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Saudi Teachers’ Perceptions of Rough-and-Tumble Play in Early Learning

Rana Alghamdi

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Saudi Teachers’ Perceptions of Rough-and-Tumble Play in Early Learning

by

Rana Alghamdi

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction
with a concentration in Early Childhood Education
Department of Teaching and Learning
College of Education
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Keywords: rough and tumble play, gender, culture, photo elicitation, early childhood

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Saleh Alghamdi and Azzah Alghamdi, for the unconditional love and ongoing encouragement and support I received throughout my life. To my lovely husband, Adil Alghamdi, for all the love, support, and encouragement throughout my journey. To my wonderful children, Faris, Faisal, Sarah, and Reem for their patience. To my nation and homeland, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for giving me the opportunity and resources to pursue my doctorate, which is a key reason behind my academic success. I will forever be grateful to the Saudi government's support and presence throughout this doctorate journey. To the United States of America for hosting me and facilitating my efforts to pursue my educational and career endeavors, which I treasure and will apply in the Saudi education sector upon my return.
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advance in my career to ensure they achieve their best in life. My in-depth love and special gratitude to my children always.

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Abstract

This study explored teachers’ perceptions of rough-and-tumble (R&T) play in early childhood education in Saudi Arabia. The literature on rough-and-tumble play in Saudi Arabia is limited in scope, and more research is needed to explore teachers’ perceptions on this type of play for early learners. The pertinent literature reveals that R&T play, which includes running, jumping, fighting, wrestling, chasing, pulling, pushing, and climbing, among other rough playful activities, can positively impact learning and development across psychosocial, emotional, and cognitive domains. Teachers’ understanding of R & T play is key, and the attitudes of Saudi early childhood teachers who are responsible for implementing curriculum-based play have not been fully researched. Four early childhood teachers from an urban Saudi preschool participated in the study. The data collected in this study were interpreted through a sociocultural lens. Data sources included in-depth interviews, photo-elicitation interviews, and participant-generated drawings. Three overarching themes emerged: teachers’ concerns about rough-and-tumble play, teachers’ perceptions about the benefits of rough-and-tumble play, and teachers’ expression of gender roles in R & T play as contextualized within Saudi culture. Saudi teachers’ perceptions are discussed in detail, and implications of the findings and recommendations for future research are put forth.
Chapter One: Introduction

As I take a look back at my life as a child, my mind’s eye focuses on the City of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in which I have vivid memories of a little girl who did not begin her formal education as early as she could have. Amidst restrictions on her time and activities, this little girl yearned to play to her heart’s desire, but particularly at school, there was neither enough time nor a good space to play. The arid desert landscape can be the most inhospitable place for five years olds. The little girl I recall, yearned to burst outdoors, running with her classmates to play chase, jump, wrestle, roll over and over, stumble, fall, get up and brush herself off, run again, and scream at the top of her lungs. She wanted to throw up her hands to catch a ball that had been thrown, play ring games, and simply feel good. She longed to be on the outside, or even on the inside, with the freedom to dance and role play with her friends, act out her feelings, improvise when necessary, and gain physical strength through rigorous play.

That little Saudi Arabian girl was me, the researcher who developed and completed this study on Saudi Arabian teachers’ perceptions of Rough-and-Tumble (R&T) play in early childhood education in Saudi Arabia. R&T play is characterized as vigorous play behaviors including wrestling, chasing, grappling, kicking, and tumbling (Carlson, 2011; Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). R & T play is often demonstrated during outdoor play. As a young girl, my heart desired to be at school, but I attended preschool for only three months and refused to continue my education because of the lack of both freedom and opportunity for play. More specifically, I did not have the
opportunities to experience R & T play. The play space at school was inadequate for running and chasing because residential buildings are often used for schools in my hometown and they are not the types of spaces conducive to R & T play. Thus, not being able to spread my wings at school and move in the way I wanted, I remained at home for many months, until it was compulsory for me to start my early education. When I finally started school, being outdoors and away from the sedentary classroom under short periods of sternly supervised play, brought me some degree of fun. I relished in the positive social and emotional outcomes of my measured freedom and I came to enjoy my early childhood educational experience.

Quite disturbingly to me, play in Saudi Arabia appears today as it did then, to have less importance in child development than academics. Most academic activities in Saudi school do not include any elements of R & T play. Play and academia are distinct features within the Saudi school environment, and academic activities emphatically take precedence over play. Lack of freedom to engage in playful physical activities often made me sad as a child, and those feelings continued with me as an adult who chose to become an early childhood teacher. For example, in the school where I taught, the children were allowed mostly solitary play in sand areas. Such play consisted of repetitive cycles of filling and emptying small plastic boxes with sand. When play equipment such as climbing bars was present, the children were not allowed to climb high. As an early childhood educator, I would have liked to have had the ability to allow and to foster more R&T play. It seemed to me that pedagogically, a full awareness of the benefits of R & T play was missing from the Saudi educational consciousness. I began to question the levels of awareness teachers might have regarding the cognitive, psychosocial, and emotional connection between play and learning. What I observed as a teacher, was an emphasis on teacher control of every aspect of
child playtime, with a de-emphasis on finding freedom and taking risks through play. As a result, I related what the children I have taught (and the teachers I have been an administrator for) to my own experiences, which resulted within me, a dampened positive spirit and tempering of natural childlike curiosity. Strict control over playtime, and relegation of activities to small body, the solitary play might have hampered the development of sportsmanship, social, and cognitive skills that result from early learners’ R&T play.

While working in the Saudi education system as early childhood (kindergarten) teacher for seven years, my observations further led me to believe that culture was key for the behavior of Saudi educators. In the contextualized Saudi educational environment, I observed that if kids engaged in R&T play between classroom sessions, teachers were likely to stop such play. At home, the situation is often similar to the idea of children playing during homework is seen as unacceptable. Overall, there is a general adherence to a very strict academic focus in Saudi schools and homes. Rough and tumble play is not considered to be beneficial.

Yet, findings in the literature confirm that the attention span of a child can be increased after engaging in R&T play. In several experimental studies, it was discovered that children’s level of attention fluctuated before and after outdoor play. Pelliegrini and Bohn (2005) suggested that when children played during recess, they were more “attentive after than before recess” (p. 15). After long periods of work, the authors demonstrated that children displayed reduced attention spans (Pelliegrini & Bohn, 2005). Carlson (2011) asserted that regular R & T play can contribute to children’s levels of attention, which may directly relate to their academic performance. Physically active children, therefore, gain the benefit of increased attention spans that may elicit better performance in academic tasks that require sustained and focused attention.
Long (2013) and Roopnarine (2011) contend that play and learning have a dichotomous relationship. In Saudi Arabia, it is questionable whether early childhood educators and other significant stakeholders (parents) conceive of R &T play as an instrument of learning. As I began to think about play, I found my observations to be consistent with Long’s (2013) assertion that in some parts of the world, play does not constitute a fitting element for rigorous early childhood education programs. The more I gave attention to the obvious dichotomous relationship between learning and play, my behavior and practice changed to focus on engaging in more intentional observation and purposeful reflection of play and learning. I became imbued with a deep desire to explore, know, and understand the perspectives of Saudi Arabian educators.

Further, as I began to investigate the literature, I found that Tannock (2008) forwarded the idea that R&T play carries with it many misconceptions. These misconceptions can impact teachers’ attitudes regarding the quality, safety, and necessity of R & T play for early childhood learners (Tannock, 2008). The rejection of R & T play in Saudi early childhood academia may be pertinent to misconceptions, and I felt the need to investigate. Like some other cultures around the world as described by Long (2013), Saudi Arabian culture may connect play with a fun, lackadaisical attitude, and seriousness and stillness, with work. Hence, R &T play may be considered as fun and learning as work. Even more, R&T play may be considered dangerous to young children in the minds of Saudi teachers.

It is important to note that Saudi Arabia holds strong and rigid expectations of behavior and life roles, in terms of gender. These gender norms form a formidable societal structure that overarches the Saudi early education system. Aljabreen and Lash (2016), as well as United Nations Education Organization [UNESCO] (2014), highlighted these cultural underpinnings with a focus
on Saudi-government protocols for early education. For instance, only female teachers can instruct preschool children. This government-imposed stipulation spurs in me, the question of its effects on the conceptualization of R&T play for early learners in Saudi Arabia. It would not be surprising to me if female teachers were to perceive R & T play as inappropriate for girls. In this way, cultural norms may define female teachers and children who allow and engage in R & T play, as societal deviants, and may label them as “tom-boy,” a name used in Western society to refer to a girl who engages in stereotypically male behavior. The combination of Tannock’s (2008) misconception idea, and the cultural positioning of gender and general behavior in Saudi propelled my curiosity to better understand play in my home country.

