementary school only when they turn seven years of age.

It can be inferred from this that the government of Indonesia believes that academic success is related to children's age, as this links to the child's ability to regulate their cognitive, social and self-regulatory skills (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). Based on the government policy, public elementary schools are compelled to prioritise the admission of children who are seven years old on July 1st. As a result, children who have already turned seven years old before July 1st, become older children in the class. On the other hand, children who are younger than 7 years old cannot enrol into public elementary schools because they are considered not to be ready for school. This regulation pertaining to Indonesian public schools was confirmed during an interview with a government personnel:

Actually, the ideal age to enter a public elementary school is 7 years old. Several countries in ASEAN, such as Malaysia and Philipines also apply it, considering the psychological readiness of the children. The age requirement is mainly implemented in public elementary school because the number of public schools and prospective students who are ready to enrol is not balanced. It is okay to accept students under the age of seven years if the school has the capacity to do so. (GP1).

This perspective resonates with Stipek (2002) who argues that children's age plays a significant role in their level of competencies leading to their success in school. In this way, older children are believed to be more ready for school than younger ones (Kagan & Rigby, 2003). This is problematic because with the majority of the participants (90%) affirming chronological age as the main determinant for school readiness, there is the likelihood of younger children with potential to be held back pedagogically. A strong adherence to maturational perspective would prevent professionals from acknowledging that each child develops at a different pace, as a result, some children may be ready for school before they turn 7 years of age (Kagan & Rigby, 2003).

Although participant teachers supported the age-readiness theory, about half (50.8%) were not supportive of delaying children if they were considered not ready for school. Findings from the interview indicated that some parents were eager to enrol their child in an elementary school before they turn 7 years old:

My son is 6 years old now, but I will enrol him to a private school. There are some tests for new students, such as writing and reading ABC and counting 1 to 20 but I cannot wait till he turns 7 years (KP1).

It can be argued that this age-related readiness for school is controversial because private elementary schools in Indonesia do not have to abide by the same rule and are free to enrol children under 7 years old through a selection test. According to Fridani (2014), a number of private elementary schools in urban areas of Indonesia do not use age 7 as a requirement for gaining access to elementary school. Instead, these private schools have established selection criteria such as reading, simple arithmetic, and writing tests to determine children's abilities. A pass in all these subject areas signifies that a child is ready for school. A parent expressed her experience when she stated:

Usually, private schools do not use age 7 to select new students. They use selection tests, including basic reading, such as ABC, mother, father, sister, and writing of their names. They must also be able to add simple numbers (KP2).

The findings seemed to suggest that the implementation of a school age requirement is confusing because practices are inconsistent across elementary schools. In 2010, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched a regulation to prevent reading and writing tests as requirements for enrolling children into the first grade of elementary school, however, a number of private schools still implement selection tests to recruit new students.

The findings on Indonesian's age-related policy on school readiness is reminiscent of some empirical studies which suggested that older children, have a tendency to achieve better performance on standardised achievement tests (Bedard & Dhuey, 2006; Crawford, Dearden, & Meghir, 2007; Elder & Lubotsky, 2009; Puhani & Weber, 2007; Smith, 2009). In this view, being older at school entry provides an advantage, because older children may have more experiences and more years of kindergarten than younger children (Bedard & Dhuey, 2006). On the contrary, other studies found that differences in academic achievement between older and younger children decreased when children move to higher grades (Cascio & Schanzenbach, 2007; Elder & Lubotsky, 2009). Some other studies revealed that age has no correlation with children's achievement (Black, Devereux, & Salvanes, 2011; Dobkin & Ferreira, 2010; Fredriksson & Ockert, 2009). These mixed findings suggest that age is a weak predictor of school readiness (Elder & Lubotsky, 2009; Stipek, 2003). Several researchers have argued that school readiness and transition to school should not only be based on children's age but also the contexts in which children live, which require the involvement of families, schools and communities (Britto, 2012; Elder & Lubotsky, 2009; Kagan & Rigby, 2003; Woodhead & Moss, 2007).

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development, which informed this study, school readiness and transition to school are progressive and interdependent processes involving the interaction between children, families, and broader communities and contexts (school, home) to support children's readiness for learning and readiness for school (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This perspective acknowledges that children's skills and knowledge are influenced by children's experiences that represent interrelation between children and their environment in the microsystem. The microsystem represents children's immediate environment including parents, peers, and teachers that engage in interaction with children over a long period of time (Britto, 2012; Scott-Little et al., 2006). This conceptualisation broadens the focus of school readiness and transition to school.

Again, seen from a bioecological perspective, school readiness and transition to school is a complex and dynamic process involving macro-level forces, for example, government policy on the age of school entry which directly and indirectly influences children, parents, and teachers' school readiness and transition to school practices (Britto, 2012). It is, therefore, important to establish a coordinated system to support the existing collaboration between parents, teachers, and policy makers in supporting children's development and learning. This broader perspective of school readiness and transition to school provides a comprehensive illustration that involves the interrelatedness between children and the range of environmental factors that support children's development (Britto, 2012; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Saluja, Scott-Little, & Clifford, 2000). It reinforces the bioecological perspective that the sources of effective school readiness and positive transition to school are not based only on children's maturity, but also the contexts in which children live and interact with families, teachers, and other community members.

The importance of attending kindergarten.

According to the National Education System of Indonesia, attending kindergarten is not compulsory (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). For this reason, some children are enrolled in elementary school on the basis of their age without kindergarten education. This study found that (Table 9) a great majority of teachers (85%) regard attending kindergarten as critically important for success in elementary school. Sample representative interview comments reinforced this importance.

Only a few children in the first grade did not attend kindergarten. Children who have participated in kindergarten could identify alphabets and numbers, so they have been prepared for literacy and math instructions. (ET3).

Every child need to have opportunity to attend kindergarten... children who stay at home and come to enrol when they turn 7 years lack many skills. Children need to learn how to socialise with their peers in kindergarten before school because if they stayed at home, they wouldn't learn social skills and how to play with friends at school (KP1).

The findings signify that teachers believe kindergarten can promote both academic and social skills for children and support their school readiness and transition to school. One elementary school teacher (ET3) mentioned that kindergarten provides an advantage in promoting children's literacy and math readiness, which in turn, sets the foundation for children to learn math, read, and write well in elementary school. Furthermore, one parent (KP1) explained the benefit of kindergarten in providing an opportunity for children to socialise with other children. Some parents during the interviews opined that although they acknowledge the importance of kindergarten education, they did not have the financial means for their children to access this form of education. This finding revealed the worrying side of

how a number of children in Indonesia are currently not benefiting from kindergarten because of socio-economic issues.

It has been identified that the interrelation between children, schools, and families as dimensions of school readiness, is influenced by social, cultural, economic, policy and historical factors (Britto, 2012). The National Education System Law of Indonesia No. 20/2003 recognised kindergarten as an early childhood education program designed for children (4 to 6 years old) to prepare them for first grade of elementary school. Since 2000 to 2015, the government has implemented the Education for All (EFA) program to ensure all children who are disadvantaged physically, mentally, economically, socially and by geographic background, have access to early childhood education and care. However, it was estimated that approximately, 31.9% (6.85 million) children in Indonesia do not have access to early childhood education due to economic or geographical factors (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014). Previous research supported this position that approximately 82% of children in Papua province, and 41% in Yogyakarta province in which this study was conducted did not participate in kindergarten prior to entering elementary school (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015). In view of the importance of kindergarten to support school readiness and transition to school, over the past decade the government have implemented The National Education System Law of 2003 to expand access to early childhood education and care services, particularly for children in rural areas and low-income families to achieve gross enrollment rate of 75% in 2015 (Tobias, Wales, Syamsulhakim, & Suharti, 2014; Unicef, 2012). However, it appears that this provision is yet to take full root in the Yogyakarta province of Indonesia where this study was conducted.

The importance of kindergarten education identified by this study participants can be argued in terms of school readiness and transition to school, which according to Touhill (2012) leads to mastering new concepts, skills, and techniques required for learning at school.

For this reason, attending kindergarten has a direct influence on improving children's school readiness because kindergarten curricula can address children's developmental domains of learning, such as cognitive, physical, social and emotional development (Brinkman et al., 2016; Isaacs, 2012), and prepare for the transition to elementary school. Research found that kindergarten experiences correlated with children's intellectual development (Kumtepe, Kaya, & Kumtepe, 2009), cognitive, linguistic and motor development (Bala, Krneta, & Katić, 2010; Ramey & Ramey, 2004), social skills (Logue, 2007), and influence children's later school success (Brigman & Webb, 2003; Marcon, 2002). This is consistent with teachers' and parents' perceptions pertaining to the importance of attending kindergarten for success in elementary school to promote social and academic skills.

Teacher qualification and instability

A further aspect of the importance of kindergarten to consider is the quality of children's educational experience, which is directly connected with the quality of teachers employed to teach children. Teacher characteristics are the common way of measuring the quality of education because quality teachers can improve children's learning and development outcomes (Akiba et al., 2007). Quality teachers ensure that kindergartens are ready to support children to positively transition through kindergarten to elementary school (Britto, 2012b). On the contrary, this study found that (see Table 8) 74.2% of the kindergarten teachers are temporary teachers who work on short term contracts in public or private kindergartens. In addition, a quarter of the kindergarten teachers (25%, n=30) held a high school diploma, and 29.1% had no early childhood education background. These suggest that those kindergarten teachers did not meet the government minimum requirement of a Bachelor degree to provide quality kindergarten education.

The Indonesian government requirement is that every kindergarten teacher must have a university degree with an early childhood education component (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). The theory behind this mandatory requirement is that teachers' education background will influence the provision of better quality outcomes in young children's learning. However, in the context of Indonesia, over several decades the early childhood education programs have been built largely on volunteer workers (Unicef, 2012) because the training of teachers is not keeping pace with demands, and many degree holders do not want to work in the field of early childhood education because of low salaries. This is a challenge for the government in their attempt to enhance the quality of early childhood teachers. Since 2005, the ministerial regulation has been implementing professional learning to develop Indonesian teachers and upgrade the teacher workforce (Chang et al., 2014; Tobias et al., 2014). Teachers also reported that the frequent resination of teachers and temporary employments were affecting the establishment of longer-term relationships with children. These challenges are discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

Academic skills practices.

The findings of this study identified three skills believed by teachers as important to support school readiness - ability to use a pencil (47.5%), recognise letters of the alphabet (44.2%), and recognise colours and shapes (49.2%). Interviews with first-grade elementary teachers indicated that they were concerned about children's ability to develop academic readiness skills, such as counting numbers (ET1), how to hold a pencil correctly (ET3), and speak the Indonesian language fluently (ET4). For example:

New students in the first grade of elementary school must learn how to count numbers from 1-10, then to 20. (ET1).

We teach children how to hold a pencil correctly. Teaching numeracy is easier. It is more difficult to teach reading and writing to the children. (ET3).

I use the Indonesian language in the classroom because the first grade of elementary school children must learn to speak the Indonesian language. But every Saturday I teach in the Javanese language. (ET4).

On the other hand, kindergarten teachers focused on introducing numbers and alphabet to children through drawing activities and singing (KT5). Kindergarten teachers' comments are captured in the following statements:

I think, recognising alphabet is the first step to teaching literacy. Sometimes I ask children to sing ABC songs to memorise the alphabets, colour the alphabet and numbers, then learn to copy each of the alphabet and numbers in drawing activities. At least at the end of kindergarten, children could write their own names, spell the words, and do basic reading. (KT5).

Although the findings identified that the majority of teachers' emphasised numeracy and literacy as important skills that support children's school readiness and transition to school, surprisingly, 53.3% of the teachers responded that the ability to count numbers is not important for school readiness.

Reading, writing, and counting should be taught in elementary school. But many children have been taught writing and calculation since kindergarten. In the first grade of elementary school, children are being taught to count from 1-10, then to 20. It is more difficult to teach reading to children. I don't think maths is all that important for school readiness. If children can read, they can understand maths too (ET3).

The findings suggest that academic preparation, such as recognising the alphabet (KT5) and counting numbers (ET1) has been implemented most of the time by kindergarten teachers to promote school readiness and transition to school. This practice probably is related to the fact that in Indonesia, a number of private elementary schools conduct literacy and numeracy tests to select new students for the first grade of elementary school (Fridani & Agbenyega, 2014). Teachers believe that children's readiness for school is represented by the basic literacy and numeracy skills. As suggested by some literature, the teachers expect that these basic abilities or skills will establish the fundamentals of learning a particular subjects or skills to fulfill school requirements (Choi, Kim, & Murdock, 2005; Mollborn & Dennis, 2012; Rimm-Kaufman, 2004), and support children's academic success (Rouse, Brooks-Gunn, & McLanahan, 2005). One first grade Elementary school teacher further explained:

The first grade of elementary school lessons involve a comprehensive reading and calculating numbers. It will be difficult for children to do well in Elementary school if they cannot recognise alphabets and numbers. Considering the burden of learning in the first grade, children should master counting of numbers and simple reading at Kindergarten (KT2).

