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Student achievement in relationship to the impact of preschool teacher qualifications and teacher accountability on kindergarten readiness in Atlanta, Georgia

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Clark Atlanta University

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

AUSTIN, PATRICE MONIQUE B.A. HAMPTON UNIVERSITY, 1989
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THE IMPACT OF PRESCHOOL TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY ON KINDERGARTEN READINESS

IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Advisor: Dr. Trevor Turner
Dissertation dated May 2008

The study examines the relationship between preschool teacher qualifications, preschool teacher accountability, and its impact on kindergarten readiness in Atlanta, Georgia. The independent variables are preschool teacher work setting, teacher qualifications, teacher professional development, and teacher accountability. The dependent variable is the degree to which the indicator of kindergarten readiness as measured by the Brisance Screening Instrument. A quantitative survey was distributed to one hundred teachers of four-year-old students in Atlanta, Georgia. Sixty-two teachers of four-year-old students responded via U.S. mail. The results of the study indicate there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher's professional development and teacher's accountability to the site administrators. There is also a significant relationship between teachers' professional development and teachers' accountability to central office/state department. Also, there is a significant relationship between teachers'
professional development and teachers’ accountability to parents. Based upon the results of this study, it is recommended that preschool teachers be afforded the opportunities for professional development. Administrators should expect documents and inspect teaching practices to ensure students are ready for kindergarten.
THE IMPACT OF PRESCHOOL TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY ON KINDERGARTEN READINESS IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

PATRICE MONIQUE AUSTIN

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between preschool teacher qualifications, preschool teacher accountability, and its impact on kindergarten readiness in Atlanta, Georgia. It was intended to determine if Atlanta preschools and preschool teachers are held to the same level of accountability for kindergarten readiness. Kindergarten students are expected to begin kindergarten with certain readiness skills. It was expected that these minimum readiness skills be mastered during the preschool experience. In urban settings, there were a variety of preschool settings such as public prekindergarten, private preschool, home school, daycare, babysitter services, and Head Start. In each setting, the teacher requirements and program expectations were different. As a result, urban learners entered kindergarten at various readiness levels. Some urban learners spent thirteen or more years trying to reach general grade level readiness level.

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This Act required that states be held accountable for ensuring that all children are proficient in reading and math. According to Weast (2001), young children from families with sufficient resources already had access to quality preschool programs on a private basis. Less fortunate children, do not, and their lack of opportunity translated into a performance gap that began even before they reached kindergarten.

1
Background of the Problem

Goals 2000 established a framework in which to identify world-class academic standards, to measure student progress, and to provide the support those students may need to meet standards. The Act signed into law the six original education goals concerning school readiness, school completion, student academic achievement, leadership in math and science, adult literacy, and safe and drug-free schools along with the encouragement of teacher professional development and parental participation (Paris 1994).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, research on the relationship between children’s early care and education and school readiness had shown potential importance of enriching learning experiences for young children, and the positive outcomes of early intervention for educationally disadvantaged children in particular (Haskins, 1989; Barnett 1995; Bowman, Donovan, & Burns 2001). Although the literature was not without controversy (Gomby, Lewit, Behrman, Larner, & Stevenson, 1995), and the influence of nonprogram factors (e.g., family background) on children’s school readiness cannot be ruled out, a finding seemed to emerge across studies: children in high-quality early childhood programs tended to develop better social and academic skills than their counterparts in poor quality programs (Bowman et al., 2001; Love, Schochet & Meckstroth, 1996).

In addition, new research on kindergarteners underscored the importance of enriching early learning experiences for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. In particular, while children from disadvantaged backgrounds caught up with peers from
more advantaged backgrounds on basic early literacy skills such as letter knowledge during the kindergarten year, the gap between these two groups widened on measures of more sophisticated knowledge and skills in reading (e.g., ending sounds) and math (solving simple addition and subtraction problems) (West, Denton, & Reaney, 2000).

In recent years, attention had focused on how the public school system could increase its involvement in making high-quality programs available for prekindergarten children (Hinkle, 2000). This attention on public schools was partially based on the assumption that in addition to a vested interest in school readiness, public schools had potential for drawing on existing resources to expand and improve prekindergarten programs (Dwyer, Chait, & McKee, 2000; Hinkle, 2000).

Public schools had access to several federally and state funded programs focused on the needs of at-risk children, including in those whose families do not speak English at home, who came from low-income households, or who had other special needs that placed them at serious disadvantage when entering schools (Hinkle, 2000). Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), public schools had access to federal preschool grants to make a range of education and related services available to children with disabilities. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, designed to aid educationally disadvantaged children, could also be used by education agencies and schools to improve teaching and learning of young children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Head Start was designed to better prepare poor children for school by providing free education and support services to children whose families are below the federal poverty level. Although the vast majority of Head Start programs either operated
independently of the school and school district or collaborates with other community-based agencies in private settings, some might have been located at school facilities and offered through school districts or state agencies (Clifford, Early, & Hills, 1999; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1999).

In 1990, the 25 year old Head Start report revealed that the program had gotten support from the most political and educational groups because the aim of the program was to help poor children beat the effects of poverty by getting the children in school earlier. However, the challenges for the Head Start programs were not solved by starting school earlier; but included little follow-up once the children reached school; few comprehensive services and support staff in the areas of nutrition, social work, and psychology; very few opportunities for parents to further their education, to get better jobs, and to acquire the skills to communicate with their children’s schools; and few funds for Head Start teacher to communicate with public school teachers to allow for smooth transitions (Chira, 1990).

Public school programs for children prior to kindergarten also received funds from state initiatives for enhancing school readiness. State initiatives differ in the age groups that were served. In a 1999 review of state-level programs, 31 state initiatives were found to serve both 3 and 4 year-olds, 18 states limited their programs to 1 year prior to kindergarten, and 8 states had programs that served children from birth to age 5 (Schumacher, Greenberg, & Lombardi, 2001). This 1999 review found that states also differed in how they involve public schools in their early education initiatives. Although the majority of states opened up funds to a broad range of providers (including Head
Start), public schools, and other early care and education providers partnered to provide services to the children in the state (Schulman, Blank, & Ewen 1999; Schulman, Greenberg, & Lombardi 2001).

Despite the increased interest in the role of public schools in preparing children for kindergarten entry (Saluja, Early, & Clifford, 2001), there was little information that differentiated public school programs from other early childhood education programs, including private schools, public and private day care centers, and Head Start programs. This was partly because there was no centralized repository of prekindergarten data for classes in public or nonpublic schools, and there was no common terminology for the various types of early education programs which were not uniform and often were clouded by varying definitions of programs and the age groups included in different data sources.