Children’s Play Council (2001), Moyles (2001), Pellis and Pellis (2007) together with Elkind (2007) explain that play is complex, and its complexity is embedded in its capacity to adapt to the individual interpretation or group interaction at any time and in any environment. It is thus reasonable to believe that R & T play becomes that which teachers perceive it to be. This adaptive capacity can be identified in Saudi teachers’ attitudes towards a curriculum that includes play. As mentioned earlier, Saudi early childhood educators use activities perceived as academic, to override activities perceived as playful and fun. As I see it, the short amount of time allocated for play or fun activities that are highly conducive to learning, are taken away. Social and emotional learning may not be perceived as significant because academics, given this mindset, do not consider it cognitive attainment. It is helpful for early childhood educators to address the importance of R&T play as it pertains to quality education and the development of children’s “thinking, questioning, reasoning, and explaining, cognitive behaviors associated with play” (Hyvonen, 2011, p. 61).
Undauntedly, my curiosity continues to mount concerning teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, feelings, biases, experiences, and therefore their underlying and strong perceptions about R & T play for early learners, especially because the lineage of the literature indicates that the relativity of play to learning has been a constant focus of the scholarship in early learning (Clements & Fiorentino, 2004; Franberg & Bergen, 2006). More than 86 years ago, developmental psychologists believed that play propelled the development of children’s physical, as well as social-emotional and language skills, abilities, and interests (Parten, 1932; Piaget, 1951; Vygotsky, 1962). Sutton-Smith (2002) grasps the multi-dimensional and complex nature of play that is presented in diverse activities and forms, whereas the proliferation of the literature since 1993 has been highlighting play as a natural phenomenon that is occurring across global cultures (Fraser, 2007; Roopnarine, 1999; Slavin, 2008; Wertsch, 1993).

However, it is critical to note that despite the preponderance of the evidence, there is still controversy concerning the role of play in early childhood education. Frost (2010), Sutton-Smith (2002), and Zigler (2000) agreed on the significant shift from the role of play in learning to teacher-performance based on learning activities that are deemed academic rather than play. Zigler captured the pendulum swing from a significant play emphasis to a reduced concentration on socioemotional learning, and to a highly specific cognitive learning concentration. Rather than a whole-child approach that concentrated on the combination of physical, emotional, social, and mental health in the intellectual realm, learning trends involved an elevated cognitive-child approach. This trend was especially supported by a focus on elementary education readiness.

Nevertheless, this noted learning trend did not override the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) in
the United States of America (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Officials of DAP determined that didactic instruction was useful for all stages of the education process and that certain mediums of learning used in higher levels must also be used in lower levels of education. The pendulum swung back to the whole-child approach as DAP adopted play as a medium of early childhood learning. This whole child approach is supported by the critical nature of play in children’s health, well-being, and learning (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk, & Singer, 2009).

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), there is a recommended action plan for the provision of playful experiences in school. NAEYC provides a set of guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). “DAP promotes young children’s optimal learning and development through play-based pedagogy” (Hart & Nagel, 2017, p. 41). DAP offers early guidance to childhood educators when planning for play in or outside of the classroom. For instance, and according to DAP, children should spend a minimum of a quarter of their school day doing physical activity, such as R&T play (Hart & Nagel, 2017). This means that schools should do their part to provide adequate playtime for young students. By embedding the early childhood core curricula with daily playtime, preschools and elementary schools can contribute to children’s development and acquisition of cognitive and social competence.

As early learners come to understand themselves, their peers, and their environment in meaningful ways, they respond to one another’s energy and stimulate one another’s creativity. They are useful and helpful to one another, they learn from one another, and much of their learning is experiential. The learning experience becomes multi-dimensional, as Sutton-Smith (2002) explained it. Whether following from early thought in social and developmental psychology based
on the work of Piaget (1951) and Vygotsky (1967), or from more recent scholarship by Sutton-Smith (2002), when the phenomenon of play is occurring, early learners (together or individually) become active in exploration and discovery.

Across many nations and cultures, early childhood educators, education leaders, and administrators are adopting the principle of DAP as the best practice, and undoubtedly, Saudi Arabia can adopt DAP too. Therefore, I feel it incumbent upon me, a Saudi early childhood educator, to explore the beliefs, feelings, experiences, thought processes, and perceptions held by Saudi teachers regarding R & T play.

**Statement of the Problem**

I have been a Kindergarten teacher for seven years. My experiences indicate that Saudi teachers have always avoided rough-and-tumble play. The literature, however, places emphasis on this type of play. Unfortunately, this downplay of the importance of R & T may hamper children from benefiting from the positive social, physical, and cognitive gains offered by play (Tannock, 2008). To change this, it becomes important to know how Saudi teachers perceive this kind of play. Tannock (2008) notes that R&T play is often misunderstood. As a result, teachers have diverse views on its quality, safety, and need for early learners. Although many preschools provide playful activities, early childhood educators seem to ignore Rough-and-Tumble (R &T) play, and it is often excluded from the learning process. The disregard for R & T play as a necessary part of the early childhood curriculum and/or nonchalant attitude towards play might be perceived as institutionalized, as many of the buildings used for preschools are not conducive to learning through play. In Saudi, most of the buildings currently housing preschools and kindergartens, were initially built for business purposes and are not suitable for early childhood R & T play activities.
Many private schools operate as a for-profit business by charging high rates of tuition and therefore may manage the schools like a private corporation rather than an educational institution (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016).

To worsen the situation, many private schools hire teachers who do not have an early childhood degree, and those teachers may lack teaching skills required in a classroom. Furthermore, teacher education colleges in Saudi operate and design early childhood teacher-education programs with little or no input and/or continued engagement, with early education specialists as preschool and kindergarten are not compulsory in Saudi Arabia (Amr, 2011, Aljabreen et al., 2016). Signaling a change, however, the new Saudi vision 2030 for education reported, “we will invest particularly in developing early childhood education, refining our national curriculum and training our teachers and educational leaders.” (The kingdom of Saudi Arabia, vision 2030, p. 36).

**Significance of the Study**

Although current research findings support the many benefits of play, including Rough-and-Tumble (R&T), gaps in the literature remain. Because R&T has not been widely researched and the majority of the literature focuses on elementary school-age boys, there is little information available on R & T play within early childhood settings (Hart, 2017). There is a need for additional research that focuses on teachers’ perceptions of R & T play and how these perceptions are formed based on culture, particularly in the field of early childhood education. Therefore, this qualitative study was conducted to enhance our understanding of R & T play, particularly in understanding the ways Saudi teachers perceive and interpret this kind of play. Prior to this study, no research could be found that examined R & T play, the benefits of R & T play, and early leaner teachers’
perceptions in Saudi Arabia. This qualitative study was the first inquiry into teacher’s perceptions of R & T play in Saudi Arabia. As such, it may have the potential to make a significant contribution to the research literature on Saudi Arabian early childhood education.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to explore early childhood educators’ perceptions of Rough-and-Tumble (R&T) play in Saudi Arabia. The study describes, explains, and enhances understandings of teacher’s perceptions and beliefs regarding R & T play. This study also sought to explore how and why teachers’ perceptions are formed, particularly in the field of early childhood education.

**Research Question**

My approach to this study was consistent with Maxwell’s (2013, p. 85) statement that, “research questions will often need to evolve,” so that even at times during the study, the question evolved via the follow-up questions that were asked of the participants. This study was guided by the following research question: What are Saudi early childhood education teachers’ perspectives of rough-and-tumble play in school?

**Organization of the Study**

The study is presented in five chapters. Chapter two presents a review of the literature on the research topic, Saudi teachers’ perceptions of Rough-and-Tumble (R&T) play in early childhood education. The literature review describes the line of the research as well as identifies, explains, and assesses the studies that supported the formulation of the research problem, the research question, and the significance of the study. Within the review, the theoretical framework is detailed and forwarded as central to the analysis and interpretation of the data collection.
Chapter Three describes the methods and procedures the researcher employed to conduct the study. The research design, including participant selection, procedures, instruments, data analyses, and ethical considerations of the study are presented in detail in Chapter three. In Chapter Four, the findings and data analysis are put forth. To conclude, interpretation and discussion of the implications of the study for the field of early childhood education in Saudi Arabia, as well as my reflections, appear in Chapter Five.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter, I explored education and early childhood education in Saudi Arabia, religion and culture, rough-and-tumble (R & T) play, the function of R & T play, Gender differences in R & T play, strategies and challenges for implementing R&T play, teachers’ perceptive and attitudes towards R & T play. I selected these categories because they were the themes for the literature I reviewed regarding the phenomenon under inquiry and the context in which the inquiry took place.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this study is Rogoff’s approach to sociocultural theory. Play is linked to culturally shared experiences and values so I employed this lens as the main theoretical framework in this study. Rogoff’s (2003) approach to the sociocultural theory developed from her work on culture and human development and advocates that human development is an inherently cultural process. Rogoff (2003) believes that because cultural processes give understanding to human development on three planes (individual, person to person, and institutional/community), culture cannot be ignored. She further offers that each plane corresponds to an aspect of sociocultural activity captured through participatory appropriation, guided participation, and apprenticeship. In brief, participatory appropriation (PA) can be summarized as the personal growth and transformation process (how people change) that occurs as people are involved in various activities and experiences (Rogoff, 2003). PA is situated within
the individual plane. Guided participation (GP), which Rogoff (2003) relates to the interpersonal plane, offers a way of understanding the processes involved between individuals that extends beyond the sociocultural logistics of doing something with someone, to the observations and “hands-on involvement” in activities. Finally, apprenticeship (AP), aligned with the community or institutional plane, puts a metaphoric perspective on how people who have more experience in a given activity mentor others to become more “mature” participants in work, school, and other activities (Rogoff, 2003).