The Indonesian parents in this study also emphasised children's academic skills, such as learning of the alphabets, knowing of colours, and counting of numbers. Parents' main focus of school readiness for children were related to competencies in numeracy and literacy. One parent narrated:

Since early childhood, my son has been learning ABC to Z, recognition of colours, and counting from 1 to 10 with his fingers. I taught him by myself, his father only occasionally because he's working all day. (KP3).

The findings are consistent with research conducted by Barbarin et al. (2008), which indicates that parents focus on nominal knowledge, such as letters, numbers, and colours for their kindergarten children. According to Kagan (2003), the mastery of pre-academic skills, such as nominal knowledge indicates that parents are satisfied that their children are ready for elementary school. Furthermore, Kagan (2003) defined that readiness for school is typically equated with reading readiness, which was also reiterated by Puccioni (2015) that parents generally conceptualised school readiness in terms of academic skills, such as the ability to recognise alphabets and numbers.

During the interviews, the teacher participants indicated that rote learning, memorisation, and recitation were the main methods of teaching they used in teaching. These findings contradict the Indonesian's goal for teaching in kindergartens. As far back as 2004, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia implemented a Competency-Based Curriculum, to prevent rote learning of numeracy and literacy in kindergarten (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). This government policy was based on the argument that rote learning of numeracy and literacy in kindergarten will interrupt play-based learning, which is considered the neutral way of children's learning and development. Interestingly, several kindergarten teachers in this study admitted using rote learning approaches. Reading by rote, writing, and numeracy in kindergarten as expressed by the participants explains the tendency of the teachers to achieve school readiness simply by meeting elementary school curriculum standards. Teachers expressed their opinions on the pros and cons of teaching reading, writing, and numeracy in kindergarten by rote:

I have read about the government regulation that kindergarten was banned from teaching academic reading, writing, and arithmetic memorisation. But, you know, lessons in the first grade of elementary school is very hard for children

who cannot recognise alphabets and numbers before they enrol. In my opinion, yes I agree that kindergarten children should be introduced to reading, writing, and arithmetic in a playful way. But how can we meet the goals of the curriculum of the first grade of elementary school? How can you do this without academically teaching them? (KT2).

Most parents assume if children are taught to read and write and memorise things in kindergarten, then it is a good kindergarten. However, in my experience, if a child is taught to read and write since kindergarten, they can cope in elementary school. Although more play-based learning is good, doing play alone will not satisfy parents' needs. (ET2).

Kindergarten teachers' responses indicate that their overall practices are tailored to meeting the demands of the elementary school, therefore, the purpose of literacy and numeracy instructions in kindergarten for preparing children for first grade of elementary school. Kindergarten teachers also mentioned that the focus on academic instructions was driven by parents' demands.

These ideas connect to previous thinking that associate school readiness with particular skills or behaviours which relate to the minimum standard of school expectations (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005), for example, literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, the majority of teachers and parents focus on academic skills to promote children's readiness for school. School readiness practices that focus on academic skills alone provide a narrow and simplistic view of a child's development (Britto, 2012b). The broader and holistic view of a school readiness program includes physical well-being and motor skills, social-emotional, language, cognition, and general knowledge development (Britto, 2012b; Kagan, 2003; National Education Goals Panel, 1995). The development of all aspects of children's development

contributes to school readiness because children's competency on particular skills cannot be separated from their total being. For example, children's ability to read is a product of language, motor, cognition and general knowledge development and well-being.

Home-school communication to overcome children's difficulties in school.

The communication between home, kindergarten and elementary school is very important for understanding the concepts of school readiness and transition to school. Effective communication identifies the knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed by children for success in school to be mutually worked upon by teachers and families (Brostrom, 2000). The findings of this study identified ways teachers communicate concerns to parents pertaining to academic and social problems experienced by children at Kindergarten and at the elementary school. In commenting on communication with parents, teachers expressed their experiences in this way:

Each week we provide a report book concerning children's progress to the parents.

We also write our observation in the report book. Parents and teacher communication will help to overcome the difficulties experienced by children in kindergarten and at home. (KT3).

It's a routine to conduct a meeting with parents at the beginning of the school year and every semester. We discuss the problems experienced by children at school and inform them about school activities, such as independence day activities and field trip. We immediately invite the parent, if a child is having problems in class. (ET2).

Kindergarten teachers provide weekly or monthly reports on a child's report book and frequent updates on children's progress. They organise home visits to

communicate with parents concerning the difficulties experienced by children at kindergarten (KT3). First-grade elementary school teachers inform parents about children's progress every six months (ET2). However, if a child encounters academic problems, parents will be invited to meet the teacher at school immediately. Both Kindergarten and Elementary teachers' responses emphasised the importance of communication between kindergarten/elementary school and parents by initiating formal and informal meetings to overcome the difficulties experienced by children, such as children's difficulties in socialisation with peers. Previous research points out that the feedback from teachers provides information about children's performance, in reverse, parents information pertaining to children contribute to solving children's difficulties (Brostrom, 2000). The interconnection and interdependent relationships among children, teachers, and parents are substantial to establish families involvement to ensure children's readiness for school. This integrated cooperation enhances the continuity between home and school that supports school readiness and transition to school (Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). The findings of this study re-echoed the need for continuity in family-teacher communication in developing children's ready for school (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000).

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006b) suggests that the relationship between family and school represents the mesosystem. The mesosystem refers to the interconnection and interaction between people (child, parent, teacher) and the context (home, school) in the microsystem. The continuity of the relationship among home, educational settings, and community provide an optimum support for children's development (Ebbeck et al., 2013; Jeynes, 2005). In contrast, a breakdown in the relationship may generate difficulties in supporting the child's adjustment during the transition to school (causes anxiety or stress). Difficulty in children's overall adjustment during the transition to school can negatively affect learning and development (Veličković, 2013).

Discontinuity in transition to school.

Although the government of Indonesia is promoting school readiness through increasing access to kindergarten education (Unicef, 2012), joint reports according to the OECD/Asian Development Bank (2015a) indicate that approximately 82% of children in Papua, and 41% in Yogyakarta provinces do not participate in preschool education. The findings of the current study found that although kindergarten education is expanding, there is no comprehensive program for transition to school support in the province where this study was conducted. A kindergarten teacher who participated in this study provided an explanation:

The awareness of parents towards children's education was actually good. However, there is no support for parents and children when their children move from kindergarten to elementary school (KT2).

This indicates that there is a discontinuity in educational practices with children in kindergarten and elementary school. Continuity and connection between these two levels of education will promote children's positive transition to elementary school (Veličković, 2013). Furthermore, a parent confirmed her experience in the following comments:

My decision to enrol my son to kindergarten is because he has no friends at home. I thought, he would have some friends in kindergarten, and it was used to prepare my son for first grade of school but when he is ready to go elementary school he may need extra support to feel comfortable. Currently, this support is not available (KP2).

The continuity issue between kindergarten and elementary school can potentially generate the diversity of each child's experiences in terms of the transition to school process (Broström, Einarsdottir, & Vrinoti, 2010; Dockett & B. Perry, 2007; Einarsdottir,

2006; Fabian & Dunlop, 2006; Petriwskyj et al., 2005). The lack of comprehensive transition programs may trigger difficulties in adjustment to environmental changes and academic demands for some children than others (Dockett & Perry, 2012; Early, Pianta, Taylor, & Cox, 2001; Fabian & Dunlop, 2006). This includes such difficulties as socialising with other children and independent problems. An elementary school parent and a teacher in this study expressed their experiences:

We moved from Kalimantan, where there was no nearby kindergarten. The first time my child went to the first grade of school, she was crying, she experienced difficulties in socialising with other children. I stayed in her class during school hours. She didn't want to be left alone in the classroom. It happened for more than a month. (EP1).

When the new academic year began, it was common to see children crying. Some children were still crying at school in the first few days. We allowed parents to accompany their children in the classroom during 3 days of starting school. After 3 days, parents could only wait outside the classroom. We don't want them to interrupt their learning (ET4).

These findings revealed that transition to school in Indonesia can be a negative experience for many children. Previous research found that discontinuity or disconnection between kindergarten and first grade of elementary school generates negative feelings, such as school-related anxiety and nervousness for children and families (Broström, 2000). Ideally, children from kindergarten and their families need to meet their teachers before entering into elementary school. This means there should be an established long-term relationships for both teachers and families to work together on children's transition to school. Teachers in this study reported that there were limited communications between kindergarten and first-

grade elementary school teachers, and between school and family before children start school. The communication between families and school is limited to a registration meeting on the first day of school where the focus was on administrative matters. In most cases, communication between families and kindergarten and elementary schools focus on children with problems and academic difficulties rather than providing continuity of experience to facilitate a smooth transition to school. Teachers in this study indicated that they met children without prior information about each child in their classroom, and children did not have an understanding of what the elementary school would be like. It is argued that if children lack information and are unfamiliar with the school environment, they become less confident, which produce insecurity and nervousness (Broström, 2000).

Negative emotions, such as feeling distressed, were also reported by an elementary school teacher in this study. Frequently, teachers and parents interpret children's insecurity as the indication of not being ready for school. This research did not find any planned transition programs in the study context in Indonesia. In general, schools organised a meeting with parents and children on the first day of school to introduce them to school environment and officials. Teachers welcomed children in the school yard before the meeting and introduced themselves to the parents and children. During the first two or three weeks of transition to elementary school, some of the Kindergarten teachers allowed parents to accompany and stay with their children in the classrooms since the children would cry if they were left by their parents. On the other hand, there were also some elementary schools that prevented parents from accompanying their children into the classroom. Some teacher participants believed that maternal presence in the classroom would inhibit children's adjustment to elementary school because children would refuse to interact with peers and teachers as echoed in the following statement:

For the first week, children will be introduced to their friends and the elementary school environment so that they feel more comfortable and so that they are not afraid to be left by their parents in the classroom. Usually, after 3 weeks, a child who is afraid to be left by his or her mother, will be left alone bravely in the classroom. However, when she or he is a spoiled child, who always gets help from the family, usually they are a bit slow to adjust. (ET5).

A parent narrated how she took steps to introduce her child to the elementary school environment by taking it upon herself to visit the nearby school prior to enrolling her child in elementary school:

I took my daughter out to the elementary school near my home on several occasions to play in the schoolyard, so she would not be afraid if she finally goes to the school someday. (EP1).

The findings indicate that parents' transition practices are considered to be specific parent-child interactions intended to prepare children for school and have been operationalised by actions such as visiting the school and playing with peers (EP1). Parents' beliefs regarding transition influenced their practices and contributed to the outcomes for their children. It was also proposed by previous research that positive transition to school practice must focus on successful adjustment to school environment for children and families (Puccioni, 2015).

Transition to school is a critical component of every kindergarten program. It is recommended as one method to support children to feel secure, relaxed, and comfortable in their new environments (Fabian & Dunlop, 2006; Petriwskyj et al., 2005). Promoting continuity can be achieved by building familiarity between child and school environment, including teachers (Dockett & Perry, 2012). If the setting is familiar, children can use skills,

knowledge, and past experiences that benefit them to adjust to the new school setting (Dockett & Perry, 2007a; K. Margetts, 2002; Niesel & Griebel, 2005).

School readiness and transition to school factors.

1. What factors of early learning experiences do early childhood educators, parents and local government personnel believe to be important for school readiness and transition to school?

School readiness and transition to school are broader than academic skills (Janus, Lefort, Cameron, & Kopechanski, 2007). Given the complexity of school readiness, this sub-research question aims to explore the broad range of factors that might contribute to school readiness and transition to school from the perspectives of Indonesian parents, teachers, and government personnel. The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) suggested five domains of school readiness, including physical well-being, cognitive development and knowledge, social and emotional development, language development and communication, and approaches towards learning (National Education Goals Panel, 1995). The findings are discussed according to domains that were considered by Indonesian parents, teachers, and policy makers who participated in this study as to the role these factors play in school readiness and transition to school.

Physical health and well-being.

The National Education Goals Panel (1995) have formulated physical health and well-being as one of the factors that influence school readiness and transition to school. Children's activities in school require good physical and psychological health status, therefore they need physical health and a good nutrition to optimally participate in the learning processes. Physical health and well-being refers to physical health status, well rested, and well-

nourished children (Brunner, 2009; Bryant et al., 2005; Currie, 2005). The findings showed that the great majority of teachers (85.8%) believed physical health and well-being are critical and essential components of school readiness and transition to school. In the interview results, kindergarten teachers stated:

Actually, for children in this school, there is a free psychologist and medical check up from the community health centre. But now parents are asked to pay for the psychological service. The doctor provides routine health checks every 6 months because physical health is very important for children. If they are unhealthy, it will disrupt their activities. (KT2).