Preliminary Study

The researcher became interested in this problem when the researcher observed the same students receiving remedial education services for their entire matriculation through elementary school, kindergarten through fifth grade. Also, during a preliminary needs assessment for a Christian Academy in Atlanta, Georgia, the parents indicated that there was a need for quality preschool programs. This led the researcher to conduct a study involving preschool education.

Statement of the Problem

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) had collected extensive information on grades 1-12 and postsecondary education for several decades and, through
the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, had more recently begun to collect information on the characteristics of kindergarten classes nationwide. The “Survey of Classes That Serve Children Prior to Kindergarten in Public Schools,” undertaken by NCES using its Fast Response Survey System, was the first national data collection that focused exclusively on classes offered by U.S. public school elementary schools for children prior to kindergarten.

Yeast and other researchers conclude that young children from families with sufficient resources already had access to quality preschool programs on a private basis. Less fortunate children do not, and their lack of opportunity translates into a performance gap that began even before they reach kindergarten. Public school prekindergarten was part of a fragmented array of early care and education programs that vary widely in focus, quality, content, organization, source of funding, relationship to the public school system, and government regulation (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001). Many terms had been used interchangeably and/or inconsistently across studies to describe these various programs. Most researchers in the field use the term “center-based” programs that provided children with care and education in nonresidential settings during the years prior to kindergarten—including prekindergarten, Head Start, preschool, nursery, day care centers, and other early childhood care (Hofferth, Shauman, Henke, & West, 1998). However, the terms such as prekindergarten, preschool, and preprimary were sometimes used in a generic fashion to cover all or some center-based programs that serve children ages 3 to 5 who had not yet entered kindergarten.
Because research has shown that children who spend time in high-quality early childhood programs develop better social and academic skills in the early elementary years than children from the lower-quality programs, it was important for administrators, teachers, and policy makers to be knowledgeable about the structural features that were characteristic of high-quality programs. One structural feature was the level of teacher education and specialized training in early childhood education (Saluja, Early, & Clifford, 2001).

This study sought to find ways to close the achievement gaps between urban learners and other learners. Kati Haycock (2001) stated that there has been a lot of talk about the achievement gap that separates low-income and minority youth from other young Americans. Between 1970 and 1988, the achievement gap between African American and white students was cut in half, and the gap separating Latinos and whites declined by one third. That progress came to a halt around 1988, however, and since that time, the gaps have widened. We cannot hold children accountable for their performance without also holding the program accountable for educating them. Yet an emphasis on testing children ran the risk of diverting us from focusing on the quality of the early childhood programs they attend (Epstein, 2003).

The Literature from No Child Left Behind Act explained that more than 40 states had initiatives aimed at helping preschool children prepare for kindergarten, because they knew that children from poor families entered school behind children from more privileged families in academic skills. Schools often have difficulty as they compensate for this difference. States should have had a more prominent role in coordinating and
providing a high quality preschool experience before children entered kindergarten. In Georgia, participation in the prekindergarten program was voluntary on the part of public schools and private child development centers. As a result, there was not enough space in every community for all four year olds to attend. At the same time, Haycock (2001) insisted that teachers with strong backgrounds make the difference in student achievement. This research should have helped determine the effects of teacher qualifications and teacher accountability on kindergarten readiness in the urban setting.

Research Questions

The framework for this study will include the following research questions:

RQ1: How are assessments utilized to determine kindergarten readiness?

RQ2: Is there a correlation between teacher/staff professional development and students’ readiness for kindergarten?

RQ3: Is there a correlation between teacher qualifications and kindergarten readiness?

RQ4: Is there a correlation between teacher accountability and kindergarten readiness?

Significance of the Study

1. This study might add to the body of knowledge in the area of preschool education.

2. This study might be used as a resource in providing data to be used in school readiness.
3. The results of this study might cause urban communities and school systems to reallocate funds for mandatory preschool programs.

4. This study might cause urban school districts to increase teacher accountability to local site administrators, central office, and parents.

5. This study might be used to help existing preschool programs strengthen professional development departments.

6. This study might help education departments enhance preschool teacher qualification and evaluation procedures.

Summary

When President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the literature explained that more than forty states had initiatives aimed at helping preschool children prepare for kindergarten. Administrators, teachers, and policy makers should be knowledgeable about the structural features that were characteristic of high-quality early childhood programs. One structural feature was the level of teacher education and specialized training in early childhood education. The significance of the study was presented and the research questions were identified.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The intent of this chapter was to review educational research and literature that were related to selected variables impacting kindergarten readiness in Atlanta, Georgia. The literature was outlined by related research on the variables of the study. The independent variables include preschool’s teacher work setting, preschool teacher’s qualifications, preschool teacher’s professional development, and preschool teacher’s accountability. The dependent variable was the degree that the indicator of kindergarten readiness was assessed. The literature was reviewed under the following headings: Preschool Teacher Work setting, Preschool Teacher Qualifications, Preschool Teacher Professional Development, Preschool Teacher Accountability, and Indicators of Kindergarten Readiness.

Preschool Teacher Work Setting

The United States Department of Education stated that although there was an increase in the role of public schools in preparing children for kindergarten entry, there is little information that differentiates public school programs from other early childhood programs, including private schools, public and private day care centers, and Head Start Programs. This was partly because there was no centralized repository of prekindergarten data for classes in public or nonpublic schools, and there is no common terminology for the various types of early education programs. As a result, the existing
data about public school involvement in early education programs were not uniform and were dismayed by varying definitions of programs and the age groups included in different data sources.

The National Center for Education Statistics reported that current information on early childhood education was inadequate for describing public school prekindergarten classes. Most of the data depended on reports from parents of children rather than agencies such as schools, school districts, and state education agencies that were in the best position to provide program information. In addition, information on public school prekindergarten was often combined with data from other early educational programs, such as Head Start, that may have operated outside of the public school system and from other center-based programs. The limitations of the data sources underscored the role of public schools in the education of children prior to kindergarten. Rhode Island’s KIDS COUNT indicated that some preschoolers were in family childcare homes.