Turning to the sociocultural activity of play in particular, Rogoff discusses play as collaborative and inherent to the nature of learning (Rogoff, 2003). Rogoff emphasizes that people interact through experiences within their respective communities through the use of symbols, verbal and body language, and “narratives, routines, and play” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 285). Rogoff (2003) posits that “From the perspective that development occurs in participation in shared sociocultural activities, it is clear that children play actively central roles, along with their elders and other companions, in learning and extending the ways of their communities” (p. 285). Rogoff (2003) further explains that reciprocal processes are involved. People contribute to the development of cultural processes, and in turn, these cultural processes contribute to the development of people.

In this respect, guided participation emerges as central to play in early childhood settings a process in which social and cultural values especially direct group activities. Under the construct of guided participation, adult and child participants are directed by internalized and observed practices and instructions for behavior in particular social settings. These instructions are often not universal but are sensitive to a culturally specific context or environment. For example, behavior
that is accepted in a gym would not be accepted in a library. Similarly, behavior that is accepted at a birthday celebration would not be accepted in a Mosque. It is reasonable to believe that when early learners enter the school environment, teachers are likely to guide and shape their behaviors, practices, and play activities based on policies and procedures from the Saudi Ministry of Education, school guidelines, parental expectations, teachers’ perceptions and beliefs, and predominant Saudi traditions. In such a setting of interconnected multidimensional influences, the guided participation phenomenon may account for the self-imposed and stringent involvement of teachers, even in the very limited time allotted to play in Saudi early learning environment.

Quite reasonably, the rationale for this theoretical framework is that it supports the purpose of this study by illuminating the cultural elements involved in educators’ perceptions and beliefs about preschool children’s development as they participate in R & T play (Rogoff, 2008). Consistent with Rogoff’s (2008) belief that institutional rules and practices are often a result of social and cultural norms, Saudi teachers’ acceptance of R & T play could largely be related to the social acceptability or approval of certain behaviors within the dominant culture. In a sense, R & T play may be symbolic of or represents social and cultural actions or behaviors that are deemed acceptable or unacceptable. When a behavior or practice, such as those in academic settings, aligns with what is culturally acceptable, there is a greater likelihood that the behavior or practice will prevail over behavior or practice that is considered culturally unacceptable. For example, Saudi teachers may consider the social and cultural acceptability of physical contact, leisure activities, or related behaviors in their determination of whether R & T play fits within what is considered acceptable behavior for children in the academic environment, especially R & T play for Saudi girls.
According to Rogoff (2007), “investigating the organization of children’s participation in routine activities offers a way to address the dynamic nature of cultural practices” (p. 490). Children develop as participants “in cultural communities, and they develop differently within these unique international cultures” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 3). This concept reveals a strong link between cultural practices and everyday routines, such as play. Consequently, Rogoff’s theory dictates that culture has a defining role in the organization of activities, especially in the preschool environment where diverse activities make up daily practices. To investigate the impact of perceptions held by Saudi teachers regarding R & T play, it was critical to examine cultural norms within the academic environment. For example, in Saudi Arabia, the educational environment from first grade through college is separated by gender. Due to religious views, single-gender education is practiced in Saudi Arabia. Such views may influence Saudi teachers’ beliefs regarding R & T play, even though preschools and kindergartens are mixed-gender environments. Rogoff, Correa-Chaves, & Navichoc (2005) discussed how the circumstances in which children interact could be associated with how play behaviors are interpreted and understood. For example, certain types of play could be associated with aggressive behaviors when children interact with same-age peers, while interactions with younger peers could be perceived as protective or nurturing (Rogoff et al., 2005). The norm in Saudi Arabia of dividing children in the academic environment based on gender provides insight to gender factors associated with perceptions by Saudi teachers on R & T play. Other cultural norms were evaluated in the same manner to hypothesize how Saudi teachers perceived R & T play as unacceptable given the socio-cultural norms.
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is currently governed by King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. Saudi Arabia is immense, and makes up four-fifths of the Arabian Peninsula. It “is surrounded by the red sea, Jorden, Iraq, Kuwait, the Arabian Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Yemen” (Rabaah, Doaa & Asma, 2016, p. 1). Arabic is its official language, and it carries a second name, “The Land of Two Holy Mosques” (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016). Saudi’s education system implements a national curriculum (Rabaah, Doaa, & Asma, 2016), and because the country produces 25% of the world’s known oil supplies, Saudi government has heavily invested in the education system (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016). King Abdullah Al-Saud and his Council of Ministers have begun to demonstrate significant focus and commitment to raising investment levels, specifically in terms of early childhood education.

Education Vision 2030, announced by Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud in 2016, sets forth a new educational program. “Irtiqaa” which is Arabic for “upgrade” captures the spirit of the new proposed measures, with a central feature of increased parent involvement. Irtiqaa “establishes parent led boards in schools to open discussion forums and further engage with parents” (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016, p. 33). Also, “teachers will receive training to raise their awareness of the importance of communicating with parents, and to equip them with effective methods to do so successfully” (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016, p. 33). Vision 2030 lays out long-term goals and expectations for early childhood education, including the development of stronger relationships between home and school, by encouraging substantive parental participation in the children’s learning processes. The plan hopes to see increased parental participation as measured
by 80% of Saudi parents participating in the learning process of their children by 2020 (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016, p. 33).

Saudi Vision 2030 seems to be incorporating DAP’s tenet on developing reciprocal relationships between parents and children in the teaching-learning process. The Saudi’s notion that children are its future, coupled with Vision 203 for major parental participation in early education, fits with DAP’s projection of building a solid reciprocal relationship with families towards placing greater value on children as individuals. Vision 2030 is therefore resonates with DAP’s assertion that parents are significant influencers in the development of their children, and thus must know about and be integral in the developmental stages of learning. Parental participation facilitates knowledge and information about children’s education and psycho-social developmental progress (Copple & Bredekamp, 2006; Phillips & Scrinzi, 2013). Parents as valued internal and external stakeholders in their children’s learning and development are emerging in Saudi Arabian education.

**Education in Saudi Arabia**

Education as a formal national system has been documented since 1924 in Saudi Arabia (Badawood, 2006). Mosques were early meeting places for formal education activities and involved religious instructions to learn the Qur’an, Arabic reading and writing, simple mathematics, and moral habits for good behavior (Abduljawad et al., 2008; Badawood, 2006; Fernea & Hocking, 2014). A typical classroom was led by a teacher who stood and wrote on a small board, while children sat on the floor and repeated the information. Although the instruction was basic, it was the constituent of the knowledge “deemed necessary for a child’s religious development” (Fernea & Hocking, 2014). Thus, the melding of religion and education in SA has
a long and entrenched history, making education in SA a, by default, a sociocultural experience. Alghamdi’s (2016), as well as Al Sunbul, Al Khateeb, Matwalli, and Abdu Al Jawad (2008) explain that the policies and practices of Saudi education primarily stem from Islam, and foster loyalty to Islam in every aspect and stage of the educational system. The 1970 “Educational Policy in Saudi Arabia” was set forth by the Higher Committee of Educational Policy and is the principal standard of education. The principles are representative of Islam and underscore every attribute of the life of every Muslim learner. It stipulates Islamic-centered education and therefore highlights the religious nature and role of Islam. At every level of education, Islam is found to be central and bears the weight of the curriculum, objectives, aims, and teachings (Al Salloom, 1995). The central codes that direct schooling are clearly defined in two sections of the mandate. In the first section, there are fundamental principles that guide education nationally and illustrate the legislative components of the system. The Educational International Conference (2008) set forth these principles which can be found in the National Report on Education Development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2008, p. 11):

1. Believe in Allah and Islam as a religion and Muhammad as a prophet.
2. Compulsive Islamic vision of universe, human being and life.
3. Individual inures the duty to call education and the state must provide Muslim female right in education in such manner suitable for its innately on equal foot with males.
4. Correlation of education all phases to state public development plan.
5. Arabic language is the education language in all the phases.

Situated in the second section of the document are the educational objectives and goals as well as the mandate that holds Islam as the national religion, identity, and culture that is
foundational and fundamental to the main system of Saudi lifestyle. These second set of principles are outlined in the Educational International Conference (2008) and found in The National Report on Education Development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2008, p. 11-12):

1. Development of Islamic religion fidelity
2. Articulate comprehensive harmony between science and religion under Islam
3. Encourage and develop scientific research and through, enhance observation, contemplation and enlighten capability of Allah marks in the universe to enable individual to participate effectively in social life and also seek to direct it soundly.
4. Comprehend the environment, widen the students’ horizons via introducing the world various countries.
5. Provide the students with other live language to supplement sciences, arts, benefit inventions and to seek transferring knowledge and sciences to other communities to participate in spreading Islam and serve humanity.
6. Conformity with youth physical growth phases, aid stable growth spiritually, mentally, emotional and socially and emphasis on the Islam spiritual aspects.
7. Define the individual differences of students as a step forward to better guide them and aid their grown pursuant to their capabilities, willingness and tendencies.
8. Provide special education and care for mentally or physically handicapped students.
9. Pay more attention to talent and gifted and provide special programs for them.
10. Train human capabilities and very education with emphasis on vocational education.
11. Implant work love in the students, form practical skills, and care with applicatory aspects at schools, enable students to carry out handicraft artistic works, participate in
output, and carry out labs, workshops and filed experiments, study scientific bases upon which production is constituted.