Children's health is very important. If a child is physically unhealthy, it is difficult to follow the lessons. School provides healthy meals with every morning and health checks periodically. (KT3).

Teachers informed that kindergartens in Sleman district-provided health checks (KT2) and nutritional foods for children (KT3). These are consistent with the policy of the government of Indonesia for providing a variety of health programs, such as immunisation and nutrition programs. These services are integrated into the health services for children administered by the Ministry of Health (Chang et al., 2007). Supplementary programs include Local Food-Based School Meals (LFBSM) program to provide health, nutrition, and hygiene/sanitation education for children in the Eastern region of Indonesia since 2012 to 2015 (Iswarawanti et al., 2016). There are several community-based programs to educate parents to monitor and optimise children's growth and development (UNESCO, 2011).

According to the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006a), children's characteristics (person), such as physical health and well-being, influence children's school readiness and transitional to school (proximal process) in the context (family, school, community). The children's health programs implemented by the government of

Indonesia aim to support the school readiness strategy because children's health and nutritional status have long-term effects on children's development (Unicef, 2012). The research found that children's academic performance was better when they were healthy, because unhealthy children may be absent from school, or have difficulties in concentrating (Currie, 2005)). Children who are malnourished during their early years tend to have lower scores on cognitive achievement, psychomotor and fine motor development, poorer attention spans and show lower levels of activity than other children. Further, they are at risk of dropping out of elementary school (UNESCO, 2010). It can be concluded that children's health plays an important role in detecting developmental, behavioural, social, environmental, and biological conditions that influence school readiness and transition to school (Brunner, 2009). Disease prevention and health promotion may reduce risk factors that influence children's development (Emel & Alkon, 2006).

Approaches towards learning.

Approaches towards learning are one of the school readiness domains designed by the National Education Goals Panel (1995). It refers to habits, patterns, attitudes, learning styles and motivation that reflect the various ways children's become involved in learning new skills and concepts in school (Barbu et al., 2015; George & Greenfield, 2005). The characteristics of approaches towards learning, including curiosity, persistence in tasks, attentiveness, flexibility, independence, organisation, and eagerness (Musu-Gillette et al., 2015) were noted in the findings. Teachers in the survey considered the ability to *finish tasks* (57.5%), *sit still and pay attention* (56.6%), and be *enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities* (45%) as very important (or essential) for school readiness and transition to school. This finding was supported by teachers and parent comments during interviews as presented below:

When they are independent children, they can perform various activities, such as eating or wearing shoes on their own, without any help from their parents. (KT2).

She can get up early, so she won't be late to school. I manage the time for my daughter's activities, such as playtime, time for watching TV, and bedtime. (KP1).

Pertaining to approaches towards learning, teachers focused on providing encouragement and training children to be more independent (KT2). On the other hand, parents acknowledged that waking up early in the morning, and following rules (won't be late to school) and disciplines (play time, watching TV and bedtime) are skills that children need to be ready for school and experience a positive transition to school (KP1). In addition, the government personnel (GP2) emphasised that following rules (paying attention to the lessons) and school routines related to the expected behaviour are important for school readiness.

My concept of school readiness is that children are ready to involve in the learning process. Children should readily follow several rules implemented by the school, paying attention to the lessons and following many school routines. Therefore, not only intellectual readiness but also emotionally readiness. (GP2).

As children start school, they encounter a number of expectations and demands from parents and teachers, such as how to follow rules and school routines. The findings of this study highlight the differences in expectations and demands between teachers, parents and policy makers. Teachers focused more on persistence, ability to pay attention and curiosity; parents were concerned with initiative and independence, and policymakers emphasised the ability to pay attention and follow rules and school routines. These differences may be caused by how each individual conceptualises school readiness (Brostrom, 2005).

According to Brostrom (2005), to support a positive transition to school, it is important to have a clear understanding of school readiness and transition to school. At the same time, there need to be established similarities and continuities between home and school to make it easier for children to recognise the activities that are important and increased children's confident to cope with the challenges during the transition to school. The differences in views between teachers, parents, and policymakers may generate different practices for children. Children who experience several changes in the transition to school may not be able to manage transition successfully and may feel uncomfortable or insecure in school (Brostrom, 2005). In relation to this findings, similarities of the demands and expectations between teachers, parents, and policymakers may enhance children's approaches towards learning, because the disparity between expectation and realisation may generate insecurity, which will cause an unsuccessful transition to school. Effective collaboration between parents and teachers will promote children's adjustment during the transition to school (Schulting et al., 2005).

Parental involvement.

According to Hill and Taylor (2004), parental involvement in preparing children to be ready for school and transition positively consisted of the following activities: communicating with teachers and school officials, assisting in academic learning at home, and participating in school events. The findings indicate that parents and schools share some responsibilities in promoting school readiness and transition to school. It appeared that mothers were more likely to be involved, on the other hand, fathers involvement was limited.

I help my daughter to get up early, so she wouldn't be late to school. I managed the time for my daughter's activities, such as playtime, time for watching TV, and bedtime. (KP1).

Since early childhood, my son has been learning ABC to Z, recognise colours, and count 1 to 10 with his fingers. I taught him by myself, his father only occasionally because he's working all day. (KP3).

The findings show that parents in this study are concerned about their involvement with children's learning activities at home, such as learning the alphabet and numbers (KP3). There is an important connection between parenting and children's readiness for school (Choi et al., 2005; Dockett & Perry, 2009; Hatcher, Nuner, & Paulsel, 2012; Rimm-Kaufman, 2004). It was also found that one way the elementary teachers promote parental involvement in their children's learning was to give the children homework. However, the results of the survey revealed that three-quarters of teachers (75%, n=90) did not want homework to be given to children on an everyday basis. Seen from bioecological theoretical perspectives, homework may represent home-school collaboration (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006b). Parents' participation in the homework process is a component of the mesosystem, that continuously bridges the two microsystems (family and school) to facilitate children's development (Tam & Chan, 2009).

In Indonesia, homework is one of the learning strategies to train and practice academic lessons at home. Some parents reported that they complete the homework for the children by themselves because they are too difficult for children to accomplish. Homework may not be an effective practice at this early stages of schooling because several children experience anxiety as they are too young to focus exclusively on tasks when it is time for them to enjoy family time (Xu, 2006). There is general agreement that the success of the transition to school and adaptation to the new physical, social and academic contexts can be facilitated by parental

involvement. From the perspectives of the children in this research, starting school can be a more pleasant experience when they are accompanied by their parents to school in the first few weeks to enable them to adjust to their new environment. The reality, the child's view may differ from that of parents. The children in this study reported the importance of family support (especially mother) when they start school.

When my mother accompanied me to class for two days, I felt better.(KC1).

My mother waited for me outside my class until school's ended. (KC2).

I didn't want to be left by the mother. (KC3).

I want to go to school but I don't want to be left by my mother to go alone.(KC5).

In general, child interviews demonstrated the eagerness to go to school but those who are looking forward to school, express feelings of apprehension and insecurity when not accompanied by parents or a family member. It is argued by previous researchers that children being away from parents on the first day of school are associated with increased distress for younger children (Cryer et al., 2005). There is the indication from the data to show that some children had mixed ideas about a school that made it difficult for them to imagine how safe it would be for them in school. For example, "schools do not play" (KC5), "teacher beats at school" (KC3) and "no sleep time in school" (KC1). Children's suggestions about how the school can help to ease these fears and tensions are building strong relationships with families in developing social and emotional skills for dealing with school context issues. These findings, coupled with the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture's Movement of Accompanying Children to School policy (2015) suggest a need for deeper investigations into these issues and the impact of increased presence of parents in the school when children transition in the first few weeks for their sense of well-being and competence.

Children's experiences of transition to school.

2. What are the experiences of:

- a) first grade of elementary school children in terms of their first day of starting?*
- b) children in kindergarten who are preparing to go to school?*

The majority of studies of transition to school have emphasised parents' and teachers' perceptions (Dockett & Perry, 2001). It is important to understand the transition to school from children's perspectives in order to identify the most appropriate strategies and resources to support them. This can only occur by listening directly to their voices. This research question is intended to gain in-depth understanding pertaining to children's experiences on the first day of starting school. The findings identified two significant issues related to children's experiences during their transition to school and those who were about to transition to school in the Sleman district in Indonesia. The discussion is presented under two themes: *negative experiences and feelings about going to school*, and *the importance of having friends*.

Negative feelings about going to school.

Transition to school is a major change for children. It presents various challenges (Yeo & Clarke, 2006), and can be a stressful moment for children (Danby, Thompson, Theobald, & Thorpe, 2012; Hirst, Jervis, Visagie, Sojo, & Cavanagh, 2011; Sink, Edwards, & Weir, 2007), because leaving their familiar home environment and entering the unknown school environment can generate negative feelings (Dockett & Perry, 2002; Weller, 2007). Some children demonstrate signs of insecurity or stress during the first week in school (Broström et al., 2010). The findings of this study confirm that children entering elementary school for the first time experienced negative feelings on the first day. These include feeling scared, worried, nervous, sad, afraid, and unhappy. Kindergarten children expressed their experiences in this way:

I was scared and shy. I cried because my mother left me in the classroom. (KC1).

I cried for a while, my mother waited for me outside my class until school ends.(KC2).

On the first day, I cried because I wasn't familiar with the school. I don't have any friend and don't know the teacher. (KC3).

I was crying because I was afraid that my mother will leave me alone in the class.

I was afraid of the teacher because I've never met her before. (KC4).

I was crying, didn't want to be left by my mother. I was afraid of the teacher. Because I was still a new to the school and didn't know what to do. (KC5).

These distressing feelings have been attributed to many factors, such as separation from parents (KC1, KC2, KC4) and unfamiliarity with school (KC3) and teacher (KC5), and having no friend (KC5). According to Fisher (2009), children's negative responses can be divided into two categories: the feelings of leaving behind what is loved and familiar (such as familiar people, routines, and environment), and the feelings of anxiety about what is to come (such as new teachers, new classrooms, and new environment). Kindergarten children in this study reported they experienced negative feelings related to separation from their mothers (KC1, KC2, and KC4) and leaving familiar environment (KC3).

This resonates with previous studies that most children become anxious about the unknown such as contact with new teachers and new school structures (Cryer et al., 2005). According to Peleg, Halaby, and Whaby (2006), a worry or an anxiety caused by separation from familiar people (caregiver, mother) or home is called separation anxiety. The reactions to separation reported by children in this study were crying (KC1, KC2, KC3, and KC4) and refusal to be left by their mothers (KC1, KC2, and KC4). Furthermore, children also reported that they felt anxious about what was to come, such as being: afraid of the teacher (KC5), unfamiliar with school (KC3), and having no friends (KC5). This finding

indicates that transition to school was strongly linked to children's experiences of separation as they left parents or caregivers for learning in the classroom with their peers and teachers (Xu, 2006), and worrying about the uncertainty of the new environment (Eskelä-Haapanen, Lerkkanen, Rasku-Puttonen, & Poikkeus, 2016). The positive or negative emotions, such as excitement or feeling anxious in transition to school is known to influence children's adjustment process (Dockett & Perry, 2012). Children who experience negative feelings, tend to lack confidence and are less enthusiastic about classroom activities. The negative feelings can be minimised when children have personal relationships with their teacher (Valeski & Stipek, 2001) and their peers (Danby et al., 2012; Dunn, Cutting, & Fisher, 2002).

Children who had previously visited their elementary school prior to enrolment approached the transition to school differently, and reported positive feelings, such as happy (EC1, EC2, EC3, EC4, EC5), not scared (EC3), and did not cry (EC1, EC2, EC3), as narrated below:

I felt happy on the first day at school. I was not crying because I know the school.

(EC1).

I felt happy because I went to the same school with my sister. I was not crying. I had several friends. (EC2).

I felt happy because I was going to elementary school, I know the teacher. I did not cry because I was a big kid. When I was in kindergarten, I cried because I was scared. But now I'm not scared anymore.(EC3).

I felt happy to be an elementary school's student. I came to the school with my mother before the school started, we came twice. I came with some friends from my kindergarten. (EC4).

I felt happy because I was going to new school. The teacher came to my house, she talked to my mom. The school building was bigger than my kindergarten. I loved my teacher, she was very friendly. (EC5).

All elementary school children in this study had attended kindergarten prior to the first grade of elementary school and had previously experienced the transition from home to kindergarten as reported by EC3, EC4, and EC5. According to Yeboah (2002), the transition from early childhood education to the first grade of elementary school is one of the most difficult and stressful stages for children. However, the findings of this study showed that children who had prior visit the elementary school with their family members experienced a positive transition to elementary school. This is consistent with Peters (2000) finding that the transition from early childhood education to elementary school is not a distressing experience for all children. This confirms Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory that, for children's developmental transitions to be smooth, their careful consideration must be given to the school, home and cultural factors (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006b). This is because, the transitions from home to kindergarten, and from kindergarten to elementary school provide challenges and demand continuity of the process to be effective. Each ecological transition requires new forms of support. For example, during the transition to elementary school, children must cope with a new environment, new academic demands and teacher's expectations that require considerable adjustments.