Preschool Teacher Qualifications

Findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative stated that research showed that early education providers who had bachelor’s degrees were more effective. Knowledge of early childhood development, included social-emotional development and emergent literacy, was essential for early care and education teachers. Increased compensation was critical to attract and retain qualified early childhood teachers and to improve the quality of the early education system. Initiatives designed to increase wages and benefits can improve workforce education and reduce turnover, particularly when professional development and education were linked to pay increases.
According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, on a national level, nearly all full-time and part-time public school teachers in regular elementary, middle, and high schools had a bachelor’s degree and 45% had a master’s degree. The NCES Early Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 base year study found that approximately 100% of kindergarten teachers held at least a bachelor’s degree. The results of this Fast Response Survey System indicated that 86% of prekindergarten teachers had a bachelor’s or higher degree.

The likelihood that a prekindergarten teacher had at least a bachelor’s degree varied by school characteristics. Prekindergarten teachers in city schools were more likely to have at least a bachelor’s degree than were prekindergarten teachers in large town schools or small town schools. Higher percentages of prekindergarten teachers in the Northeast and Central regions had at least a bachelor’s degree than prekindergarten teachers in the West and Southeast. Prekindergarten teachers in schools with the highest poverty concentration were less likely to hold at least a bachelor’s degree than were prekindergarten teachers in schools with the lowest poverty concentration.

Laverick (2005) conducted a research study to describe the characteristics and instructional practices of teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in the Early Childhood/Generalist category. The problem of this study was to examine if there were common characteristics that exemplary teachers use. The study rested upon the following considerations: (a) literacy learning was important and the early childhood period was prime time for language learning;
(c) young children needed effective and appropriate instruction which did not occur consistently; and (d) ways that early literacy instruction could be more effective. The study concluded that the characteristics and instructional practices of the National Board of Certified Teachers (NBCT) had the potential to promote the development of expertise in early learning educators.

Richter (2005) conducted a dual level qualitative study on the experiences of individuals identified throughout the study as teacher-students, enrolled in an early childhood alternative certification program experiencing the phenomena of simultaneously teaching while being taught. The conflict between the philosophy taught and the reality of teaching in an environment that was driven by accountability and test scores caused a dilemma for these teacher-students as they attempted to implement educational content such as developmentally appropriate practice and perceptions of their role as both teacher and student. Perceptions of their dual role were discussed in terms of their school teaching environment. Participants' experiences were presented through in depth narratives that revealed the complexity of this dual role, and described in detailed portraits that showcased the uniqueness of each experience. Guidelines for a college teaching model designed to meet the needs of these teacher-students was presented. Thompson (2004) recommended that teacher education programs facilitate teacher autonomy by helping preservice and in-service teachers to articulate and defend their beliefs.
Preschool Teacher Professional Development

Phipps (2002) responded that states needed to raise the standards of prekindergarten teachers and to fund a professional development system that prepared, supported, and compensated the teachers. She went on to state that prekindergarten teachers had fewer opportunities to prepare for their roles, acquire ongoing training and support, and advance along a career path in comparison to their colleagues in elementary and secondary education.

Jung (2006) proclaimed poor professional development had been the major barrier to achieving high quality mathematics education in early childhood programs. This qualitative study investigated the ways early childhood teachers could be helped to teach mathematics, seeking important ideas of how teacher educators could plan to provide professional development to maximize the professional growth of teachers. The findings from the study indicated that two early childhood teachers' who participated in the study benefited in terms of the growth of their knowledge of teaching mathematics. Their collaborative experiences also helped the teachers develop positive dispositions toward teaching mathematics. Consequently, the teachers were able to demonstrate their abilities to implement an effective mathematics curriculum in the classroom. Potential explanations for the success of the collaborative professional development experience examined in this study were discussed, as were implications for teacher educators.

LaFerney (2006) examined the association between different types of early childhood professional development and childcare quality in preschool classrooms. Participants in the study were preschool teachers in childcare centers across Oklahoma.
Classroom observations data collected in the study through the use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) was used. The variables for this study included formal childhood education, workshops, systemic workshops, credentials, and accessing of the infrastructure. The types of professional development examined in this study were all found to be correlated with each other. Specialized education, credentials, and workshops were found to be significantly correlated with the total ECERS score. The results suggested that specialized education made a difference in terms of child care quality. Pence (2005) found that administrative support and continual staff development and training were necessary for successful policy implementation to occur.

Preschool Teacher Accountability

Davis (2005) remarked that the “the age of accountability” in which teachers and school districts had been held directly accountable for the achievement of students. Standardized tests had been used to assess students for the purpose of reporting to policymakers.

Evans-Becker (2003) also indicated that recent state and federal legislation that mandated testing had increased the levels of accountability for schools and teachers. There was a gap between the expectations and the achievement and students’ knowledge and skills needed to meet expectations. The gap was present before children started school. With the publishing of test results, demands came from the public for schools to improve student achievement as measured by test scores.

in an attempt to reform the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that was reauthorized in 1994. The Good Start, Grow Smart Early Childhood Education Initiative, followed in April 2002. Both of these reform measures had significant implications for school success and achievement of all children in both childcare and public school settings as well as accountability for teachers and administrators.

Indicators of Kindergarten Readiness

Enriquez (2004) reported that testing of students had been a part of the history and development of the educational system in the United States. Standardized testing had involved students in grades 1 through 12. The accountability movements of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s led to the development and use of standardized tests for kindergarten students. These same years marked the beginning and growth of the federally sponsored Head Start Program. By the 1990s, the accountability movement encompassed testing of preschool children in Head Start.

Brewer (2006) investigated the extent to which teachers of four-year-old children were using common assessment themes in practice as well as beliefs. Results showed that a large amount of teachers were not using developmentally appropriate assessment measures in an appropriate manner with young children.

Clancy-Menchetti (2006) conducted a study where preschool students were assessed three times per year to assess growth in phonological sensitivity, print awareness, and expressive vocabulary. Davis (2005) looked at play as a form of assessment with kindergarten literacy skills. It was founded that play within planned literacy centers, can be a successful method of assessment.
Enriquez examined the correlation between norm referenced testing and assessments through teacher observation in the oral language development of preschool children in Head Start. The norm referenced instruments included pre-idea proficiency test, Peabody picture vocabulary test, and developmental skills. Teacher observation was also included.

Wylie (1998) indicated that Montessori assessment practices involved the use of distinctive flow charts that track individual student progress through a structured curriculum, teacher notations of student performance and development, teacher-student collaborative planning and review of personalized assignments, student recording of planning and performance, student self-assessment, interactive portfolios and student-parent-teacher conferences. It was evident that the teacher was key to valid assessments within Montessori programs.