Religious rules also impact gender roles in SA. Teachers employed in early childhood schools are exclusively female, so the perceptions of male teachers cannot be explored at this level of education (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016). Nevertheless, culture, religion, and subsequent social norms are essential aspects of Saudi early education.

In addition to the unique religious influence on early childhood education in SA, Saudi preschools are set apart from developed nations in other ways of relevance to this study. For instance, early learning environments in SA often lack the physical requirements for safe outdoor play. The landscape of Saudi Arabia fluctuates between mountainous regions and a coastline near the sea (Rabaah et al., 2016), inclusive of wide expanses of desert, a grassless terrain of hot sand. This geographical feature makes it challenging for preschools to have man-made grassy play areas. This, in turn, limits the opportunity for outdoors rough-and-tumble (R &T) play, which is boisterous and vigorous and has safer consequences in natural settings. As such, Saudi preschool teachers must take special precautions when planning for their students’ outdoor activities, which are generally limited by the amount of exposure in sunny, hot sandy areas with no trees for shade.

**Early Childhood**

Aljabreen (2017) together with Badawood (2006) discuss Saudi’s preschool development as a public program that has occurred only in the last 40 years. During this period, Saudi leaders became aware of the necessity for early learners to participate in a more highly structured program. The formal preschool education doctrine continues from the larger system with a focus on the principles of Islam. Aljabreen (2017) joins Sedgwick (2001) to explain that education
administrators rely on the Qur'an together with the admonitions of Prophet Muhammad as the primary instructional source. The Saudi education system seeks to guide early learners into absorbing Islamic virtues for what is deemed as appropriate human development.

Aljabreen (2017) and Abduljawad, Alkhatib, Alsenbl, & Metwally (2008) highlight that in the current education system, children from ages 3 to 5 are categorized as “preschool or kindergarten” learners. Teachers are exclusively female by law, and provide care and instruction in an optional coeducational environment. Early childhood is supervised by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, and the private sector. The Ministry of Education formed the General Administration of Preschool in 2004 (Bahatheg, 2011) to “improve and ensure the qualitative and quantitative development of pre-school education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia” (Badawood, 2006, p. 19). Since 2004, much effort has been placed in adopting curriculum changes meant to meet improvement goals.

In further detailing the Saudi education system, Abduljawad et al. (2008) noted the positive impact of conspicuous Western educators, such as Froebel, Montessori, Freud, Erickson, and Russell, on Saudi early childhood education. Erikson’s is especially noted for the significance of his human development model. Dewey and Piaget are also noted for their significant contribution to early childhood education philosophy in Saudi, especially Piaget’s principles of child psychology and children’s cognitive developmental stages.

The Saudi education system also functions on the notion that the realm of early childhood education is intricate. Early learning occurs in compound settings, and these settings work in unison for child development. Aljabreen (2017) complements Prokop (2003) in explaining that similar to other nations, a plethora of educational resources, such as formal institutions of learning,
the institution of the home, community processes, and educators’ personal endeavors, have been historically involved in providing educational care for the young Saudi learner. The school, home, and society have been participating in learning, creating a spirit of exploration, and discovery in young Saudi children.

Furthermore, Saudi early childhood education is noted by Al-Mogbel (2014) to be a critical element of SA childhood development. He argues, “The importance of pre-primary education lies in its being the foundational stage for all other stages, wherein the ability to learn, to control movement, to control thoughts, to express emotions and to adjust socially are the basis for future education” (p. 284). Whereas Al-Mogbel (2014) focuses on the skills and abilities for development. Badawood (2006) focuses on the timing of developmental educational elements of interest. For example, Badawood notes that the Saudi education system relies on a notion that at the early learners’ level, they initially become interested in structured playful activities, reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as collaborative and individualized tasks, and even exposure to higher-level education such as at the primary level.

Arguably, the child developmental philosophy undergirding Saudi’s early childhood education curriculum is broadly on par with other developing countries. Faragi (2009) discusses the broad goals of this philosophy translated to objectives, many of which continue to be based on the Ministry of Education 1970 documents as (a) to direct children in and give them the opportunity to exercise sensory development, supporting healthy habits of activity, and building strong bodies; (b) to teach children to enjoy being with, collaborating with, and sharing with other children; (c) to care for the children’s moral, mental, and physical growth; and (d) to prepare the child for the elementary school environment, introduce social skills, language, age-appropriate information,
and academic subjects. Thomas (2003) describes the emphases of the Saudi preschool philosophy lying in (a) the development of physical, mental, psychological, and social learning; (b) the inclusion of an abundance of experiences and activities (especially hands-on, kinetic learning), which young children can absorb and understand; and (c) a focus on the present and future of the child.

However, as was mentioned earlier and as Sedgwick (2001) explains two elements of Saudi early learner curriculum that differ from curricula common in developed nations (a) the assimilation of Islamic learning as the national dogma, faith, basis of ethics, and center of the legal system, and (b) the learning of Arabic language, including official practice to facilitate the comprehension of the Qu’ran. In comparison with Turkey, although 98% of Turks are Muslims, and sociocultural norms are heavily influenced by Islam, religion is not an integral part of education. There is a stark separation of Turkish religion and education (Aura et al., 2007; McMullen et al., 2005). Turkish Educational guidelines are found to be consistent with the philosophy of DAP (Erdiller & McMullen, 2003; McMullen et al., 2005).

**Gender Segregation**

As a conservative and religious society, Saudi Arabia focuses on gender roles as directed by religious laws. This factor, when compared to other less conservative and religious societies, plays a significant role in how play is organized both in schools and at home. In Saudi kindergartens, the instructional staff are single-gender female. Male students leave these schools at the age of seven to enroll in all-boys schools with single-gendered male teachers. These gender-based arrangements compel a gender-segregated educational system. In 1945, the Saudi education system was predominantly accessible only for male children from wealthy families. After a decade,
in 1964, females were allowed to go to all-girls schools (Rabaah, Doaa & Asma, 2016). Today, schools remain segregated by teacher and student gender after age seven.

**Rough-and-Tumble Play**

Rough-and-tumble (R & T) play can be characterized as behavior that many young children engage in both at home and school. R & T play in the literature has taken on several different names. Kamii & DeVries (1978) defined R & T play as “physical activity”, Carlson (2011) as “big body play,” and “physical play” by Colwell & Lindsey (2005). Pellegrini (1998) wrote that the concept of “rough-and-tumble” was first used by Harlow, a social and behavioral scientist in the early 1960s, in his discussion about rhesus monkeys and social play. The social activities of these monkeys were compared by Harlow to the social activities of pre-school children, as they both involved soft-handed hits, high-energy wrestling, and overstated gestures and movements (Pellegrini, 1998).

The observable physical behaviors of R & T play are vigorous, as it involves intense, full-body moves that are often associated with wrestling, grappling, chasing, climbing, and tumbling (Carlson, 2011a; Carlson, 2011b; Pellegrini & Smith, 1998; Peterson, Madsen, San Miguel, & Jang, 2018; Tannock, 2011). R & T play has also been observed to include a great deal of laughter (Kamii & DeVries, 1978). Rough-and-tumble play is considered to be a dynamic and lively way to engage in social activity, particularly in early childhood, and may defy or reinforce contextual rules put into place by cultural norms. Pretend play is often a key element in R & T play, through which children may accept or reject local practices and traditions (Rogoff, 2003).

R & T shares characteristics of play in general, in that it may provide an opportunity for immediate feedback and collaborative skill development between children and groups of children.
Through play, children are able to test their interaction skills with a measure of independence (Jarvis, 2006). Interestingly, this form of shared learning often results in culture creation, as opposed to purely transmission of culture. (Bjorklund & Pellegrini, 2002, p.201). R & T play, whether undertaken by mixed or single-gender groups, puts children into authentic situations where they can simultaneously practice spontaneous, autonomous, competitive and cooperative interaction, developing many of the complex social skills that fundamentally underpin adult life (Jarvis, 2006). Feedback emerging from the reactions of players gives children opportunities to independently problem-solve and autonomously self-correct in order to remain within group activities (Jarvis, 2006).

R & T play is sometimes met with controversy when considering aggression and play. Playful aggression is defined as, “verbally and physically cooperative play behavior involving at least two children, where all participants enjoyably and voluntarily engage in reciprocal role-playing that includes aggressive make-believe themes, actions, and words; yet lacks intent to harm either emotionally or physically” (Hart & Nagel, 2017, p. 43). For this reason, R & T play is categorized as a form of playful aggression due to its use of dramatic role-play, role reciprocity, and intent to do no harm.