The importance of having friends.

Children often experience various kinds of new demands and new environments during transition to school process that potentially generates stressful moments (Dockett & Perry, 2002; Hammond, 2016; Weller, 2007). Perspectives of kindergarten children transitioning to

elementary school in this study reveal their experiences that indicate the importance of having friends to help them cope with their negative feelings:

I'm not scared because I went to school the first day with friends that I already know in my previous kindergarten. (KC1).

My friend comes from the same neighbourhood and we went to school together, this makes me happy, my mother does not accompany me anymore. (KC5).

Having friends can help children gain positive school experiences, such as reduced fear (KC1), and improve their independence (KC5). This study also reveals that elementary school children who already have friends from the same kindergarten experienced more positive feelings during the transition from kindergarten to elementary school. In other words, old and new friends can have a positive impact on children's transition to school. An elementary child narrated her experiences in this way:

I felt happy to be an elementary school student because I go to school with two friends from my previous kindergarten. She helps me with my work (EC4).

On the other hand, lack of friends is related to challenges and difficulties in transition to school, because some children can be anxious when they feel as if they do not have friends (Dunn et al., 2002; Peters, 2003). This was evident in a comment from a participant:

On the first day of school, I cried because I am not familiar with the school. I didn't have friends, and I didn't know the teacher. (KC3).

The findings indicate that elementary school children who already have friends from kindergarten (EC4), experienced a better adjustment to school than kindergarten children who have no friends (KC5). It signifies that having friends can be a potential source of support for school adjustment. Children who have friends are less likely to experience negative emotions,

such as stress and anxiety (Peters, 2003). These findings are consistent with several studies that emphasised the importance of friends and friendship in supporting a positive transition to school (Danby et al., 2012; van Hoogdalem, Singer, Eek, & Heesbeen, 2013; Yeo & Clarke, 2006). Children who were preparing to enter elementary school the following year expressed fear and anxiety of going to school. For example, some of the children said, “*I do not want to go because I do not know the teacher*” (EC3); *I am scared of the teacher*” (EC1).

These findings suggest that during transitions to school, children need supportive relationships with parents, teachers and peers to gain better long-term outcomes for school adjustment (Danby et al., 2012). Such relationships strongly influence and support children’s social-emotional adjustment (Yeo & Clarke, 2006).

Kindergarten and elementary school are different environments in terms of the demands, and the nature of the setting. Transition to school requires adjustment to the new tasks, new environment, and gaining acceptance from the new peer group (Yeo & Clarke, 2006). Research has found that friendship is the key factor of adjustment to school (Dunn et al., 2002; van Hoogdalem et al., 2013). Children who have friends can become more socially competent (Berndt, 1999). The ability to have relationships and socially interact with peers and teachers will provide emotional support and promote a positive transition to school (Danby et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2002; Peters, 2003; Yeo & Clarke, 2006).

Conclusion

From the discussions on teachers, parents, policy maker and children’s perspectives we see very clearly the difference between the perspective of professionals and the unique needs of children and parents. Although Kindergarten, as well as elementary school teachers, spend time in their demanding role guiding children and parents for school readiness and during the transition into elementary school, in Indonesia where this study was conducted

showed that no comprehensive programs on the transition to school existed at the time of the data collection. So children's school readiness and transition to school is marred in discontinuity and academic rote learning. There is evidence that both parents and children are very nervous when their children start elementary school. What parents and children expect is friendship and positive experience which can be facilitated by strong collaboration between institutions and families. Parents and educators need to enter a communicative relationship about what is done and not done in the elementary school and in the family to prepare children to cope with the transition to school. In this case, school readiness is needed not only for children but also for parents.

I found that setting the school entry age at 7 years is also problematic and inconsistent across schools because this only applies to public elementary schools. The combination of issues discussed in this chapter suggests that policy around school readiness and transition to school needs to be revised and new measures instituted to make the system fair and consistent with international standards, and at the same time, respond to the Indonesian socio-cultural environment in which early education takes place.

Chapter VI.

Summary, Recommendation and conclusion.

Introduction.

This study was conducted for the purpose of understanding the perspectives of teachers (kindergarten and first grade of elementary school), parents, children and education policy makers regarding school readiness and transition to school practices in Yogyakarta province in Indonesia. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory was used to frame the study and explain the results. An explanatory mixed-method that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted in this study to generate data. The quantitative component of the study was conducted to examine the dimensions and factors of school readiness and transition to school. It involved 95 kindergarten teachers and 25 elementary school teachers in Sleman district in Indonesia responding to questionnaires. To gain further insight into teacher's, parents', policy makers', and children's opinions, a qualitative method of semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 teachers, 7 parents, 2 policy makers, and 10 children. The next section of this chapter presents the summary of the findings which is followed by the recommendations for action and future research.

Summary of key findings.

The main research question explored the perspectives of kindergarten and first grade of Elementary school teachers, parents, children and local government personnel in terms of what they are doing to guide, educate and support children to enter elementary school with skills to be successful. The results indicated six main findings in response to this question:

First, the government of Indonesia set children's age at 7 years as the criterion of school readiness. This is to ensure that children are physically matured to fit into the existing structures of the elementary schools. These structures include the type of furniture, classroom layout and teaching methods that do not necessarily use play. Second, there is a strong awareness of the importance of kindergarten due to the Indonesian government early childhood education policy and initiatives to make early childhood accessible to all Indonesian children in both urban and rural areas. This is an important finding in this research because the first step to implementing a successful program is creating awareness. Awareness creation of the importance of early childhood education is so much more than just telling people about what you want to do and what the potential outcome will be. Creating awareness of early childhood education, school readiness and the transition to school sets the stage where government and professionals gather feedback, foster participative management, get to ask questions, spark ideas and most importantly seek to understand as to why the quality of early childhood education and transition programs can enhance academic success in school. By not giving awareness creation the importance it deserves, the risk is that teachers, parents, and community members may look at early childhood education as another loose-end project or, worse yet, not understand how it truly links to the strategic plan of using early childhood as a vehicle for poverty reduction. The creation of awareness of the early childhood initiative to champion school readiness and the positive transition to school will ensure the best chances of success as well as holding all stakeholders accountable.

Third, teachers in kindergartens focus mainly on developing children's competency in academic skills through rote learning of mathematics, reading and writing with little time for play-based activities. The purpose of this is to prepare children to an expected academic level that would make them acceptable by favourite (best) primary schools. This is an important finding that is consistent with previous studies which found that rote learning destroys

children's creativity (Agbenyega, 2009; Dockett & Perry, 2001). This means when children are engaged in rote learning they are prevented from developing the ability to come up with a novel, original and unique solutions to problems or ideas. Children's divergent thinking and problem-solving skills are stalled when their learning method is restricted to memorisation. This is because, rote learning, is associated with convergent thinking. When used as the sole learning technique it ignores the development of a child's divergent thinking skills, leading to children having a reduced ability to think creatively because their thinking is limited to producing one right answer.

Fourth, there is a strong emphasis on home-school communication to overcome children's difficulties in school. This has become important as teachers are now realising the important role families play in their children's education. This finding is consistent with previous studies which identified that family involvement supports the accomplishment of successful transitions to school (Dockett & Perry, 2001; McIntyre et al., 2007). Parents not only support schools but also implement several activities at home to help their children learn. These include collaborating with other parents, telling stories to children and engaging children outdoor activities (Barnett, Lamy, & Jung, 2005).

Kraft-Sayre and Pianta (2000), for example noted that a positive transition to school practice should include frequent contacts with families during the first few days of school, regular meeting with families, and encouragement of family participation in home-learning activities. Thus, this finding has implication for developing practices to engage families through home visits, calling the child, or inviting parents to visit preschools regularly (Eckert et al., 2008). Such parental participation in school activities during transition programs may bring a sense of security to children and help resolve the issue of separation anxiety (Malaspina & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008). This finding also aligns with previous research evidence that the participation of parents in children's transition program can

provide children with a sense of comfort, emotional stability and positive attribution (Xu, 2006). This is because, when parents participate actively in transition programs, there is reciprocal sharing of relevant information on children's learning and development that teachers can use to enhance their adjustment in the transition process (Broström, 2000).

Fifth, there is a discontinuity in how children transition from kindergarten to school. This means, there is no established transition framework for supporting kindergarten children during their transition period to elementary school except a one day visit on the day of admission. The lack of formalised transition program has led many children unsupported and stressed during the transition to school. The finding of discontinuity in learning resonates with other studies that used Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006b) and found that the key factor of human development is the continuous *proximal process* that operates over time in child development (Touhill, 2012). It is argued that the transition to school is a dynamic process of continuity and change which occur over time (Dockett & Perry, 2014) therefore, children's learning must be organised in a continuous process so that they can understand learning concepts better.

This finding is also consistent with a study conducted by Barblett, Barratt-Pugh, Kilgallon, and Maloney (2011) which found that continuity in learning supported children to make significant gains when they transitioned from kindergarten to school. This findings has implication for developing consistency in children's educational experience and care settings and the coordination of services and agencies (Veličković, 2013). This concurs with the argument that the consistency between kindergarten and elementary school settings in the areas of pedagogy, curriculum, resources, support (Bühmann & Trudell, 2008; Podmore, Sauvao, & Mapa, 2001), linguistic, and educators are beneficial for promoting successful transition to school (Woodhead & Moss, 2007; Wong, 2015) . When there are similarities between settings and continuity of learning and relationships, children will develop more confident to

learn (Dockett & Perry, 2012; Lam & Pollard, 2006; OECD 2001; Woodhead & Moss, 2007). For this reasons, the curriculum frameworks in kindaergartens and elementary schools need to integrate and strengthen the pedagogic continuity (Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani, & Merali, 2006).

Sixth, this study found that a number of kindergarten teachers did not meet the minimum required degree mandated by the Ministry of Education and Culture but due to the limited number of kindergarten teachers in the rural and remote regions where this study was conducted, secondary school leavers were employed to teach children. This finding is cause for concern because the lack of knowledge in terms of children's development has implications for poor teaching, which can affect children's learning and development. This finding supports previous studies, which argued that teachers occupy a central position in any educational process and as such, they must have relevant knowledge about student learning, and development (Early et al., 2001; Luschei & Zubaedah, 2012).

The implication of this finding is that teacher training on the transition to school practices for Indonesian early childhood and elementary school teachers must be intensified to enhance their knowledge and skills pertaining to the needs of children (Eckert et al., 2008). Previous research findings suggest that the effectiveness of the early childhood teacher is important in the transition to school practice because effective teachers know and use a variety of tools to conduct needs assessments on children and use the results to develop programs that respond to children's specific needs (Guo, Justice, Sawyer, & Tompkins, 2011; Limlingan, Britto, Rana, Pasic, & Mannathoko, 2012). Training programs that target specific skills of teachers have been found to upgrade teachers' professional knowledge on how to promote children's social and emotional development and learning, organise, manage and teach the diverse characteristics of children in their classrooms (Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani, and Shallwani, 2008; Limlingan et al., 2012).

Furthermore, a considerable number of kindergarten teachers in this study are temporary teachers who work on short-term contracts in public or private kindergartens. This is significant because temporary teachers have limited time to establish ongoing relationships with children. Continuous relationship with children is important for building children's trust and continuity in their learning and development. Children thrive in stable and nurturing environments where they have a routine and know what to expect from teachers, the environment, and other adults. Although teachers cannot avoid changing their jobs, sudden and dramatic discontinuities in teacher workforce can cause serious disruptions and stressful conditions that affect children's feeling of security in school. Children need supportive relationships with adults who act as a buffer against any negative effects of instability. This enables them to learn how to cope with adversity, adapt to their surroundings, and regulate their emotions (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2007).

These six key findings illustrate the ways in which the study participants (teachers, parents, and government personnel) perceived and are implementing educational practices for children to be ready for school. The use of chronological age as a determining factor for school readiness suggests that readiness is conceptualised narrowly as depended on the child and what the child can do as an individual to be accepted into an elementary school. It also suggests that kindergarten education is basically understood as sites of preparing children to adjust into existing pedagogical and institutional structures of schooling. This perception deviates from Bronfenbrenner's bioecological perspective of school readiness and transition to school that considers the bioecological nested system in which a child learns and develops (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

The biological and cultural child develops within families, communities, schools and the wider society, and is influenced by norms, values, social practices, school and government policies and demands (Brunner, 2009). In this way, age alone cannot be a defining parameter

for school readiness. School readiness and transition require the involvement and interconnection of families, schools, and communities over time. However, the findings of this study indicated the discontinuity of the relationship and communication between teachers, parents, policy makers, and children. This creates implications for school adjustment issues in the implementation of school readiness and transition to school programs in Indonesia.