The Georgia Department of Education (2003) scripted that the Baseline Assessment of Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program was administered at the beginning of the kindergarten year to each student enrolled in Georgia Public Schools. There were 10 items selected to provide information needed by teachers and parents at the beginning of a student's kindergarten year. The student who was ready for kindergarten had a concept of his/her printed name. The student progressed at working with print materials and held a book correctly. The student rote counted to 10, knew basic shapes, knew some colors, displayed a reasonable level of self-confidence and social adjustment, and was able to follow one or two-step directions.
Summary

The literature review was organized to study each variable. The headings were: preschool teacher’s work setting, preschool teacher qualifications, preschool teacher professional development, preschool teacher accountability, and the indicators of kindergarten readiness. The literature revealed that “the age of accountability” has had an impact on early childhood education.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The focus of this study was to examine the relationship between kindergarten readiness, preschool teacher qualifications, and preschool teacher accountability in urban settings. The definition of all variables was discussed and research hypotheses were presented. Limitations of the study were explained and a summary of the theoretical framework was included.

Definition of Variables

**Independent Variables**

*Preschool Teacher Work Setting:* The type of preschool program where the teacher teaches four-year-old students.

*Teacher Qualifications:* The number of years spent as a teacher of four-year-old students whether 1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, 16 to 20, or 21 years or more.

*Teacher Professional Development:* The extent to which the teacher enhances formal education by engaging in workshops, interview panels, discussion groups, site visits, seminars, peer reviews, conferences, and individual studies.

*Teacher Accountability:* The extent to which the teacher is held accountable by the site administrator, the central office of the school district, and by the parents and the extent to which the teacher uses assessment in preparing students for kindergarten readiness.
Dependent Variable

The degree to which the indicator of kindergarten readiness is measured by the Brigance Screening Instrument is the dependent variable.

Relationship Among Variables

Total Quality Management (TQM) was based on the assumption that people want to do their best and that it was management’s job to enable them to do so by constantly improving the system in which they work. TQM required teamwork, training, and extensive collection and analysis of data. W. Edward Deming’s philosophy (as cited in Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996) provided a framework that can integrate many positive developments in education. Deming’s theory was considered a framework for transforming schools. Deming’s theory has 14 principles. The research variables relate to six principles.

The dependent variable, which was the indicator of kindergarten readiness, relates to the third principle “Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality.” According to Deming, it always costs more to fix a problem than to prevent one. The independent variable teacher’s professional development related to the fifth principle suggests to improve constantly and forever every activity in the company, to improve quality and productivity. The focus of improvement efforts in education, under Deming’s approach, would be on teaching and learning processes. The teacher’s professional development also related to the thirteenth principle, which stated to institute a vigorous program of education and retraining for everyone. The staff must be retrained in new methods of school management, including group dynamics, consensus building, and collaborative
styles of decision-making. The school community must realize that improvements in student achievement will create higher levels of responsibility.

The independent variables teacher’s professional development and teacher’s qualification related to Deming’s sixth principle was to institute training on the job. Training of educators was needed in three areas. First, there must be training in the new teaching and learning processes that were developed. Second, training must be provided in the use of new assessment strategies. Third, there must be training in the principles of the new management system.

The independent variable teacher’s accountability relates to the twelfth principle, which stated to remove barriers that rob people of pride of workmanship. Effective communication and the elimination of things like lack of involvement, poor information, the annual or merit rating, and supervisors who don’t care were critical. Teacher’s accountability also relates to the last principle that put everyone in the organization to work to accomplish transformation. Transformation was everyone’s job.

Null Hypotheses

$H_01$: There is no significant relationship between teacher’s work setting and student achievement.

$H_02$: There is no significant relationship between teacher qualifications and student achievement.

$H_03$: There is no significant relationship between the teacher’s professional development and teacher accountability.
H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between teacher accountability and student achievement.

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between teacher’s professional development and teacher’s accountability to parents.

H₀₆: There is no significant relationship between teacher’s professional development and teacher’s accountability to assessment.

H₀₇: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to site administrators.

H₀₈: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to central office/state department.

H₀₉: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to parents.

H₀₁₀: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to assessment.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to one urban area in the southeastern portion of the United States. A questionnaire was used for the purpose of data collection in this study. It was assumed that all answers were truthful and provided in a serious manner. Only classes for four-year-old students participated in the survey. The dependent variable was not measured empirically but through teachers’ responses and should be considered with caution.
Summary

The theoretical framework of this study focused on the independent variables preschool teacher work setting, preschool teacher qualifications, preschool teacher professional development, preschool teacher accountability and how they may be related to dependent variable to which the indicator of kindergarten readiness assesses skills as measured by the Brigance Screening Instrument. The assumption was that in urban settings, preschool teacher work setting, teacher qualifications, teacher professional development, and teacher accountability impact kindergarten readiness. Definitions of variables were presented and research hypotheses were stated.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was designed to examine the relationship between preschool teacher qualifications and work setting, preschool teacher accountability, and kindergarten readiness. The intent of the study was to determine if kindergarten readiness was influenced more by teacher’s qualifications and the teacher’s level of accountability in urban areas.

Research Design

The research design for this study was quantitative and a survey of teachers of four-year-old students. A questionnaire for teacher’s work setting, teacher’s qualifications, teacher’s professional development, and teacher’s accountability was developed for the purpose of collecting data to test hypotheses described in chapter three. Results of the questionnaire were analyzed to describe relationships among variables.

Description of the Sample

The study occurred in an urban school area in Atlanta, Georgia. The participants in the study were selected based upon work setting. The teacher was the unit of analysis. The survey was given to teachers of four year old students at preselected public prekindergarten (PreK) programs, Head Start Centers, private prekindergarten schools,
home school locations and day care centers. All of the preschool programs were located in the city of Atlanta. One hundred teachers of four-year-old students were asked to participate in the survey. Sixty-two teachers of four-year-old students participated in the survey. The sixty-two came from a variety of prekindergarten work settings in Atlanta, Georgia.