From a biological perspective, playful aggression has been shown to be a beneficial type of social play involving complex biophysiological processes that helps to develop brain (Fry, 2014; Hart & Nagel, 2017). Brain development is beneficial for growing children who are learning to control their bodies and emotions. Likewise, playful aggression helps children practice spontaneous and autonomous behaviors that support competition and cooperation—two actions that foster social skills development (Chmelynski, 2006; Jarvis, 2007; Peterson, Madsen, Miguel,
Consequently, the literature appears to call for the encouragement of young students’ playful aggression as it may augment optimal development in the areas of cognition, social interaction, physical development, and communication.

In the discernment of R & T play, observation of a child’s facial expressions is an important aspect of identifying if a child is enjoying rough-and-tumble play. Best practices in play provide guidance that if a child has a facial expression of joy, that expression likely aligns with their willingness to join and sustain the play (Carlson, 2011; Reed & Brown, 2000). Children often show specific behavior while playing in outdoor settings. For instance, during R & T play, they show certain behaviors such as running, open-ended slapping, pushing, loud talking, hitting, chasing kicking, and jumping (Tannock, 2008). These behaviors are often considered to be a sign of physical aggression by some early childhood educators. In the past, NAEYC has publicly discouraged R & T play for children who are six years old and below (Bredekamp, 1986). Recently, however, NAEYC recognized that rough-and-tumble play supports socializing and learning as children play and invent ways to interact with their peers (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Carlson, 2011). For teachers, having an awareness of children’s play characterizations during R & T play can be important to appropriate supervision to assure playful aggression versus physical violence.

**Function**

Farmer, Fitzgerald, Williams, Mann, Schofield, McPhee, & Taylor (2017) relied on a plethora of studies and findings (Burdette & Whitaker, 2005; Fisher, 1992; Little & Wyver, 2008; Milteer & Ginsburg, 2012) to establish the concept that plays constructively affect the development of children, particularly in cognitive, social, and emotional ways, and suggest that
play ought to be varied, full of imagination and that children should be gradually exposed to opportunities for ‘risky’ play that includes rough-and-tumble. The function of R & T play thus may be considered as critical whole-child development.

Huber (2017) argued that while teaching children to move is not required, they need to move if they are to be taught. He further argued that children are born to move, and as the repetitive movement becomes automatic, they must have the freedom to move, and especially in early learning programs, to be allowed to express themselves with the use of their body with the freedom to sit or stand to participate in activities. Huber (2017) advocates R & T play as he also perceives it as an embracing activity in allowing children to show affection through hugs and cuddles, which in turn promote social bonding. Children’s movement is the basis for both their exploration and expression (Carlson, 2011; Negal & Hart, 2017). They learn much about themselves, particularly their physical capabilities and limitations (Carlson, 2011; Negal & Hart, 2017). They learn to communicate within their environments by expression of movement and sound (Carlson, 2011; Negal & Hart, 2017).

Both Huber (2017) and Farmer et al. (2017) place emphasis on the emerging culture of little or no movement in children’s learning environment. According to Huber, Lack of movement in early childhood undervalues R & T play. Consistent with Smith (1998), Falmer perceives lack of movement as nothing more than risk-aversion in institutional settings.

Benefits

Recent studies investigating play in schools reveal multiple benefits for both students and teachers. In a 2017 study involving 18 schools conducted by Farmer et al., researchers described the benefits of unrestricted (rule-free) play as improved behavior and accountability, increased
positive collaboration with peers, and increased self-confidence. 50% of the participating schools reported a more relaxed playground atmosphere (Farmer et al., 2017). Teachers at the study schools roamed in the playground in case there was a need to end an argument, or if an accident occurred, and in so doing, the children were permitted to engage in their own decision-making process (Farmer et al., 2017). An interesting outcome of the allowance of rules-free play is the need for fewer teachers to be on playground duty (Farmer et al., 2017). Researchers concluded this was due to children being more engaged, and a decrease in bullying and conflicts. In addition, 50% of participating schools reported that since the implementation of rule-free play, teachers perceived the children as more physically active during playground time (Farmer et al., 2017). One respondent reported that because of improved fitness, children were more prepared for a school camp, “…we have noticed that our children…are much fitter as a general group, and we’re only well, we’re only having to do two walks [to prepare for camp] this year instead of four” (Palmer, 2017, p.249).

Huber’s (2017) constructs regarding personal and interpersonal development during play, support the outcomes of the Farmer et al.’s (2017) study in reference to the development of self-management skills through play. Huber argues when engaged in intensive activity or arousal, followed by a period of low intensity or arousal, children are able to better self-regulate during times of lower intensity (2017). The Farmer et al.’s (2017) study gave teachers an opportunity to alter their perceptions of high-intensity play, such as R & T play, as the children showed increased abilities to self-regulate and even care for one another. Huber (2017) also describes that children learn to decode nonverbal cues during rough-and-tumble play, large body play, while through
increased awareness of their bodies and the bodies of their peers, as they bump into one another and fall to the ground (Huber, 2017).

Tannock (2008) asserts that R & T play is conducive to not only social skills attainment but also the academic and executive progress of young children. Logue and Harvey (2010) concur that children make substantial gains in academics while learning about themselves during play. As children make decisions, solve problems, learn about justice, and respond to their peers, they grow intellectually (Logue & Harvey, 2010). In a qualitative study conducted by McClintock and Petty (2015), researchers used several data collection procedures including teacher interviews, documents and photographs, and teacher reflective journal entries to determine how much play contributed to children’s perceived cognitive growth (McClintic & Petty, 2015). They found that early childhood educators involved in the study used play as cognitive ‘bait’ by carefully planning and preparing play environments. The opportunity for play served as a draw and gave children opportunities to develop both physically and intellectually, without the constraints of purely academic time containing rigid instruction (McClintic & Petty, 2015). Likewise, other researchers such as Martin, Farrell, Gray, and Clark (2018), have put a spotlight on how play benefits the intellectual development of young children. These researchers recently studied the effects recess has on kindergarten children’s performance in the United States of America (USA). By surveying teachers, college students, and parents, researchers found that the participants attributed improved cognitive performance in the classroom to higher levels of play intensity during recess (Martin, Farrell, Gray, and Clark, 2018), thereby adding to the growing body of evidence that supports regular intense play in early childhood as academically beneficial.
Gender

Gender has been shown to be an element of interest in the scholarly literature surrounding play. Boys and girls react to each other as they play and engage in learning opportunities. Bosacki et al. (2015) study found that when boys and girls engaged in R & T play, they were more often well liked by their peers in contrast to other types of play. Similarly, Jarvis (2006) studied preschool children and the role of gender in socialization germane to R & T play. In a London school, Jarvis engaged in the observation of children’s behavior during recess to collect data. By organizing the observational data into gender-based groups, made up of subgroups of girls’ play, boys’ play, and mixed-gender play, Jarvis (2015) noticed that more boys than girls tended to engage regularly in R & T play. In the mixed-gender play, the children were observed participating in cooperative rituals that involved social behaviors of both collusion and competition.

Pelleigrini and Permutter (1988) conducted a longitudinal study using videotaping in an elementary school in Atlanta, Georgia. Findings revealed that gender roles during R & T play affect socialization of boys and girls. Boys’ performance particularly exhibited gains in social competence. Veiga, de Leng, Cachucho, Ketelaar, and Rieffe (2017) conducted a study to observe children’s engagement in different kinds of social play, such as fantasy play, role play, exercise play, and R & T play. The researchers reported findings in contrast with prior studies in that R & T play was the most preferred type of play for both boys and girls (Veiga, de Leng, Cachucho, Ketelaar, and Rieffe, 2017). It should be noted that in the investigation of R & T play the setting of indoor or outdoor can be a variable that impacts outcomes. In general, indoor settings yield lowered R & T play preferences by both boys and girls (Veiga, de Leng, Cachucho, Ketelaar, and Rieffe, 2017).
Gender differences with respect to outdoor and physical play in early childhood education settings are prevalent in society. Pellegrini and Smith (1998) mentioned that males often take part in vigorous play more frequently compared to females. In addition, in many of the cultures that have been studied, males surpass females in the frequency of R & T play (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). As noted by Logue and Harvey (2010), boys are more likely than girls to take part in rough-and-tumble play, as well as war-and-weapon play. In addition, boys have been observed to build more disorderly constructs with incongruous and risky elements when compared to girls (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998).

In their research on rough-and-tumble play and fighting, Smith and Lewis (1985) found that out of a total of 145 R & T episodes, 22 involved girls, 84 were conducted by boys, and 39 had participants from both sexes (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). The difference in the frequency of involvement in R & T play between boys and girls is attributed to a variety of causal factors. In their argument, Pellegrini and Smith (1998) note that boys and girls are socialized into distinct and separated worlds that fortify gender differences. More often, girls are closely supervised by their teachers and parents, which may further inhibit their inclinations to engage in physically vigorous behaviors (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998).