The first sub research question highlighted a number of factors that were believed by teachers, parents, and government personnel to be important for school readiness and transition to school. The three most rated factors by the participants were (1) physical health and well-being, (2) approaches towards learning, and (3) parental involvement. The findings revealed that teachers, parents, and government personnel have different demands and expectations in terms of children's attitudes, habits, learning styles, and motivations as the factors that they considered influence school readiness and transition to school. In relation to physical health and well-being, the participants felt that support for physical health and well-being would enable children to engage with learning. For example, the government of Indonesia funded the provision of milk to children on daily basis to support their nutritional requirements. These findings resonate with previous studies that the conceptualisation of children's physical well-being vary in different contexts because it can be viewed from policy-related purposes, the underlying factors that create well-being, and the interrelationship between different components of children's well-being (Bradshaw, Hoelscher, & Richardson, 2007; UNICEF, 2015; WHO, 2012). Children's physical health and well-being are prioritised by international organisations, such as World Bank (2002), UNICEF (2015), and WHO (2012), because its essential role in supporting children's learning and development (Brunner, 2009; Currie, 2005; Glewwe & Miguel, 2007). Therefore, recognising and situating children's physical health and well-being at the centre of school readiness and transition to school is a bold step towards making children connect to school. Pivik (2012) argues that nutrition and

physical health are connected to learning because good nutrition and health in early years influence early brain growth and development which can affect children's ability to learn. It is also recognised that a better physical well-being in early years will benefit children's development and school achievement (ACECQA, 2017; UNICEF, 2015; WHO, 2012; World Bank, 2002), and minimise risk factors associated with poor nutrition and chronic physical illness which directly or indirectly interfere with children's development and school outcomes (Currie, 2005; Glewwe & Miguel, 2007; Ross & Anderson, 2010).

The most important knowledge that can be gleaned from this study is that a child's health should not be considered as a separate part of school readiness strategy (Brunner, 2009). As one component of school readiness, physical health and well-being cover a number of important indicators, such as healthy food and adequate sleep. To maximise the learning experiences within kindergarten and school settings, children should not be left hungry or tired. Information sharing on children's health and well-being is essential to understanding their condition before they start school with the intention to provide appropriate support for learning and development (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016). This has policy implications for Indonesia because evidence suggests that policies, which strengthen the foundations of health in the early childhood periods, may have long-lasting positive effects on children's learning and development (Dockett & Perry, 2013). When children have the best possible start in life, they are more likely to become healthy, resilient and productive adults (Caspi & Blau, 2011; Heckman, 2006; McEwan, 2013; Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2000). Developing into healthy adults, will in turn, contribute to the whole of society through increased participation in social and economic activities.

School readiness and transition programs must have a comprehensive physical health and well-being policy integrated as part of the overall school readiness strategy because when children are physically healthy, well rested and well nourished, they are ready to transition to

school and learning. Since physical health alone cannot make children ready for school there is need to consider establishing a strong positive link between home, school, and policy makers to promote school readiness and successful transition to school.

The second sub research question is related to children's experiences and feelings in terms of their first day of starting school and those about to enter school. The findings indicated that children who participated in this study expressed (1) negative feelings about going to school, and (2) the importance of having friends as part of adjusting to elementary school. Children who were in elementary Grade One at the time of this study indicated that they encountered negative emotions, such as being scared of their new teachers, school environments, and school routines because these were different from kindergarten practices. Some of the negative feelings also included being shy and afraid of unknown peers.

According to the children who participated in the study, crying was the common reactions associated with their negative feelings on their first day of starting school when they felt distressed. Some of the children who were happy on their first day of starting elementary school mentioned having friends as their motivating factor. Being scared to go to school at the age of 7 years demonstrate the degree of insecurity which is related to unfamiliarity with new teachers and the school environment.

Children who were in the last year of kindergarten expressed fear and anxieties about going to elementary school the following year. All these constitute important findings, which indicate discontinuity of children's experiences in terms of the transition from kindergarten to school. The findings echoed Dockett and Perry's (2013) research, which showed that generally, children who felt unsupported when they first entered formal school tended to dislike school. This has important policy implications for developing programs that serve and support children and families. Having systems and policies in place in early childhood programs and elementary schools to identify children and families who are experiencing significant changes as a result

of the transition to school is one approach to target extra transition services and case management to those children and families (Caspi & Blau, 2011; McEwan, 2013; Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2000).

Given the central role parents play in the transition to school process, additional efforts could be made to target child health and parental mental health toward helping both children and families to build capabilities toward environmental and school adjustments. A well-designed transition program can reduce parental and childhood stress, and strengthen family coping strategies to ease the impact of instability on children.

Limitations of the study.

This study was conducted in one district of Yogyakarta province in Indonesia. It involved 120 teachers, 7 parents, 10 children and 2 government personnel. Indonesia consisted of 34 provinces with diversities in local languages, cultures, and demographic components. The findings of this study cannot be generalised to the wider kindergarten or elementary school settings in the whole of Indonesia. Data from each province in Indonesia could add different perspectives and enrich the findings.

Another limitation of the study is that all parents who participated in this study were mothers. Father's involvement in research pertaining to educating children is important, however, due to logistical reasons, fathers were not included in this study. I am of the strong view that their inclusion would have given deeper insights into the role of fathers in school readiness and transition to school.

A further limitation of the current study is that some of the interviews with parents in this study were conducted in the Javanese language. The challenge to conducting research in Indonesia is that some people cannot speak the Indonesian language and can only communicate in their local languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, and many other

local dialects. As a result, some of the ideas they expressed were difficult to translate into Indonesian or the English language. I was not from the Javanese tribe, therefore, I relied on a local person to translate some of the challenging words, and this may have implications for some aspects of the data. Despite these limitations, this study uncovered many topical issues that need to be addressed so that children's school readiness and transition to school in Indonesia can be enhanced. The next section draw attention to some of these issues through specific recommendations.

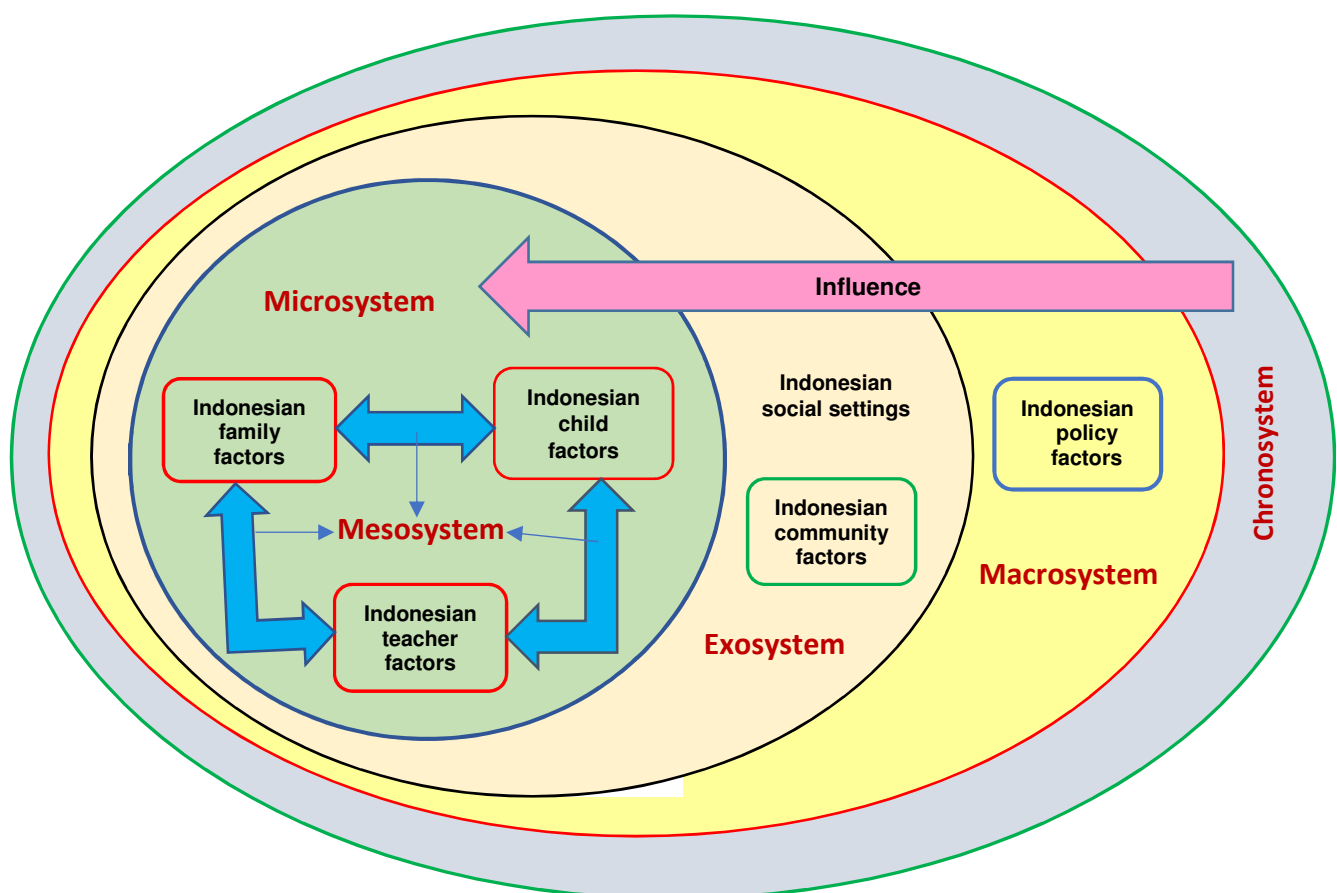
Recommendation for school readiness and transition to school in Indonesia.

In light of the findings of this research which were situated in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework, two key recommendations regarding school readiness and transition to school in the Indonesian context can be made. As the study found that maturational perspective dominates the conceptualisation of school readiness and practices in Indonesia, the first approach to any transformation is to reconceptualise the maturational view of school readiness and transition to school. Reconceptualisation in this sense implies, developing a new and deeper understandings of what it means to be ready and transition to school. It is the formation of new perspectives, which are grounded in sound and contemporary theories that support the holistic development of children.

The maturational view provides a one-sided account of children's learning and development and ignores the interactive role of child, family, school, and community (Kagan & Rigby, 2003). School readiness policies that draw on the interconnections and interrelationship between child, family, school, peers, and community to frame school readiness are holistic in nature. This is because this conceptualisation perceives the child's learning and development in the context of the wider social and environmental factors that impact the child (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). A model of school readiness and transition

to school based on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological perspective that may be applicable to the Indonesian context is illustrated in Figure 8. These conceptual diagram shows the interrelation and interconnectedness between Indonesian children, parents, teachers, and government policy perspectives.

Figure 8. A school readiness framework for Indonesia based on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model.



A school readiness framework for Indonesia based on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Figure 8) represents the interconnection between child, family, teacher and community within the five layers of environmental systems that should be involved in school readiness and positive transition to school planning in the Indonesian context. The microsystem consists of Indonesian children families, and teachers, and the dynamic interactions, relationship and

communications between these persons (the mesosystem). This means families in Indonesia must be considered the principal players, where Indonesian children's learning and developmental processes begin. Home traditions and practices influence children's learning style and their kindergarten experience, their progress and vice versa (Hedegaard, 2009).

A child's biological and behavioural attributes (dispositions), such as age, gender and physical health and how they are supported will influence the interaction and communications (mesosystem) between child and other persons around him/her in the microsystem (Hedegaard, 2009). The demands, expectations and resources of the persons around the child in the contexts (home, school, community) influence the practices that are implemented to promote school readiness and successful transition to school (Dockett & Perry, 2015).