Description of the Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher along with faculty at Clark Atlanta University. The questionnaire was composed of teacher’s work setting in item number one, teacher’s years of teaching four-year-old students and the highest educational degree earned in items 2 and 3, teacher’s professional development in items 4 through 17, teacher accountability to the site administrator in items 18 through 27, teacher accountability to central office/state department in items 28 through 35, teacher accountability to parents in items 36 and 37, teacher accountability for assessments in item 38, and Brigance Screening Instrument in item 39. Responses were organized on a Ratings scale.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The instrument went through the following validation process. Construction occurred based upon review of literature on teacher qualification and preschool accountability. Face validity was obtained by ensuring items on the questionnaire matched the defined terms of each component and variables, and by submitting questionnaire to the faculty at Clark Atlanta University who served on the dissertation committee and as experts in the field research.
Data Collection Procedures

Prior to conducting research, permission was requested from the district office and/or site administrator. Participants were selected from the body of preschool programs in the City of Atlanta. Additionally, a letter was addressed and given to each teacher requesting his or her assistance in the research project. The purpose of the letter was to explain the purpose of the study, confidentiality and to assure participants that their responses would be anonymous. Responses from the participants to the questionnaire were on a Ratings Scale. The researcher collected the completed questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed statistically, examining relationships between each variable. The statistical analysis included the usage of correlation coefficients to determine whether relationships existed between named variables and regression analyses to determine relationship between each independent variable and dependent variable.

Summary

The research design involved in this study was quantitative in nature. Teachers of four-year-old students in the city of Atlanta were invited to participate in the study. Participants responded to questions on a questionnaire. All data collected were kept confidential. Information was analyzed according to responses given on a ratings scale.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between various attributes of preschool teachers and their impact upon kindergarten readiness in urban settings. The study was conducted in a large urban school system during the 2004-05 academic year. The data collection process used an instrument entitled “The Impact of Preschool Teacher Accountability on Kindergarten Readiness in a Large Urban School Setting” which was specially designed to obtain data on the variables under consideration. The sample consisted of teachers of preschool children from a stratified random sample of public pre-kindergarten, private pre-kindergarten, Head Start, community, and home school day care centers. Efforts were made to obtain one hundred surveys that were distributed. The response rate is 62%.

The instrument consisted of 39 items covering eight different dimensions relating to the effectiveness with which preschool teachers deliver instruction. The eight dimensions were: teacher’s work setting (item 1), teacher’s qualifications (items 2-3), teacher’s professional development (items 4-17), teacher accountability to the site administrator (items 18-27), teacher accountability to central/state department (items 28-35), teacher accountability to parents (items 36-37), teacher accountability for assessments (item 38), and Brigance Summary Instrument (item 39). The items associated with the first three items elicited categorical responses. The other items
requested that prekindergarten teachers indicate their frequency of participation on certain aspects of their jobs. This required that teachers record their responses on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Teachers indicated their choice for each item by circling the appropriate response on the scale. Identity confidentiality was maintained. The first step in the data analysis process after the collection of the completed instruments was to enter the responses into a personal computer so that they could be assessed by the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 11.5 computer program. The output from the application of this program provided the descriptive statistics and the analysis needed to perform the tests of significance to address the hypotheses specified in this study.

This chapter presents the descriptive statistics produced to provide an overview of characteristics of the respondents, as well as the results of the hypotheses examined in this study. The results are presented in narrative and tabular form.

To obtain information on the demographics of the participants as well as an indication of their responses to professional development, teacher accountability, and Brigance Screening items appearing on the instrument, an item analysis was generated. The results of this procedure, which gives the number and percentage of teachers associated with each of the possible responses for each of the 39 items on the instrument, are presented in the appendix. The compilation of the table provided an accuracy check since responses outside of the possible range of value indicated invalid responses. The results of the item analysis reveal that most (59.7%) of the teachers were from a public prekindergarten setting. The respondents were fairly evenly distributed in terms of the number of years served as a teacher of four-year old students. The percentages range
from 11.3 for the 16-20 year range to 27.4 for the 6-10 year range. In terms of the highest degree completed, most of the teachers (53.2) had attained a technical degree in early childhood development.

Items 4-17 pertained to teacher’s professional development. In terms of a percentage of teachers giving a response of “Often” or “Always,” item 8 (How often are you encouraged to further your professional development by attending conferences and workshops outside of the work site?) received the most favorable rating (77.4%), while item 6 (Do you serve on interview panels for prospective teachers at your school?) received the least favorable rating (11.3%).

The dimension denoted “Teacher Accountability to the Site Administrator” was surveyed by items 18-27. For this dimension, both items 18 (Are you required to have daily lesson plans?) and 19 (Are you required to have weekly lesson plans?) had a total of 93.5% of the teachers giving responses of “Often” or “Always.” Thus, these two items tied for the highest rating for this dimension. Item 26 (How often does your principal/site leader have a conference with you after a classroom observation?) had the lowest rating of 43.5%.

For the dimension pertaining to “Teacher Accountability to Central Office/State Department,” which was measured by items 28-35, the most favorably rated item was number 33 (How often does the central office or state department of education provide you with written feedback after a classroom observation?) on which 46.8% of the teachers recorded a response of “Often” or “Always.” The lowest percentage (33.9) was for item 30 (How often does an administrator from the central office or state department
of early childhood education observe your classroom on a quarterly basis?). Thus, there was a relatively low range for the responses to the items associated with this dimension. The dimension denoted “Teacher Accountability to Parents,” consisted of items 36 and 37. For item 36 (How often do you conference with parents to discuss their children’s readiness for kindergarten?) the percentage of combined “Often” and “Always” responses was 61.3. The corresponding percentage for item 37 (How often do you have parent workshops/meetings/seminars that assist parents with helping their children transition to kindergarten?) also 61.3.

A single item, number 38 (Do you use the results of the Brigance Screening Instrument to help guide and shape your lessons with your students?) made up the dimension denoted “Teacher Accountability for Assessments.” The percentage of teachers giving the responses of “Often” or “Always” was 64.5.

Similarly, item 39 (Please estimate the percentage of students in your four-year-old class from 2004-05 who scored at the readiness level on the Brigance Screening Instrument.) constituted the last dimension denoted as “Brigance Screening Instrument.” The highest percentage of the teachers (29.0) selected the 41-60% interval, while the lowest percentage (6.5) was associated with the 21-40% interval. The combined percentage of teachers for the upper two intervals of 61-80% and 81-100% was 50.0.