Moreover, Gender differences appear across common pretend play themes, such as superhero play, house/family play, play fighting, and chasing games. R & T play is a form of play that is both social and locomotive and can occur in tandem with pretend play, which is parsed into two categories: “thematic fantasy play and social dramatic play” (Storli & Sandester, 2015, p. 204). Boys have been shown to be more apt to engage in pretended roles typified by superhero play involving play fighting, jumping, and running (Storli & Sandester, 2015). Boys and girls too,
display contrasting behavior on the playground (Storli & Sandester, 2015). For instance, boys tend to react physically, as opposed to verbally when compared to girls (Storli & Sandester, 2015). Physical behavior, however, has been shown to be amenable to be channeled into improved social competence, self-regulation, social problem solving, and trust (Hart & Nagel, 2017). During rough-and-tumble play, boys, in particular, read their peer’s facial expressions as they explore social boundaries related to social group placement (Hart & Nagel, 2017). Girls, on the other hand, have been observed to value solitary, pretend to play more than boys (Hart & Tannock, n.d.; Singer & Singer, 2009). These findings suggest a developmental value by gender in terms of R & T play.

Reed and Brown add to the values discussion in (2000) presenting that gender differences appear in terms of how children express caring behaviors. In their argument, boys and girls perceive intimate relations differently, and they interpret connection and expression of care differently (Reed & Brown, 2000). The research also suggests there might be a correlation between rough-and-tumble play and caring friendships (Reed & Brown, 2000). The authors note that rough-and-tumble play presents a great avenue for boys to express intimacy and care for other males in a socially acceptable manner (Reed & Brown, 2000).

In a recent study, Storli and Sandester (2017) explored how early childhood education practitioners perceived rough-and-tumble play in terms of gender. Using a mixed-methods study design, the researchers gathered quantitative data through semi-structured interviews of practitioners (Storli & Sandester, 2017). Findings revealed practitioners had both positive and negatives perceptions of rough-and-tumble play, and they did not discriminate based on gender when allowing children to engage in R & T play, especially outdoors (Storli & Sandester, 2017).
Implementation

Sandseter (2009) defines risky-play as, “thrilling and exciting forms of play that involve a risk of physical injury” (p. 3). Farmer et al. (2017) relies on Sandester’s description and a plethora of additional research (Clements, 2004; Santos, Pizarro, Mota, & Marques, 2013; Veitch, Bagley, Ball, & Salmon, 2006), to articulate parent and teacher concerns about risky-play, particularly rough-and-tumble (R&T) play. In a study on risky-play involving the parents of children in 18 different schools, Farmer et al. (2017) found that parents worry about traffic and unknown persons who could abduct or otherwise abuse their children they cannot sit and watch them play. Parental concerns also surfaced about the possibility of physical injury. Farmer et al. (2017) displayed parental concerns evidencing that in many cases, children who are sheltered and possibly overprotected, mature to be less self-determined or self-regulated, and lose a measure of the ability to hone skills and/or acquire mastery of skills involved in free play.

Farmer et al. (2017) also relies on research findings (Bundy et al., 2009; Evans, 1994; Niehues, Bundy, Broom, Tranter, Ragen, & Engelen, 2013), to set forth that another challenge to implement R & T play is educators’ collective perceptions of both a duty to care and a sense of accountability for other people’s children. Farmer cites Gill (2007) and Little and Wyver (2008) in explaining that teacher perceptions of R & T play can lead to the removal of playground equipment to thwart potential liability and litigation should children be injured on the school playground.

The concerns of parents and teachers are not surprising, and perhaps universal, which may be one reason there is a paucity of additional literature on how early childhood educators perceive risky play or rough-and-tumble play (Hill & Bundy, 2014). There is little available information on
how early childhood educators perceive R & T play. Farmer et al. (2017) echoes Little, Sandseter, and Wyver’s (2012) belief that cultural differences may very well exist for risky play such as R & T play aversion in early childhood educators across varying nations. Consistent with Little and Sweller (2015), Farmer et al. (2017) stated that there is no doubt that teacher support, together with accessibility to playgrounds are significant elements in stimulating increased R & T play.

Bundy et al. (2009) explored the perceptions of early childhood educators and teacher support. The study showed teacher and staff concern over the possibility of increased risk given R & T play. In the Sydney Playground study (Bundy et al., 2009; Bundy et al., 2011), the aim was to increase risk by adding children’s playthings consisting of tires, logs, tarpaulins, and boxes, and objects with no worth or obvious function. The study focused on changing the way adults perceived and assessed the actual risk involved in risky play. In so doing, researchers made teachers aware of the benefits of risk-taking for children. Benefits included increased opportunities for complex decision-making in an environment that provided a wider variety of choices (Bundy et al., 2009; Bundy et al., 2011).

Educators in the pilot study (Bundy et al., 2009) conveyed that placing the lost objects such as tires, logs, tarpaulins, and boxes, in the playground resulted in increased children’s play, and increased play that was more creative and socially-oriented. Despite the positive outcomes for children, however, the loose objects increased risks, which caused some degree of anxiety for the teachers (Bundy et al., 2009). Educators conveyed fear of prospective injury and the potential of being sued if an injury occurred (Bundy et al., 2009). Nevertheless, educators had the ability to exercise risk management by finding productive ways to cope with their fear through direct intervening in physically dangerous play, removing lose objects, or decreasing the number of
children in overcrowded areas (Bundy et al., 2009; Carlson, 2011; Huber, 2017). Through the experiment, educators grew an awareness that children engaged in risk-mediation by exercising caution, looking out for other children, and learning from past experiences (Bundy et al., 2009). Attitude-shifting in educators towards play and away from a direct observation and a ‘helicoptering’ approach to one that is more relaxed and permissive was also emphasized (Farmer et al., 2017). Although there was initial concern about the lenient attitude towards play, educators quickly became aware that the children can manage their affairs and learn valuable life lessons in the process. Farmer et al. (2017) reported that one educator mentioned:

It was interesting that…one or two people again were a little bit, ‘Ooh’…cause one child got wiped out by a tire. But then do you ban the whole thing because someone got hit by a tire? No, everyone just after that knew to look…watch out for the tires. And I mean it was wonderful…. (p. 246)

As loose parts required extra consideration of storage and maintenance, that element became challenging. For example, boxes and ropes may not be as long-lasting as other equipment and may need to be changed regularly based on wear and tear. Because schools desired to store items at the end of the day so that they would not be accessible after school hours, storage became essential. Although the participating schools were in lower socioeconomic locations, some administrators were mainly anxious about vandalism and graffiti. For instance, one of the participating schools clearly expressed its discomfort with implementing loose parts, particularly because a tire tower had been set on fire. Administrators and teachers perceived loose parts as a potential attraction to similar, unwanted, destructive behavior to the school. Then there was the additional dilemma involving bringing loose parts into the play area without also introducing usage rules while perceiving that more rules would cancel out the essence of play:
You need to get the right stuff and then it’s got to be in a safe environment of that they actually are fence posts or whatever you’re using, not just a piece of timber somewhere. So there’s a few things that we’d have to watch . . . Because if you bring in something like that and have to bring a whole pile of rules with it, it’s defeating its own purpose. (Farmer et al., 2017; p. 248)

Nevertheless, while some schools expressed the practical challenges of incorporating loose parts, other schools also articulated the positive outcomes of their use, such as social and imaginative play:

The tires are the perfect example of loose parts. I walked around and they had them all arranged over in the corner here and they were all sitting in them. And I said, ‘Girls, what are you doing?’ and they said, ‘We’re just pretending we’re in a pool.’ And so . . . it was just . . . it was lovely. So they’re very creative. I mean the sticks…. I mean who knew that sticks would become so valuable. (Farmer et al., 2017, p.248)

A team effort was a really positive part of some schools’ experience. When enthusiasm waned in some members, others could take over. Many people taking responsibility for the school’s plan also created a shared goal and feeling of achievement. Educators are busy people with many demands on their to-do list. To maintain the momentum in making changes it was necessary to have a team and to be able to delegate tasks. It “… is fantastic for organizing people. She sees a job and she does it. She’s very, very impressive” (Farmer et al., 2017; p.249).

**Play and Culture**

Play and culture have been a long-standing topic in the related literature. Cole, Hakkarainen, and Bredikyte (2010) define culture as “historically accumulated knowledge, tools, and attitudes that pervade the child’s proximal ecology, including the cultural ‘practices’ of the nuclear family members and other kin” (Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development [online], p. 4). Long (2013) explains that culture is adaptable or adjustable, and therefore members of a society are also flexible and can be so at the three intersections of individual, family, and society.
Roopnarine and Johnson (1994) state that “children’s play…is an outcome of being a participant within a particular culture or subcultural milieu.”

Frost (2010) as well as Rogoff (2003), support the above definitions by suggesting that culture refers to generational learned behavior imparted and developed on three planes and through the various activities including religion and schooling. People, therefore, go through a cultural socialization process that is intentional and unintentional. In this way, societal beliefs, perceptions, opinions, and philosophies are formed and become habits. Long (2013) explains that in order to fully comprehend the nature of play in the learning process of children, culture must be given significant attention. The context of culture must be clearly understood so as to make informed decisions about the prominence of play in early learners’ holistic development. L’Abate (2009) explains that from culture to culture, the significance of play is perceived differently and replicates the customs of a society. Because culture is the foundation upon which a nation is established, it plays a fundamental role in all aspects of the development and sustenance of that society.