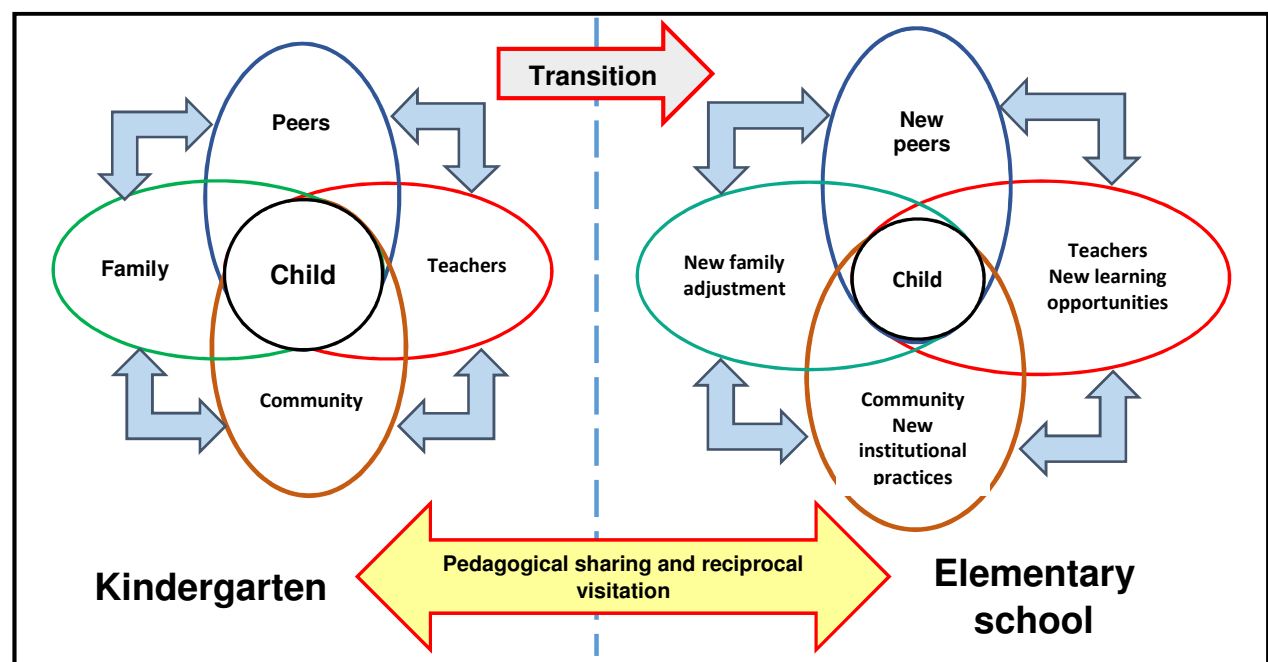
The exosystem represents the Indonesian community in larger social settings that are directly or indirectly influenced by the macrosystem (the government policies). Children's learning and development are also influenced by the processes that occur in the community and social settings, such as family's friends/neighbours and social networks in which children and family live (Hedegaard, 2009; Hepburn, 2004; Jansen, André, & Suhre, 2013). This calls for a greater coordination of policies, community programs and school practices.

The macrosystem represents the Indonesian cultural, social values, political and economic aspects which may influence all layers of the ecosystem, and indirectly influence a child's learning and development (Hedegaard, 2009; Hepburn, 2004; Jansen, André, & Suhre, 2013). In the macrosystem, the development of values and beliefs emanating from the societal experiences have several impact on children (Edwards, Jumper-Thurman, Plested, Oetting, & Swanson, 2000; Dockett, 2008;). As societal experiences can come from areas of culture, type of government, socioeconomic circumstances or geographical areas, these

can disadvantage or favour some children. It is therefore important for government and schools in Indonesia to take urgent steps to facilitate deeper understandings of early childhood education values and beliefs, and develop institutional structures to support all children to thrive. This is critically important in order to avert the negative experiences of children in their early education concerning transition to school.

The chronosystem reflects the ongoing change and continuity of the environment and process around the child over time in Indonesia. These changes include Kindergarten and Elementary school policies, teacher education and qualification standards, and the frequent political and economic changes that directly affect children's learning and development (Brunner, Floyd, & Coperman, 2005; Dockett, Perry, & Petrywskyj, 2013). In this way, the bioecological conception of school readiness and transition to school acknowledges the importance of three ecological domains: ready children, ready families, and ready schools (Britto, 2012a; Dockett & Perry, 2009).

Figure 9. A model of an ecological and dynamic model of transition for the Indonesian context.



A model of an ecological and dynamic model of transition from kindergarten to elementary school in the Indonesian context as illustrated in Figure 3, represents the dynamic interconnections and relationship between child, family, teachers, peers, and community in kindergarten and elementary school contexts. In Indonesia, the demands, expectations, resources, and environments in kindergarten and elementary schools are different. For example, interactions in kindergarten classrooms are not typically formal, while elementary school classrooms, emphasise formal teacher directed instruction.

The transition from kindergarten to elementary school provides a new environment, new peers and new experiences which require new adjustment for the child and family (Marie Hirst et al., 2011). It also draws implications for new learning opportunities for the teacher, and new institutional practices for the community. According to (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) a community consists of other citizens and informal groups in the geographical area of every school district. The promotion of processes that support positive transitions to school require horizontal continuity between home, kindergarten, and elementary school in terms of the demands, expectations, and the familiarity with school environment (Barblett, Barratt-Pugh, Kilgallon, & Maloney, 2011; Dockett & Perry, 2007b). Horizontal continuity can be achieved by establishing and conducting transition programs and reciprocal communication between family and school (Ahtola et al., 2011; Broström et al., 2010; Tudge, Freitas, & Doucet, 2009).

In view of the framework in Figure 3, transitioning to elementary school is not just about the first day that the children moves from kindergarten to the school premises with their parents. It must be seen as a continuous process that begins when children and families start to prepare in the year before the child is ready to go to school and they continue with follow-up programs until the child finally adjusts to the school setting (Ahtola et al., 2011). This is because transition involves significant changes and adaptations for children and families, and

there are different reactions and ways that children and families adjust to the physical environment such as the size of the playground, classroom and school buildings, the location and types of toilets, the number of other children and teachers behaviours (Einarsdottir, 2006). Changes also involve learning the new rules and procedures of the school, in terms of timetabling, eating and going to the toilet, rules for different places such as the classroom and playground, lining up and putting up a hand to speak which usually is not the case in kindergartens (Marie Hirst et al., 2011).

Above all, children need time to build new relationships with other children and adults and respond appropriately to children of different ages. Children can be stressed when learning more formal subjects within structured times and set tasks that require increasing independence (Yeo & Clarke, 2006). These adjustments may bring excitement to some but for others, it can be a terrible and difficult experience. As a result, educators and schools can use the framework in Figure 3 to develop the children's social, emotional and learning skills to cope with the new challenges. As the framework illustrates, both teachers in elementary school and kindergarten can share pedagogical perspectives through shared professional learning (Ahtola et al., 2011). This should be combined with reciprocal visiting to both the kindergarten and preschool settings. The combination of reciprocal visitation and pedagogical sharing as an established framework would improve children's experience of school readiness and transition to school because of the strong focus on partnership (Ahtola et al., 2011).

Direction for further research.

This study addresses school readiness and transition to school in a small geographic region of Indonesia. It provides a baseline for future research in terms of school readiness and transition to school in Indonesia. Although when compared to the over 200 million people living Indonesia, it can be said that the views of the participants are not representative, the

findings echoed valuable insights into what is currently happening in terms of school readiness and transition to school in the Sleman district of Indonesia.

In order to obtain a broader and in-depth understanding of school readiness and transition to school in the Indonesian context, future research should involve more children, parents, teachers, and government personnel in all of the 34 provinces of Indonesia. In some local schools, kindergartens and elementary schools children and parents only speak and understand the local language. It would, therefore, be important to identify local research assistants who are fluent in both the local and national language to work as collaborators in the research process. This would influence the method of data collection and enrich the research process and the findings. More importantly, the children in this study pointed to making friends as one of the factors that helped them adjusted to school, therefore, an investigation of how making friends contributes to a positive transition to school is warranted.

Contributions to knowledge.

This study makes contributions to new knowledge in the field of education in three domains: theory, policy, and practice.

The implication for theory: The findings of this study indicated the discontinuity in transition to school practice in Indonesia. Teachers and parents who participated in the study revealed that some children did not attend kindergarten prior to elementary school because nearby kindergartens were not accessible. Furthermore, in Indonesia, there were no specific transition programs or practices prior to the beginning of the school year. As a result, some children experienced negative feelings, such as being distressed and anxious. This suggests that there is a continuity issue between kindergarten and elementary school. Transition to school provides a new environment, new peers, and new demands on the children, which requires adjustment to new conditions (Broström et al., 2010; Fabian & Dunlop, 2006). Any

change in the environment, such as classroom settings, or size of the building, may generate a sense of discontinuity for children. An extreme discontinuity can cause negative feelings, such as anxiety, fear, and stress (Veličković, 2013).

The discontinuity of the curriculum between kindergarten and elementary school may generate challenging issues for children during the transition to school (Broström, 2000). The Ministry of Education and Culture needs to develop kindergarten and elementary school curriculum that support the varying needs of children from various backgrounds, and provide a guide for school readiness and transition to school practice to promote a positive transition to school.

The findings emphasised the importance of bioecological theorising of transition programs to establish continuity between kindergarten and elementary school to promote a positive transition to school. Continuity can be achieved through pedagogical sharing between kindergarten and elementary school teachers and through reciprocal visitations which are supported by the bioecological framework. According to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006b), the interconnections and communication between persons (child, parent, teacher), institutions (kindergarten, elementary school), and contexts (home, school, community) is very important in promoting a positive transition to school.

The implication for policy: In light of the findings and the bioecological conceptualisation of school readiness and transition to school, there is need to consider the importance of three ecological domains: ready children, ready families, and ready schools (Kagan & Rigby, 2003). The inter-relationship and collaboration between ready children, ready families and ready schools will ensure school readiness and positive transition to school. School-based policy can be established to guide teachers and parents on how to

collaborate to support all children. An established policy framework will determine the roles of teachers and families and the frequency of joint activities.

In terms of ready school, this study found a number of kindergarten teachers who did not meet the required degree mandated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Upgrading teacher's competency is very important to improve the quality of learning (Akiba et al., 2007). Therefore, it is important to upgrade teacher's qualification and quality by organising education and training for kindergarten teachers at local levels to promote ready schools.

The implication for practice: In view of the findings that there is limited communication between family and school to facilitate family involvement during the transition from home to kindergarten, and kindergarten to elementary school, the establishment of a parent-family network and the use of periodic newsletters written in the local language will help improve communication. This study contributes to knowledge regarding the need for parents to work with teachers and introduce children to school environments prior to beginning kindergarten, and to establish familiarity with the new environment in terms of transition to elementary school. Establishing a comprehensive and quality transition program will ensure that starting school becomes an exciting experience for young children and their families (Boyd et al., 2008; Dockett, Perry, & Kearney, 2012). Quality transition programs will support children so that when they move from a familiar child care environment, with established relationships and routines, to a larger more structured school setting they are not overwhelmed by new practices (Steen, 2011). Collaboration between kindergartens, parents and teachers play an important role in preparing children and families for school and easing their transition from preschool to the school setting (Rous, Myers, & Stricklin, 2007). Therefore, it is important to upgrade the relationship and communication between family, kindergarten, and elementary school in each district in Indonesia and intensify

parents' involvement to develop a better transition to school practices as well as support children's learning activities at home.

Conclusion

This study focused on the perspectives of children, parents, teachers, and government personnel in Indonesia pertaining to their understanding and practices of school readiness and transition to school. The findings of this study demonstrated the contribution of parents, teachers, and government personnel in preparing and educating children to be ready for school. Through Bronfenbrenner's (1986) bioecological perspective, children's readiness for school cannot be understood in terms of children's age-related maturity alone. Understanding needs to extend to how parents, peers, teachers, communities and environmental factors such as home, school, other social settings around the children influence learning and development over time.

The collaboration and communication between children, family, school, and community are important factors in promoting and supporting school readiness and positive transition to school. Family involvement in transition to school process and developing reciprocal communication between family and school are critical. In addition, the government policy in early childhood education, such as kindergarten and elementary school curriculum should respond to the various needs of Indonesian children, and provide a guide for school readiness and transition practice. More importantly, a reciprocal visitation and pedagogical sharing between teachers of elementary schools and kindergartens would support improvement initiatives for school readiness and positive transition to school in Indonesia.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire for teacher.

Part 1.

Please show your highest level of education.

- ① Less than High School
- ② High School Diploma or GED
- ③ Some College
- ④ Associates Degree in _____
- ⑤ Bachelors Degree in _____
- ⑥ Graduate Degree in _____

Darker the circle matching your answer to such question.

1. Do you teach: ① Full-Day ② Half-Day

2. What type of class is this?

- ① Prekindergarten : Kelompok Bermain (Play Group)
- ② Kindergarten : Taman Kanak-kanak
- ③ First grade of Elementary School : Kelas 1 Sekolah Dasar

- 1. Kelompok Bermain (Play Group) – Non formal education for 3 years old, prior to kindergarten.
- 2. Taman Kanak-kanak – Formal education for 4-6 years old.
- 3. First grade of Elementary School – Formal education, starting from 6 years old.

3. How many years have you been teaching?

- ① Less than 5 ② 5 – 10 ③ 11 or more

4. How many years have you been teaching children under 7-years old?

- ① Less than 5 ② 5 – 10 ③ 11 or more

5. Did you major in early childhood education in college or graduate school?

- ① Yes ② No

6. Are you currently a member of a professional early childhood education association?

- ① Yes ② No

Part 2.