An overall score was computed for each of the dimensions. This process consisted of computing the arithmetic mean of the items making up the various dimensions. The mean scores as well as other statistics are given in Table 1 for each of the dimensions.
Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for the Dimensions of the Impact of Preschool Teacher Accountability on Kindergarten Readiness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Valid Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s Professional Development</td>
<td>4-17</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Accountability to Site</td>
<td>18-27</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Accountability to Central Office/State Department</td>
<td>28-35</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Accountability to Parents</td>
<td>36-37</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Accountability For Assessments</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigance Screening Instrument</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen from Table 1 that the means ranged from a low of 3.15 for Teacher Accountability to Central Office/State Department to a high of 3.91 for Teacher Accountability for Assessments. Thus, the means for the dimensions were all between 3 ("Sometimes") and 4 ("Often") on the scale used for the administration of the instrument. An examination of the standard deviation (S.D.) in Table 1 indicates the largest disparity (S.D. = 1.81) in the responses of teachers occurred for “Teacher Accountability to Central Office/State Department,” while the largest degree of agreement (S.D. = 0.79) was shown on the dimension denoted as “Teacher’s Professional Development.”
The remainder of this chapter is devoted to the hypotheses to be addressed. All hypotheses were tested to the .05 level of significance. Notation was made for any hypotheses significant to the .01 level.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between teacher’s work setting and student achievement.

Information on the work setting of teachers was obtained in item 1 on data collection instrument. The item served as the independent variable for the testing of this hypothesis. Student achievement, which is the dependent variable, was measured by item 39 in which the teachers were asked to estimate the percentage of students in their four-year-old class from 2003-04 who scored at the readiness level on the Brigance Screening Instrument. The responses were the intervals 0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80% and 81-100%.

The original hypothesis was designed to examine the performance of students on the Brigance Screening Instrument over the six work settings. However, this hypothesis had to be revised since only one work setting, public prekindergarten, had a sufficient number of participants to allow for a valid statistical test. Thus, the comparison was performed between two groups, the teachers who indicated that they were from public prekindergarten setting comprised one group, while the other group consisted of a combination of teachers from private kindergarten, Head Start, daycare center, and other settings. The results of the testing of this hypothesis are given in Table 2.
Table 2  
*Comparison of Performance on Brigance Screening Instrument Between Teachers' Work Settings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Work Setting</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Prekindergarten</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Settings*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Represents a combination of private, Head Start, community, and home school prekindergarten sites

The mean for the 36 prekindergarten teachers who report Brigance Screening Instrument was 3.83. This represents a point on the higher end of the 61-80%. The mean for 13 other teachers with Brigance Screening Instrument scores was 2.92, which represents a performance on the higher end of the 41-60% interval. Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances was significant to beyond the .05 level. Thus, the application of the t-test of significance requires the use of separate variance estimates.

Although there was a mathematical difference between the respective means of 3.83 and 2.92, the resulting t-value of 1.74 with 47 degrees of freedom was not significant to the .05 level. Thus, hypothesis 1 was accepted at the .05 level. There is no significant difference between teachers in public school settings and those in other work settings.

H$_02$: There is no significant relationship between teacher’s qualifications and student achievement.
Teacher’s qualifications were measured in terms of the number of years served as a teacher of four-year-old students. This information was elicited from the teachers by item 2 on the instrument. The choices available were the intervals 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, and 21 or more years. As in Hypothesis 1, performance on the Brigance Screening Instrument served as a measure of student achievement.

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed as a measure of the relationship specified in this hypothesis. Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient is a number between −1 and +1, which gives a measure of the strengths of the relationship between a pair of variables. A correlation of +1 indicates a perfect positive relationship while −1 indicates a perfect negative (inverse) relationship. A correlation of zero indicates the total absence of a relationship.

The results of the correlational analyses appear in Table 3. The correlation between teacher’s qualifications and student achievement was 0.085, with 48 degrees of freedom; this value was not significant to the .05 level. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is accepted. There is no significant relationship between teacher’s qualifications and student achievement.

Table 3

Pearson Correlations Between Dimensions Teacher Qualifications and Brigance Screening Instrument Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Brigance Screening Instrument Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Qualifications</td>
<td>0.085</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the teacher's professional development and teacher's accountability.

The information provided in Table 4 indicates that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient used to measure the relationship specified in this hypothesis was 0.374. This correlation was significant to the .01 level. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is rejected. There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher's professional development and teacher's accountability.

Table 4

*Pearson Correlations Between Dimensions of the Preschool Instrument*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Teachers' Professional Development</th>
<th>Brigance Screening Instrument Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' Accountability to Site</td>
<td>0.374**</td>
<td>0.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' Accountability to Central/</td>
<td>0.449**</td>
<td>-0.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Office Department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' Accountability to Parents</td>
<td>0.417**</td>
<td>0.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' Accountability to Assessments</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>0.202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between teacher's professional development and teacher's accountability to central office/state department.
From Table 4, it can be seen that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between teacher’s professional development and teacher’s accountability to central office/state department was 0.449. With 48 degrees of freedom, the correlation was significant to the .01 level. Thus, hypothesis 4 is rejected. There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher’s professional development and teacher’s accountability to central office/state department.

Hₐ₅: There is no significant relationship between teacher’s professional development and teacher’s accountability to parents.

Table 4 indicates that the applicable correlation coefficient was 0.417. This value with 48 degrees of freedom was significant to the .01 level. Thus, hypothesis 5 is rejected. There is a statistically significant relationship between teacher’s professional development and teacher’s accountability to parents.

Hₐ₆: There is no significant relationship between teacher’s professional development and teacher’s accountability to assessment.

The dimension denoted as “Teacher’s Accountability to Assessment” was measured by teachers’ responses to a single item, number 38 (Do you use the results from the Brigance Screening Instrument to help guide and shape your lessons with your students?). From Table 4, the applicable correlation coefficient is -0.044. This value is not significant to the .05 level. Thus, hypothesis 6 is accepted. There is no significant relationship between teachers’ professional development and teachers’ accountability to assessment.

Hₐ₇: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to site administrators.
Student performance on the Brigance Screening Instrument as obtained from teachers’ responses to item 39 served as the measure of student achievement. From Table 4 the correlation coefficient to measure the relationship specified by this hypothesis is 0.057. The value is not significant to the .05 level. Thus, hypothesis 7 is accepted. There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teachers’ accountability to site administration.

H₀₈: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to central office/state department.

The correlation coefficient to measure the relationship between these two variables is given in Table 4. The value of −0.091 is not significant to the .05 level. Thus, Hypothesis 8 is accepted. There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to central office/state department.

H₀₉: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to parents.

From Table 4, the correlation between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to parents 0.101. This value is not significant to the .05 level. Thus, Hypothesis 9 is accepted. There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to parents.

H₀₁₀: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to assessment.

From Table 4, the correlation between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to assessment is 0.202. This value is not significant to the .05 level. Thus,
Hypothesis 10 is accepted. There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability.