Rough-and-Tumble Play and Culture

Rough-and-Tumble Play (R & T) from a sociocultural perspective could be defined as a “cultural tool” (Rogoff, 2003). Cultural tools also include diagrams, language, artwork, signals, etc. (Robbins, 2003). As Robbins (2005) shared, cultural tools are of great value during communication and the coordination of sociocultural activities. Robbins (2005) states, “tools cannot be separated from the activity in which they are embedded, from the thinking of the child, or from the meaning, purpose, relevance, and value being appropriated to them by the child and others” (p.146).
In many cultures, R & T has been generally accepted as a tool to pass on traditional artifacts. In Japanese society, these artifacts include traditional children’s games such as the Sumo wrestlers fight (Trawick-Smith, 2010). In Africa, children often engage in hunting and spear shooting activities (Lew-Levy et al., 2017), and in Jamaica, capture the bull is a popular child’s game handed down through generational R & T play (Murphy, 2002). These examples of R & T play arguably allow for young children to positively perceive contextualized cultural history, language, and traditions. As such, children are able to explore and gain access to their world in a sociocultural setting. Moreover, such plays engender cognitive, social, and physical skill development that intersects with the individual and community role expectations of a given society. Robbins (2005) summarized that these role expectations, “are deeply interwoven into the society’s social cultural activity” (p. 147).
Chapter Three: Methods and Procedures

The purpose of this study was to explore early childhood educators’ perceptions of Rough-and-Tumble (R&T) play in a kindergarten in urban Saudi Arabia. This study describes, explains, and enhances, understandings of teacher-perceptions, beliefs, and practices regarding R & T play in SA by providing insight into how and why those beliefs are formed. The research question that guided this study was: What are Saudi early childhood education teachers’ perspectives of rough and tumble play? In this chapter, the details of the design of the study, the methods used to undertake the study, and the procedures used to conduct the study are presented. This chapter also provides details regarding context, participants, and the procedures used for data collection and data analysis.

Methods

Lichtman (2013) opines that the key objective of using qualitative research is to elucidate, comprehend, and deduce the interactions and experiences of individuals in terms of their cultural backgrounds. In other words, many researchers deliberately decide to use qualitative research to understand the meanings people have constructed based upon their experiences. As Hatch (2002) validates, the ultimate objective of qualitative research is to have an understanding of the world based on the views of those living in it. To understand the perspectives of the study participants and the meanings they have constructed, the qualitative researcher works towards an important
purpose, which is to “unearth, extract, and interpret,” meaning and experience (Merriam, 2002, p.39).

Through various methodology and methods, qualitative research often yields thick and vivid descriptions that demonstrate the firsthand experiences of participants relevant to the topic of study. In other words, a qualitative research design pronounces the participants’ big picture in terms of their social context, sans a motive of projecting and controlling participants’ experiences and meaning-making process (Merriam, 2009). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), arriving at captivating descriptions requires the researcher to address epistemological deductions of what knowledge entails and how it is acquired. The knowledge required for this study focused on the nature of the perceptions and beliefs held by teachers in regard to rough-and-tumble play. Through the use of multiple methods, including a semi-structured interview, photo-elicitation, and participant-generated drawings, I gained several vantage points on the participants’ experiences and interactions (Patton, 2002). I employed the semi-structured interview to allow for flexibility in wording and order of my questions, as well as for follow up and follow along, with the participants’ trains of thought (Creswell, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Patton (2002) mentioned that the semi-structured interview provides a chance to delve into data by exploring the interviewees’ personal feelings, thoughts, and perspectives. As a second method, photo-elicitation was an important aspect of the interview sessions with the participants because it prompted different kinds of talk and provided distinctive insights into the social phenomena of R & T play (Harper, 2002; Rose, 2016; Thomas, 2003). I employed participant-generated drawings to delve further into the teacher participants’ thoughts about R & T play.
Finally, during all three of the approaches noted above, I used a researcher’s journal (field notes) to capture and record the responses generated through formal interviewing and causal conversations (Patton, 2002). Rogoff (2008) mentioned that institutional rules and practices are often a result of social and cultural norms. By extracting details from Saudi teachers’ perceptions of rough-and-tumble play through multiple methods, I gained information about cultural norms such as the social and religious mandates that influence Saudi teachers’ beliefs regarding R & T play.

**Context of the Study**

When it came to selecting a school at which to conduct my study, I was presented with the reality of conducting interviews to gain individual perspectives, along with taking photos for reproduction elsewhere, in a conservative and highly-regulated society. I also faced a challenge in locating a school with an early childhood program that had a defined play area with play equipment. Kindergartens are currently not a part of the compulsory education requirement in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, public schools that offer these programs are limited. Many schools have play areas that consist of sand only. In those situations, there is generally a large bin with beach type toys that children play with. Traditionally, there are strict rules for sand play in Saudi and it is usually restricted to sedentary manipulation of the sand to build things, sift, and observe. This led me to look for schools with playground space containing equipment and a flooring surface, as sand play rules include no running, no throwing, and no rolling around. Rough-and-Tumble play is partly constituent of running and rolling, and other forms of play with ground contact. The research questions would not be able to be investigated in a school with a play setting of sand only.
In addition, it should be noted that for private schools in urban areas, the school facilities are typically rented, and this is common practice in SA. Private schools rent small facilities that may have previously been residential in use, to keep operational costs down. These buildings are often large villas and, therefore, are not equipped with many customary design and safety elements of a location that has been built for the education of young children. Vision 2030, a part of the Saudi government’s efforts to improve education includes lower cost, larger and more open areas, new school buildings for schools that serve young children (Saudi vision 2030, 2016). Private schools may be able to, in the future, take advantage of loans to build larger and more open facilities for early childhood.

In my initial internet search, I looked for schools offering early childhood programs located within ten miles of my home, because I would have to travel to meet the teachers for interviews. My search focused on the area west of the capital city of Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. I found three schools, one public and two private. I then searched each school’s website for images of the play space, although not all schools had images available for viewing. I found two schools with images to confirm they had a suitable play space. I emailed each school to introduce myself and the study, asking for permission to speak to them about the possibility of conducting my study at their location. One of the two schools I emailed did not respond, so I followed up with a phone call and left a voice message. The other school declined to allow me to conduct the study at their location due to the fact that I would be taking photos. I offered that I could come to the school after all students and teachers had gone home for the day, however, I was told that I would not be allowed to take photos. No reason was given to me regarding the photo-taking rules.
In my efforts to secure a study site in Saudi Arabia while I was physically located in the United States, I sent an in-person proxy to the school where I had left a voice mail, to inquire about myself and the study. In SA, it is sometimes easier to get things done on a face-to-face personal level. The proxy met briefly with the principal of the school and there was an agreement made that I could follow up that meeting with an email sharing more of the methodology of the study. After a week, the principal granted me the permission to conduct the study at Almnahel private school.

Almnahel is located in a middle-class neighborhood. Private schools that rent space in middle-class neighborhoods typically rent former residences, and those residences vary in size. Almnahel’s neighborhood is suffering from urban overcrowding, where open spaces are severely limited and/or expensive to rent. Private school play spaces vary significantly in size. However, the more expensive the school tuition, the bigger and more features one might find in the play area, including grass. Grass is an expensive commodity in SA due to the weather and maintenance costs of grass. In comparison with a public school in the same area that offers an early childhood program, Almnahel students have a smaller play space, but with perhaps better and more play equipment. Saudi education centers restrict access to parents and staff, as well as offer limited photographs publicly available on the internet of the school spaces. For this reason, it was difficult to find actual comparisons, and I made use of my personal experience as a former early childhood teacher in SA to describe the typical differences between public and private school play spaces.

Almnahel serves a student population from pre-kindergarten to third grade. At the time of the study, the school had four prekindergartens and two kindergarten classes. Thus, four teachers served as the target population for this study. A full-time work schedules at Almnahel begins at 7:00 am and ends at noon. The students eat breakfast at school, no other meals. The teachers who
participated in this study reported that there are approximately 25 to 30 minutes per day spent with children at recess. The daily schedule for prekindergarten and kindergarten classes at this particular school consists of core academic subjects taught prior to recess consisting of the Arabic language, math, centers, and multidisciplinary learning, referred to as circle time.

Ultimately, the selection of Almnahel school was what Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim (2016) refer to as typical case purposive sampling within a qualitative study. The authors note that typical case (TCS) purposive samples are nonrandom, and practical when random sampling is not possible. To have an opportunity to complete this study, a nonrandom TCS process was used to select the school site. Almnahel private school is an average representation of a private school program within the variability inherent to private school programs. Other factors leading to the choice of a TCS purposive site selection were accessibility, proximity to my home base during the study, and willingness to participate. The implications of purposive sampling include a cascading effect purposive sampling of participants.