Here are some statement about what makes children ready for school. Show how much you agree each of the statements by circling the alternative answer matching your answer using this scale:

① = Strongly disagree; ② Disagree; ③ Neutral; ④ Agree; ⑤ Strongly Agree

No	Statement	Answers				
1	Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten	1	2	3	4	5
2	Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten.	1	2	3	4	5
4	If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Readiness, comes as children mature, you can't push it.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills	1	2	3	4	5
8	Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Homework should be given in kindergarten almost everyday.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I assume that the end of kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3.

How important do you think these qualities are for a child to be ready for kindergarten? Show how important they are by circling the alternative answer matching your answer using this scale:

① = not at all; ② not very; ③ somewhat; ④ very; ⑤ essential

No	Statement	Answers				
1	Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Finished tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Can count to 20 or more.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Takes turns and shares.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Has good problem solving skills.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Is able to use pencils on paint brushes.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Is not disruptive of the class.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Know the English language.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Is sensitive to other children's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Sits still and pays attention.	1	2	3	4	5

12	Knows the letters of the alphabet.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Can follow directions	1	2	3	4	5
14	Identifies primary colors and basic shapes	1	2	3	4	5
15	Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 2. Questionnaire for teacher (Indonesian language).

Kuesioner Untuk Guru

Bagian 1.

Pendidikan terakhir Anda:

- ① SMP
- ② SMA
- ③ D1 / D2
- ④ D3 / D4 _____
- ⑤ Sarjana _____
- ⑥ Pasca Sarjana _____

Hitamkan lingkaran yang sesuai dengan jawaban Anda untuk menjawab setiap pertanyaan.

1. Apakah Anda mengajar: ① Sehari penuh ② Setengah hari
2. Apakah jenis kelas yang Anda ajar?
 - ① Kelompok Bermain (pendidikan non formal untuk anak usia dibawah 4 tahun)
 - ② Taman Kanak-Kanak (pendidikan formal untuk anak usia 4-6 tahun)
 - ③ Kelas 1 Sekolah Dasar (pendidikan formal, untuk anak mulai usia 6 tahun)
3. Sudah berapa tahun Anda mengajar?
 - ① Kurang dari 5 ② 5 – 10 ③ 11 atau lebih
4. Sudah berapa tahun Anda mengajar anak-anak usia di bawah 7 tahun?
 - ① Kurang dari 5 ② 5 – 10 ③ 11 atau lebih
5. Apakah Anda pernah mendapat pendidikan Diploma atau Sarjana untuk pendidikan Anak Usia Dini?
 - ① Ya ② Tidak
6. Apakah Anda saat ini menjadi anggota organisasi profesi pendidik Anak Usia Dini?
 - ① Ya ② Tidak

Bagian2.

Berikut ini terdapat beberapa pernyataan tentang faktor-faktor yang membuat anak siap bersekolah. Berikan tanggapan seberapa setuju Anda terhadap pernyataan tersebut dengan melingkari angka yang sesuai dengan jawaban Anda menggunakan skala sebagai berikut:

① = Sangat Tidak Setuju; ② Setuju; ③ Netral; ④ Setuju; ⑤ Sangat Setuju

No	Pernyataan	Jawaban				
1	Mengikuti Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini sangat membantu keberhasilan seorang anak di Taman Kanak-kanak	1	2	3	4	5
2	Anak yang mendapatkan pelajaran membaca dan berhitung secara formal di PAUD akan memiliki kemampuan membaca dan berhitung lebih baik di Sekolah Dasar.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Orang tua harus meyakinkan bahwa anaknya sudah mengerti huruf sebelum memasuki Taman Kanak-kanak.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Bila seorang anak ternyata tidak siap memasuki Taman Kanak-kanak, saya akan menyarankan supaya menunggu setahun lagi untuk mendaftar.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Anak-anak yang memiliki masalah kesiapan bersekolah sebaiknya mengikuti sekolah sedini mungkin, sehingga mereka bisa mendapatkan apa yang mereka butuhkan.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Kesiapan bersekolah akan terjadi bila anak sudah matang, kita tidak bisa memaksakannya.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Saya dapat meningkatkan kesiapan sekolah anak dengan memberikan pengalaman yang mereka butuhkan untuk menguasai ketrampilan yang penting.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Orang tua sebaiknya meluangkan waktu setiap hari untuk membantu mengerjakan PR bagi anak-anaknya yang bersekolah di Taman Kanak-kanak.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Untuk murid Taman Kanak-kanak, sebaiknya Pekerjaan Rumah diberikan hampir setiap hari.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Saya perkirakan, pada akhir masa Taman Kanak-kanak, semua murid akan siap mengikuti pelajaran di Sekolah Dasar.	1	2	3	4	5

Bagian 3.

Menurut Anda, seberapa pentingkah kualitas faktor-faktor berikut ini untuk mempersiapkan anak bersekolah di Taman-Kanak-kanak? Berikan jawaban Anda dengan melingkari alternatif jawaban yang sesuai dengan pendapat Anda menggunakan skala berikut:

① = Tidak penting; ② Agak Penting; ③ Penting; ④ Sangat Penting; ⑤ Paling utama

No	Statement	Answers				
1	Kesehatan fisik, istirahat yang cukup, gizi yang baik.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Mampu menyelesaikan tugas.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Mampu berhitung sampai 20 atau lebih.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Mampu bergiliran dan berbagi.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Memiliki ketrampilan menyelesaikan masalah.	1	2	3	4	5

6	Bersemangat dan memiliki rasa ingin tahu terhadap aktivitas baru.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Mampu menggunakan pensil dan kuas gambar.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Tidak mengganggu di kelas.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Mampu berbahasa Indonesia.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Bisa memahami perasaan anak yang lain.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Duduk tenang dan memperhatikan.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Mengenal huruf.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Dapat mengikuti perintah.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Mengenal warna dan bentuk.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Mampu menyatakan kebutuhan, keinginan, dan pikirannya dengan bahasa anak.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 3. Interview Questions.

The interview with parents, teachers, and government personnel was conducted in semi structured interview. The interviews were individual and were audio recorded. Three questions were asked to obtain the perceptions and ideas regarding the understanding and practice of school readiness and transition to school:

- What do you understand by the term “school readiness”?
- What is the criteria you use to determine when children are ready for school?
- Who is responsible for getting children ready for school?

Lampiran 2. Pertanyaan wawancara

1. Apa yang Anda ketahui tentang “kesiapan bersekolah”?
2. Apa yang Anda gunakan sebagai kriteria untuk menentukan bahwa seorang anak sudah siap bersekolah?
3. Siapakah yang bertanggung jawab untuk mempersiapkan anak agar siap bersekolah?

Appendix 4. Interview questions for children.

Project: MUHREC LR CF15/347 - 2015000168

Title: Exploring the understanding and practices of school readiness and transition in Indonesia.

Interview with children

The design of the interview with children were based on Dockett and Perry (2004) research. Each child was given a large sheet of paper (at least an A3 sheet of art paper) and colored pencils. Children were requested to draw about what school had been like for them at the first day of school. After drawing, children were asked to share their story about the drawing. To help children started the story, they were given the first sentence: “On the first day of school, I....”.

Appendix 5. Explanatory statement for teachers, parents, and government personnel.



Explanatory Statement

Project: MUHREC LR CF15/347 - 2015000168

Title : Exploring the understanding and practices of school readiness and transition to school in Indonesia

Chief Investigator's name: Dr. Corine Rivalland

Department of Education Monash University

Phone: +61 99044546

email: corine.rivalland@monash.edu

Student's name : Wahyu Nurhayati



You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the researchers via the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

What does the research involve?

This research aims to obtain a better understanding regarding school readiness and transition in Indonesian context, and offer a perspective on how Indonesian parents prepare their children to start school. Participating in this research will not cause any more inconvenience than taking your time to interview. The interview questions are designed to draw out your opinions and there are no right or wrong answers.

You will be asked regarding your age, employment, education background and your perspective on school readiness and transition to school. The interview will be conducted face-to-face at your child's school. This informal interview will take around 45 minutes to 1 hour of your time and will audio recorded.

Why were you chosen for this research?

You were chosen to be a participant for this research because parents are their children first educators and the family context is a place where children learn cultural and societal and educational values and traditions from the time that they are born. Therefore information from parents regarding how they prepare their child/ren to be ready for school is very important.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. No payments will be made to participants who are involved in this research. If you do consent to participate, you need to sign a consent form. You have the right to withdraw from further participation at any stage; however you may only withdraw prior to having approved the interview transcript. If you decide to withdraw prior to approving the interview transcript any data involving you in the research, including recording will be destroyed.

Possible benefits and risks to participants

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation will add to the understanding of what constitute school readiness in our Indonesian context. Findings from this study will help the government put in place better policies that may support teachers, communities and schools to be better prepared for children starting school. Your involvement in this research will not cause any more inconvenience than taking your time to interview. All your information will be stored securely.

Confidentiality

Information that you provide during the interview will be stored securely and only my supervisor and I will have access to it. Quotations from what you said in the interview will be attributed to a false name that reflects your gender, along with your age will not be disclosed, but labelled with a letter or similar identifier. For example:

"The parents should understand their children's needs."

- Mrs. A, 31.

Storage of data

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. All the files in the computer will be deleted securely if it is no longer required.

Use of data for other purposes

The research findings will be shared as a part of research paper for the conference or journal article. No reports relating to the research, including a thesis, research publications and oral presentations will disclose your name or any other details that will identify you.

Results

Upon request you will receive copies of journal article and access to the thesis through a URL link.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact

Ms Julia Naelufara
Ministry of Education and Culture
Research and Development officer
Jl. Gunung Sahari Raya No. 4
Jakarta Pusat
Tel: +62 3847537
Email : gwefara@yahoo.com
Fax: +62 3849451

Thank you,

Wahyu Nurhayati

Appendix 6. Explanatory statement (Indonesian language).



Penjelasan Penelitian

Project: MUHREC LR CF15/347 - 2015000168

Judul : Exploring the understanding and practices of school readiness and transition in Indonesia

Pembimbing Penelitian: Dr. Corine Rivalland

Department of Education Monash University

Phone: +61 99044546

email: corine.rivalland@monash.edu

Nama Peneliti : Wahyu Nurhayati

Anda diundang untuk mengambil bagian dalam penelitian ini. Mohon dibaca Penjelasan Penelitian ini secara lengkap sebelum memutuskan apakah akan berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini atau tidak. Jika Anda menginginkan informasi lebih lanjut mengenai aspek apapun dari penelitian ini, Anda dianjurkan menghubungi peneliti melalui nomor telepon atau alamat email yang tercantum di atas.

Apa tujuan penelitian ini?

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih baik mengenai kesiapan dan transisi sekolah dalam konteks Indonesia, dan menawarkan pandangan bagaimana orang tua Indonesia mempersiapkan anak-anak mereka untuk mulai sekolah. Berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini tidak akan menimbulkan akibat apapun selain meluangkan waktu Anda untuk diwawancarai. Pertanyaan wawancara dirancang untuk meminta pendapat Anda dan tidak ada jawaban benar atau salah. Anda akan ditanya mengenai usia, pekerjaan, latar belakang pendidikan dan pendapat Anda tentang kesiapan sekolah dan transisi ke sekolah. Wawancara akan dilakukan secara tatap muka di sekolah anak Anda. Wawancara informal ini akan memakan waktu sekitar 45 menit sampai 1 jam dari waktu Anda dan wawancara tersebut akan direkam dan dicatat.

Mengapa Anda dipilih untuk penelitian ini?

Anda dipilih untuk menjadi peserta penelitian ini karena orang tua adalah pendidik pertama anak mereka dan konteks keluarga adalah tempat di mana anak-anak belajar nilai-nilai budaya dan masyarakat dan pendidikan dan tradisi sejak mereka dilahirkan. Oleh karena itu informasi dari orang tua tentang bagaimana mereka mempersiapkan anak / ren mereka untuk siap bersekolah sangat penting.

Menyetujui untuk berpartisipasi dalam proyek dan menarik diri dari penelitian

Berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini adalah sukarela dan Anda tidak berkewajiban untuk menyetujui partisipasi. Tidak ada pembayaran yang akan dilakukan kepada peserta yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini. Jika Anda setuju untuk berpartisipasi, Anda perlu menandatangani formulir persetujuan. Anda memiliki hak untuk menarik diri dari partisipasi lebih lanjut pada tahap apapun; Namun Anda mungkin hanya menarik diri sebelum menyetujui transkrip wawancara. Jika Anda memutuskan untuk menarik diri sebelum menyetujui transkrip wawancara, ada data yang melibatkan Anda dalam penelitian ini, termasuk rekaman akan hancur.

Kemungkinan manfaat dan risikonya bagi peserta.