Summary

This chapter presented the statistical analyses of the data with respect to each null hypothesis and its findings. This study proposed to determine the relationship between preschool teacher qualifications, preschool teacher accountability, and its impact on kindergarten readiness in Atlanta, Georgia. Statistical applications were used to determine what significant differences, relationships, and relative influences existed with regard to the independent and dependent variables.

The tests for the hypotheses were performed by the procedures found in the computer program of the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following statistical tools were used: t-test, Levene’s test for Equality of Variances, and the Pearson Correlation Coefficient.
CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between preschool teacher qualifications, preschool teacher accountability, and its impact on kindergarten readiness in Atlanta, Georgia. This chapter is divided into four parts. These are: findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations. This study was reported in the sequential format outlined below.

Chapter I, Introduction: The first chapter provided an overview of the study and the significance of the topic investigated. There were other subsections addressed in the chapter. Through the introduction, the purpose of the study relating to preschool teacher qualifications, preschool teacher accountability, and its impact on kindergarten readiness in Atlanta, Georgia was discussed.

The background of the problem stated that there was no centralized repository of prekindergarten data for classes in public and private schools, and there was no common terminology for the various types of early childhood education programs. The statement of the problem examined the effects of preschool teacher qualifications and preschool teacher accountability on kindergarten readiness. The significance of the study stated that this study could add to the body of knowledge in the area of preschool education. It further stated that by preschool teacher qualifications and preschool teacher
accountability having an impact on kindergarten readiness that education departments might enhance preschool teacher qualification and evaluation procedures.

Chapter II, Review of Literature: The second chapter outlined the literature by related research on the variables in the study. The literature was reviewed under five headings: Preschool teacher work setting, preschool teacher qualifications, preschool teacher professional development, preschool teacher accountability, and indicators of kindergarten readiness. The literature highlighted the impact of the “age of accountability” on early childhood education.

Chapter III, Theoretical Framework: The third chapter gave the operational definitions of the specific terms used in the study. In addition, each null hypothesis was stated. The relationship among the variables and the limitations of the study were addressed.

Chapter IV, Research Methodology: The fourth chapter presented the methodology and procedures that were used to conduct this study. The research was quantitative in nature. Teachers of four-year-old students in the city of Atlanta were participants in the study. Permission was requested and granted by the school district for the research to proceed. A description of the instrument was given. A face validity update was conducted to assure the usefulness of the instrument in 2004. The data collection procedures specified how the researcher obtained the data.

Chapter V, Analysis of Data: Chapter five presented data with accompanying analyses of data in terms of the stated null hypotheses. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was the program used to analyze the data.
Chapter VI, Findings, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations: In Chapter Six, a summary of the findings generated by the study are presented. Based on these findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations, the results are submitted for application and interpretation in the field of education.

The research study sought to answer the following ten null hypotheses:

$H_01$: There is no significant relationship between teacher’s work setting and student achievement.

$H_02$: There is no significant relationship between teacher qualifications and student achievement.

$H_03$: There is no significant relationship between the teacher’s professional development and teacher accountability.

$H_04$: There is no significant relationship between teacher accountability and student achievement.

$H_05$: There is no significant relationship between teacher’s professional development and teacher’s accountability to parents.

$H_06$: There is no significant relationship between teacher’s professional development and teacher’s accountability to assessment.

$H_07$: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to site administrators.

$H_08$: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher’s accountability to central office/state department.
$H_09$: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher's accountability to parents.

$H_010$: There is no significant relationship between student achievement and teacher's accountability to assessment.

Findings

The null hypotheses of the study were tested to answer the research questions. The specific findings as they relate to the null hypotheses include the following:

1. There was no significant relationship between teacher's qualifications and student achievement. The data is not ordinal.

2. There was a statistically significant relationship between teacher's professional development and teacher's accountability to site administrators and central office/state department. The site administrators and central office/state department require teachers to submit lesson plans, observe daily lessons being taught by the teachers, and provide feedback to teachers after an observation.

3. Based upon this study, the state monitoring/supervision and compliance with the federal government act was not examined.

4. There was a statistically significant relationship between the teacher's professional development and teacher accountability. Teacher's professional development is the extent to which the teacher enhances formal education. The teachers are accountable to site administrators, the central office/state department, and parents.
5. There was no significant relationship between teacher accountability and student achievement. This includes the extent to which the teacher uses assessment in preparing students for kindergarten readiness.

Conclusions

This study was done to examine the relationship between preschool teacher qualifications, preschool teacher accountability, and its impact on kindergarten readiness in Atlanta, Georgia. Indicators of kindergarten readiness have been defined in the review of literature. An analysis of the data in relation to the null hypotheses concluded that teacher’s professional development is impacted by teacher’s accountability to site administrators, central office/state department, and parents.

The study also found that preschool teacher’s accountability to site administrators impacts professional development. The study found that preschool teacher’s accountability to the central office/state department impacts professional development. The study found little significance between kindergarten readiness and assessments. The study inferred a correlation between teacher/staff professional development and kindergarten readiness since professional development is impacted by accountability to administrators.

There is no correlation between teacher qualifications and kindergarten readiness. The correlation is inferred between teacher accountability and kindergarten readiness. Teacher accountability is impacted by site administrators, central office/state department, and parents.
Implications

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the study, there are implications for the following practices, policies, and research areas. First, preschool site and central office administrators should consistently practice collecting lesson plans, conducting classroom observations, and providing feedback on lesson plans and observations. Administrators of preschool programs need to provide opportunities for teachers to attend classes/workshops, visit other schools, and participate in the decision making process at the local preschool sites. Teachers need to conference and conduct workshop for parents on school readiness. Second, state departments of education should establish policies that require school districts to implement a common school readiness assessment for students exiting preschool programs and entering kindergarten programs. Third, more research needs to be done in the areas of minimum requirements to obtain a certificate to teach preschool education and the role of the federal department of education on preschool programs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are given based on the findings of and the conclusions drawn from this research.

1. Preschool teachers need to be afforded professional development opportunities.

2. Administrators at preschool sites must observe teaching and provide feedback.
3. Further study should be done to ask specific questions about the indicators of kindergarten readiness.

4. Further study should be done on other variables that impact kindergarten readiness in urban settings.

5. Further study should be done with the qualifications preschool teachers in a qualitative study or empirical research.
Dear Teacher of Four Year Old Students:

I am Patrice M. Austin and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership at Clark Atlanta University. For the completion of this degree, I have chosen to study the impact of preschool teacher qualifications and teacher accountability on kindergarten readiness. With the increased accountability efforts in education and the No Child Left Behind Act, early childhood education programs are being examined more to determine their roles in school readiness. Because some early childhood programs are perceived as baby sitting services, many early childhood programs do not know how they impact a child’s successful matriculation in school.