Tidak akan ada manfaat langsung bagi Anda, namun partisipasi Anda akan menambah pemahaman tentang apa yang merupakan kesiapan sekolah dalam konteks Indonesia kita. Temuan dari penelitian ini akan membantu pemerintah menerapkan kebijakan yang lebih baik yang dapat mendukung guru, masyarakat dan sekolah untuk lebih siap menghadapi anak-anak yang mulai sekolah Keterlibatan Anda dalam penelitian ini tidak akan menimbulkan ketidaknyamanan daripada meluangkan waktu untuk wawancara. Semua informasi Anda akan disimpan dengan aman.

Kerahasiaan

Informasi yang Anda berikan selama wawancara akan disimpan dengan aman dan hanya atasan saya dan saya akan memiliki akses terhadapnya. Kutipan dari apa yang Anda katakan dalam wawancara akan dikaitkan dengan

nama palsu yang mencerminkan jenis kelamin Anda, bersama dengan usia Anda tidak akan diungkapkan, namun diberi label dengan surat atau pengenalan serupa. Sebagai contoh:

"Orang tua harus mengerti kebutuhan anak-anak mereka."

- Ibu A, 31.

Penyimpanan data

Penyimpanan data yang dikumpulkan akan mematuhi peraturan Universitas dan disimpan di tempat Universitas di lemari arsip / lemari arsip yang terkunci selama 5 tahun. Sebuah laporan penelitian dapat diajukan untuk publikasi, namun masing-masing peserta tidak dapat diidentifikasi dalam laporan semacam itu. Semua file di komputer akan terhapus dengan aman jika tidak diperlukan lagi.

Penggunaan data untuk keperluan lain

Temuan penelitian akan dibagi sebagai bagian dari makalah penelitian untuk artikel konferensi atau jurnal. Tidak ada laporan yang berkaitan dengan penelitian, termasuk tesis, publikasi penelitian dan presentasi lisan akan mengungkapkan nama Anda atau rincian lainnya yang akan mengidentifikasi Anda.

Hasil

Atas permintaan Anda akan menerima salinan artikel jurnal dan akses ke tesis melalui link URL.

Keluhan

Jika Anda memiliki masalah atau keluhan tentang pelaksanaan proyek, Anda dapat menghubungi kami

Ibu Julia Naelufara
Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan
Perwira Riset dan Pengembangan
Jl. Gunung Sahari Raya No. 4
Jakarta Pusat
Tel: +62 3847537
Email: gwefara@yahoo.com
Faks: +62 3849451

Terima kasih,

Wahyu Nurhayati

Appendix 7. Consent Form for teachers, parents, and government personnel.



Consent Form

Project: MUHREC LR CF15/347 - 2015000168

Title: Exploring the understanding and practices of school readiness and transition in Indonesia

Chief Investigator: Dr. Corine Rivalland

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement and I hereby consent to participate in this project.

Consent to the following:	Yes	No
I agree to be interviewed by the researcher.		
I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped.		
I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required.		
I would like to be sent a transcript of the interview for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.		
The data that I provide during this research may be used by researcher in future research projects.		

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw from the project prior to approving the interview transcript, without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that data from the interview, including the audio-tape and transcript will be kept in secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period.

Name of Participant _____

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 8. Consent Form (Indonesian language).



Lembar Persetujuan

Project: MUHREC LR CF15/347 - 2015000168

Title: Exploring the understanding and practices of school readiness and transition in Indonesia

Dosen Pembimbing: Dr. Corine Rivalland

Saya telah diminta untuk mengambil bagian dalam penelitian dari Monash University yang disebutkan di atas. Setelah membaca dan memahami Penjelasan Penelitian, maka dengan ini saya setuju untuk berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini.

Saya menyetujui hal berikut:	Ya	Tidak
Saya setuju untuk diwawancarai oleh peneliti.		
Saya setuju dan mengizinkan wawancara itu direkam secara audio.		
Saya setuju dan menyediakan diri untuk wawancara lebih lanjut jika diperlukan.		
Saya ingin dikirim transkrip wawancara untuk persetujuan saya sebelum disertakan dalam penulisan penelitian.		
Data yang saya berikan selama penelitian ini dapat digunakan oleh peneliti dalam penelitian di masa depan.		

Saya mengerti bahwa partisipasi saya bersifat sukarela, bahwa saya dapat memilih untuk tidak berpartisipasi dalam sebagian atau keseluruhan proyek, dan bahwa saya dapat menarik diri dari penelitian tersebut sebelum menyetujui transkrip wawancara, tanpa dikenakan sanksi atau dirugikan dengan cara apa pun.

Saya memahami bahwa setiap data yang diambil peneliti dari wawancara ini untuk digunakan dalam laporan atau publikasi yang diterbitkan, dalam keadaan apapun, tidak mencantumkan nama atau data pengenalan.

Saya mengerti bahwa setiap informasi yang saya berikan bersifat rahasia, dan bahwa semua informasi yang dapat mengarah pada identifikasi setiap individu tidak akan diungkapkan dalam laporan penelitian, atau laporan kepada pihak lain.

Saya mengerti bahwa data dari wawancara, termasuk rekaman audio dan transkrip akan disimpan di tempat penyimpanan yang aman dan dapat diakses oleh tim peneliti. Saya juga mengerti bahwa data akan dimusnahkan setelah 5 tahun.

Nama Partisipan _____

Tanda tangan partisipan _____ Tanggal _____

Appendix 9. Consent Form for Children.



Consent Form for Children: (Parent to read to child)

Project: MUHREC LR CF15/347 - 2015000168

Title : Exploring the understanding and practices of school readiness and transition in Indonesia

Mrs. Nurhayati is going to University (a big school for adults) and would like to know what children like and do not like when they come to school for the very first time. To do that she wants to know if you would:



Draw a picture



Yes



No



Talk to her about your picture



Yes



No

You can draw a circle around the happy face if you are happy about doing these things or the sad face if you would not like to draw a picture or speak to Mrs. Nurhayati. If you start drawing, then decide that you do not want to do it anymore, you can say “I don’t want to do it anymore” and that is fine, you do not have to do these things if you do not feel like doing them.



Once Mrs. Nurhayati has finished her project she wants to tell other people about what she has learnt. She might write about children going to school and how they feel in a book or she might tell other people about it at a big meeting. She would like to use your drawing and your words about the drawing you made to help other people understand how children feel, what they like and what they do not like when they start big school.



You can now draw a circle around a happy face if you are happy about that; if you don't want her to you can draw a circle around the sad face.

Last of all you can write your name on this page so that Mrs. Nurhayati knows it was you who drew the circles.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 10. Consent form for children (Indonesian language).



Lembar Persetujuan Untuk Anak: (Untuk Dibacakan Oleh Orang Tua Kepada Anak)

Project: MUHREC LR CF15/347 - 2015000168

Judul : Exploring the understanding and practices of school readiness and transition in Indonesia

Ibu Nurhayati dari Universitas (sebuah sekolah besar untuk orang dewasa) dan ingin tahu apa yang disukai dan tidak disukai anak-anak ketika mereka datang ke sekolah untuk pertama kalinya. Untuk melakukan itu dia ingin tahu apakah kamu akan:



Menggambar



Ya



Tidak



Bercerita tentang gambarmu



Ya



Tidak

Kamu bisa menggambar lingkaran di sekitar wajah bahagia jika kamu senang melakukan hal-hal itu atau wajah sedih jika kamu tidak ingin menggambar atau berbicara dengan Ibu Nurhayati. Jika kamu mulai menggambar dan memutuskan bahwa kamu tidak ingin melakukannya lagi, kamu bisa mengatakan "Saya tidak ingin melakukannya lagi" dan itu diperbolehkan, kamu tidak perlu melakukan hal-hal itu jika kamu tidak ingin melakukannya.



Begitu Ibu Nurhayati menyelesaikan tugasnya, dia ingin memberi tahu orang lain tentang apa yang telah dia pelajari. Dia mungkin menulis tentang anak-anak yang pergi ke sekolah dan bagaimana perasaan mereka dalam sebuah buku atau dia mungkin akan menceritakan hal itu kepada orang lain di sebuah pertemuan besar. Dia ingin menggunakan gambar dan penjelasan kamu tentang gambar yang kamu buat untuk membantu orang lain memahami bagaimana perasaan anak-anak, apa yang mereka sukai dan apa yang tidak mereka sukai saat mereka mulai sekolah.



Kamu sekarang bisa menggambar lingkaran di sekitar wajah bahagia jika kamu senang dengan itu. Jika kamu tidak menginginkannya, kamu bisa menggambar lingkaran di sekitar wajah sedih.

Terakhir kamu bisa menuliskan namamu di halaman ini sehingga Ibu Nurhayati tahu kamu yang membuat lingkaran di wajah itu.

Nama: _____ Tanggal: _____

Appendix 11. Human Ethics Certificate Approval.



MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the project below was considered by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Committee was satisfied that the proposal meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and has granted approval.

Project Number: CF15/347 - 2015000168

Project Title: Exploring the understanding and practices of school readiness and transition in Indonesia

Chief Investigator: Dr Corine Rivalland

Approved: **From:** 24 February 2015 **To:** 24 February 2020

Terms of approval - Failure to comply with the terms below is in breach of your approval and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must include your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Require the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.



Professor Nip Thomson
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Dr Hilary Monk, Ms Wahyu Nurhayati

Monash University, Room 111, Chancellery Building 3e
24 Sports Walk, Clayton Campus, Wellington Rd
Clayton VIC 3800, Australia
Telephone: +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile: +61 3 9905 3831
Email: muhrec@monash.edu <http://intranet.monash.edu.au/researchadmin/human/index.php>
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

Appendix 12. Research Permission Letter.



PEMERINTAH KABUPATEN SLEMAN
BADAN PERENCANAAN PEMBANGUNAN DAERAH

Jalan Parasamya Nomor 1 Beran, Tridadi, Sleman, Yogyakarta 55511
Telepon (0274) 868800, Faksimile (0274) 868800
Website: www.bappeda.slemankab.go.id, E-mail : bappeda@slemankab.go.id

SURAT IZIN

Nomor : 070 / Bappeda / 1166 / 2015

**TENTANG
PENELITIAN**

KEPALA BADAN PERENCANAAN PEMBANGUNAN DAERAH

Dasar : Peraturan Bupati Sleman Nomor : 45 Tahun 2013 Tentang Izin Penelitian, Izin Kuliah Kerja Nyata,
Dan Izin Praktik Kerja Lapangan.
Menunjuk : Surat dari Kepala Kantor Kesatuan Bangsa Kab. Sleman
Nomor : 070/Kesbang/1139/2015
Hal : Rekomendasi Penelitian

Tanggal : 17 Maret 2015

MENGIZINKAN :

Kepada :
Nama : WAHYU NURHAYATI
No.Mhs/NIM/NIP/NIK : 24570362
Program/Tingkat : S3
Instansi/Perguruan Tinggi : Monash University Australia
Alamat instansi/Perguruan Tinggi : Wellington Road Clayton Victoria Australia
Alamat Rumah : Pondok Kelapa Duren Sawit Jakarta Timur
No. Telp / HP :
Untuk : Mengadakan Penelitian / Pra Survey / Uji Validitas / PKL dengan judul
**EXPLORING THE UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICES OF SCHOOL
READINESS AND TRANSITION IN INDONESIA**
Lokasi : Dinas Dikpora Sleman dan SD di Wilayah Kab. Sleman
Waktu : Selama 3 Bulan mulai tanggal 17 Maret 2015 s/d 17 Juni 2015

Dengan ketentuan sebagai berikut :

1. Wajib melaporkan diri kepada Pejabat Pemerintah setempat (Camat/ Kepala Desa) atau Kepala Instansi untuk mendapat petunjuk seperlunya.
2. Wajib menjaga tata tertib dan mentaati ketentuan-ketentuan setempat yang berlaku.
3. Izin tidak disalahgunakan untuk kepentingan-kepentingan di luar yang direkomendasikan.
4. Wajib menyampaikan laporan hasil penelitian berupa 1 (satu) CD format PDF kepada Bupati diserahkan melalui Kepala Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah.
5. Izin ini dapat dibatalkan sewaktu-waktu apabila tidak dipenuhi ketentuan-ketentuan di atas.

Demikian izin ini dikeluarkan untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya, diharapkan pejabat pemerintah/non pemerintah setempat memberikan bantuan seperlunya.

Setelah selesai pelaksanaan penelitian Saudara wajib menyampaikan laporan kepada kami 1 (satu) bulan setelah berakhirnya penelitian.

Tembusan :

1. Bupati Sleman (sebagai laporan)
2. Kepala Dinas Dikpora Kab. Sleman
3. Kabid. Sosial & Pemerintahan Bappeda Kab. Sleman
4. Rektor Monash University Faculty Of Education
5. Yang Bersangkutan

Dikeluarkan di Sleman

Pada Tanggal : 17 Maret 2015

a.n. Kepala Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah

Sekretaris

u.b.

Kepala Bidang Statistik, Penelitian, dan Perencanaan