Please respond to the attached questionnaire. Your participation will help to gather information about the preschool teacher’s role in kindergarten readiness. I am asking that you read the statement below and sign the form indicating your willingness to participate in the study. Please note that you not are required to disclose your name, nor will any other identifying information be asked of you. This data will be analyzed for the entire group of respondents rather than individuals. This will assure anonymity and will also ensure that no physical or emotional harm will result from your participation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 404-402-8042.

Thank you.

I agree to voluntarily participate in the research on the impact of preschool teacher preparation and teacher accountability on kindergarten readiness being conducted by Patrice Austin. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and that my identity will remain anonymous.

Name ____________________________ Date ____________________________
APPENDIX B

Research Questionnaire

The Impact of Preschool Teacher Preparation and Teacher Accountability on Kindergarten Readiness in Atlanta, Georgia

Teacher's Work Setting

1. Please circle your work setting (Only one)
   - Public Pre-kindergarten
   - Private Pre-kindergarten
   - Head Start
   - Daycare Center
   - Home school Environment
   - Other (Please specify) _____________________________

Teacher's Qualifications

2. Please circle the number of years you have served as a teacher of four-year old students (including this year):
   - 1-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16-20 years
   - 21 or more years

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Appendix B (continued)

3. Please circle the highest educational degree that you have completed: (Circle all that apply)

   Bachelor's Degree or higher in Early Childhood Education
   Bachelor's Degree or higher in other Educational Field
   Bachelor's Degree or higher in field other than education
   Technical Degree in Early Childhood Development
   High School Diploma
   Other (Please list) ____________________

Please use the following scale to indicate your level of participation on certain aspects of your job.

1  Never
2  Rarely
3  Sometimes
4  Often
5  Always

Teacher's Professional Development

4. How often do you read professional journals/articles on the development of four-year-old students?

   1  2  3  4  5

5. How often do you read professional journals/articles on best practices for four-year-old students?

   1  2  3  4  5
Appendix B (continued)

6. Do you serve on interview panels for prospective preschool teachers for this school?
   
   1 2 3 4 5

7. How often do you have professional development opportunities at your school site?
   
   1 2 3 4 5

8. How often are you encouraged to further your professional development by attending conferences and workshops outside of the work site?
   
   1 2 3 4 5

9. How often are you encouraged to continue your post secondary studies?
   
   1 2 3 4 5

10. How often are you encouraged to observe the classroom of a colleague in the building?
    
    1 2 3 4 5

11. How often do you discuss best teaching practices with building colleagues?
    
    1 2 3 4 5

12. How often are you encouraged to visit the classroom of a colleague in another school?
    
    1 2 3 4 5

13. How often do you visit the kindergarten classrooms at your neighboring schools or in your building?
    
    1 2 3 4 5

14. How often do you meet with kindergarten teachers in your school or at neighboring schools?
    
    1 2 3 4 5
Appendix B (continued)

15. Does your principal/site leader encourage you to meet with the kindergarten teachers in your building or neighboring KDG teachers?
   1  2  3  4  5

16. When you as the classroom teacher have a parent workshop, does your principal/site leader help provide resources for the workshop?
   1  2  3  4  5

17. When parent workshops are sponsored on readiness for kindergarten, are kindergarten teachers invited to be workshop participants?
   1  2  3  4  5

Teacher Accountability to the Site Administrator

18. Are you required to have daily lesson plans?
   1  2  3  4  5

19. Are you required to have weekly lesson plans?
   1  2  3  4  5

20. Are you required to have monthly lesson plans?
   1  2  3  4  5

21. Does your principal/site leader observe your classroom on a daily basis?
   1  2  3  4  5

22. Does your principal/site leader observe your classroom on a weekly basis?
   1  2  3  4  5

23. Does your principal/site leader observe your classroom on a monthly basis?
   1  2  3  4  5
Appendix B (continued)

24. When your principal/site leader observes your classroom, how often does he/she remain in the classroom for more than ten minutes?

\[ \begin{array}{ccccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \end{array} \]

25. How often does your principal/site leader provide you with written feedback after a classroom observation?

\[ \begin{array}{ccccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \end{array} \]

26. How often does your principal/site leader have a conference with you after a classroom observation?

\[ \begin{array}{ccccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \end{array} \]

27. How often does your principal/site leader observe your classroom to determine if suggested strategies are being implemented?

\[ \begin{array}{ccccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \end{array} \]

*Teacher Accountability to Central Office/State Department*

28. How often does an administrator from the central office or the state department of early childhood education observe your school site on a quarterly basis?

\[ \begin{array}{ccccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \end{array} \]

29. How often does an administrator from the central office or the state department of early childhood education observe your school site on a yearly basis?

\[ \begin{array}{ccccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \end{array} \]

30. How often does an administrator from the central office or the state department of early childhood education observe your classroom on a quarterly basis?

\[ \begin{array}{ccccc} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \end{array} \]
Appendix B (continued)

31. How often does an administrator from the central office or the state department of early childhood education observe your classroom on a yearly basis?

   1  2  3  4  5

32. How often does an administrator from the central office or the state department of early childhood education observe your classroom for more than ten minutes?

   1  2  3  4  5

33. How often does the central office or the state department of education provide you with written feedback after a classroom observation?

   1  2  3  4  5

34. How often does the central office or state department of education have a conference with you after a classroom observation?

   1  2  3  4  5

35. How often does the administration from central office or state department of early childhood education observe your classroom to determine if suggested strategies are being implemented?

   1  2  3  4  5

*Teacher Accountability to Parents*

36. How often do you conferences with parents to discuss their children’s readiness for kindergarten?

   1  2  3  4  5

37. How often do you have parent workshops/meetings/seminars that assist parents with helping their children transition to kindergarten?

   1  2  3  4  5
Appendix B (continued)

Teacher Accountability for Assessments

38. Do you use the results from the Brigance Screening Instrument to help guide and shape your lessons with your students?

1 2 3 4 5

Brigance Screening Instrument

39. Please estimate the percentage of students in your four-year-old class from 2003-2004 scored at the readiness level on the Brigance Screening Instrument: (Circle one)

0-20%
21-40%
41-60%
61-80%
81-100%
REFERENCES