**Study Participants**

In this study, I used purposeful sampling to select potential study participants (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) mentioned that a qualitative inquiry focuses on small samples to permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon in depth. Therefore, my sampling relied on small numbers as I sought to get in-depth details of the early education teachers’ perceptions of rough and tumble play in the teaching and learning process.

To decide how many participants to choose, I referred to Marshall (1996), who indicated that selecting a sample size depends on the research questions. He illustrated that when research questions are specific and narrow, small sample size is adequate (Marshall, 1996). Therefore, the
participants of this study were four female eligible teachers, that number equating to all of the early childhood teachers at the selected school. The teachers were all female given the Saudi Early Childhood Education (ECE) system dictates that teachers in both public and private schools shall be female and that no male can study or major in early childhood education (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016).

The following teacher selection criteria were used: First, the teacher will hold a degree in early childhood education (ECE), as preschool teachers who have a degree in ECE are more knowledgeable and more involved with children than those without a degree (Aljabreen & Lash, 2016). This criterion would only allow teachers with formal knowledge and experience with young children to participate, and work to eliminate participants who did not have direct interaction with young children. Second, each participant had at least two years of experience teaching kindergarten age, as time spent teaching shapes teacher viewpoints on the actual lived experience of teaching.

My recruitment strategies were guided by personal contacts.

First, I contacted the Principal to get permission to conduct the interview. I provided the administrator with the appropriate information and documents, such as the research topic, purpose, significance of the study, duration of the interview, and criteria for participation. Based on the Principals’ positive response and support for the study, I emailed a Letter of Invitation (see appendix E) to each teacher to invite them to the study. The Invitation Letter provided detailed information concerning the study, including the research topic, purpose, significance, methods, place, time, and duration of the interviews, and confidentiality of participation. Teachers were requested to respond via email by asking for more information, clarity, and/or acceptance or declination to participate. Those teachers who showed interest and indicated a willingness to
participate in the study signed a hard copy consent when we met for the interview sessions. There was no promise of remuneration for participation, nor negative work outcomes if a teacher chose not to participate.

All four of the participants who responded, met the criteria, and participated in this study. The participants took part in this study anonymously. The school too is hereby referred to in pseudonym as, “Almnahel school”. Each of the four participants was a teacher at Almnahel for at least two years, and all held a certificate in early childhood education at the time of the interviews, which is a requirement to teach young children in KSA. Three of the teachers taught in same age range, with children from five to six. One teacher taught younger children from three and one half, to four.

**Procedures of the Study**

Prior to the data collection, I contacted the principal of a preschool located in west of the capital city of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh by email, to explain the study and invite educators from the school to participate. I included the purpose of the study, the criteria for teacher participation, and the consent form in the Arabic language. Four early childhood teachers agreed and were willing to participate in face-to-face interviews with me. All four completed both parts of the interview session with three teachers completing the interviews in one sitting, and one teacher meeting with me in two different days.

Once I arrived in Saudi Arabia from the United States on March 9, 2020, the school where the interviews were to take place was closed due to the global pandemic of COVID-19. Still, the principal of the school was proactive in helping me to communicate with the participants by providing me with the teachers’ contact information, and giving me written permission to contact
each teacher to set an alternative day, time, and location to conduct the interviews. The original location for the interviews was to be the school. I was also allowed to enter the school grounds for a short period of time to take digital photographs of the outdoor play area. I intended to use the photos in the photo-elicitation interviews with the participants. School leadership and the Saudi government deemed it safe for people to have face-to-face contact while maintaining social distancing, so I asked each teacher to choose a date, time, and location that was convenient for her interview.

The interviews were to have taken place over two sessions in an available room at Almnahel school. Given that the school grounds were closed, and there was a growing uneasiness amongst people about conducting activities of everyday life, I collapsed the interview plan from two sessions to one session, for those participants who preferred to meet in one session to complete the study. The interviews took place from Thursday, March 12, 2020, through Sunday, March 22, 2020, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The interviews were conducted at local coffee houses (café’s) in proximity to the participants’ houses.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

For the purpose of this study, the interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions to obtain more comprehensive responses as supported by Rubin and Rubin (2002). Through the use of open-ended questions, I obtained deeper and richer information and gained clarification from the participants as validated by (Dutton et al., 2010). I integrated both visual and language-based methods of gathering information in the semi-structured interview procedure. I used the semi-structured interview as the main method of data collection in this study and to explore teachers’ perceptions of rough-and-tumble (R&T) play, and to provide data to consider
the reality constructed by the participants. The interviews gave the participants an opportunity to express their views of the situations they encountered in terms of R & T play (Hines, 2016; Punch, 2009). Punch (2009) validates the interview methodology as necessary to comprehend how individuals derive meaning out of the situations and social experiences. Interviews are crucial tools because researchers can collect in-depth qualitative data from the participants about their viewpoints, skills, and knowledge (Castillo & Hines, 2016). Janesick (2011) and Rubin and Rubin (2005) recommend the use of interview guides which includes a set of questions to be asked during the interview. I followed an institutional review board, pre-approved interview guide, which is termed the interview protocol, in this study.

As previously stated, the interviews consisted of a two-part, semi-structured session with study participants, and digital photographs used in the photo-elicitation portion of the interview session. The data collection process began immediately after receiving institutional review board (IRB) approval of the study, methods, and protocols. Through the use of photo-elicitation, different kinds of talk and insights into social phenomena emerged (Rose, 2016). Moreover, in the photo-interviews, there was a reduced need for eye contact and the “potential tension generated by face-to-face contact [was] lessened by mutual gazing at a photograph” (Tinkler, 2013). The interview protocol used in the study contained multiple sets of questions. The first part of the semi-structured interview process included general and open-ended questions as follows, as well as the use of participant-generated drawings, a non-language based visual method:

1. Tell me about yourself as a teacher, what do you enjoy most and what are your challenges?
2. Tell me about your teaching experience, what ages have you taught, how long have you been teaching?
3. To what training programs in early childhood education did you have access? (I am seeking information on how cultural norms impacted access on qualifications because only female teachers are allowed in early education)

Next, I asked questions related to play, specifically physical outdoor play, and the cultural context of the play. I began with a general “grand tour” question intended to get the interviewees broadly talk about the topic (Lichtman, 2013).

4. How would you describe play?

5. What are some of the things you value about play and learning?

Having establishment rapport through part one of the first interview, Participant-generated drawing commenced. Kortegast et al., (2019) defined drawing as a participant-generated visual method (PGVM). PGVMs are reflective tools wherein participants create visuals that expand the possibilities for the knowledge-acquisition process (Kortegast et. al, 2019). Given the importance of culture in my study, I asked a group of questions related to physical outdoor play and the cultural context that may emerge in part, through participant-generated visual data (Prosser & Loxley, 2008).

Rogoff (2008) asserted that institutional rules and practices are often the result of social and cultural norms. Therefore, I posed a group of more specific or concrete example questions related to physical outdoor play and the cultural context that may emerge through participant-generated visual data (Prosser & Loxley, 2008).

Participant-generated visual methods inspire the participants, provide stimuli reinforcement, creates a connection with the participants, and permits them to self-select relative
occurrences from their own experiences relevant to the aspects of Rough-and-Tumble play being investigated (Boucher, 2018).

Interpretation of the participant-generated visual data occurred by asking the interviewees to describe the meaning of their drawings. According to Prosser (2008), asking participants to describe their drawings is one way to interpret the data. Another approach is to use what Prosser calls, “close reading” (2008). The close reading approach uses researcher’s knowledge to co-construct the meaning (Prosser, 2008). The script I used for the participant-generated drawing portion of the interview appears below:

1. Researcher: I would like you to draw two things. On one half of this paper, please draw what comes to your mind when you think of R & T play. On the other half, please draw a non-example of R & T play. (Participants will be provided with blank white papers and a pencil with an eraser). When each participant indicated her drawing was complete, I sought the interpretation of the drawing by asking the participants to describe its meaning. Next, I transitioned from drawing back to the semi-structured interview, and asked the following questions:

2. Describe an example of R & T play you’ve seen at school.

3. When you see R & T play, what is your reaction?

4. What do the children normally do when they are outdoors? In what kind of outdoor play do you allow your kids to participate and why?

5. What are some of the things in the school context that shape your perception of R & T play? For example, how do policies, parental expectations, and physical environment influence the amount of outdoor play time in your daily schedule?
6. What policies would you change or seek to improve concerning R & T play? (I am looking for procedures that impact the scope of outdoor play within a Saudi school)?

I then asked follow-up questions based on the responses of the participants that were intended to clarify and/or expand upon a response, or follow an unanticipated path (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Follow-up questions were aimed at extending the depth of the participants’ perspective sharing and exploring relevant concepts or events that emerge in the course of the interview. I probed as needed to ask for elaboration and detail, or to ask for illustrative examples.

**Photo-Elicitation**

The second part of the interview included photo-elicitation. Photo-elicitation has become increasingly valuable and is implicated heavily in the literature as a rigorous method to elicit responses to research questions in educational research (Boucher, 2018; Harper, 2002; Lichtman, 2013;). Harper (2002) defines photo-elicitation as, “the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview” (p. 13). I used a photo-elicitation interview because it fosters varying kinds of talk and promotes varying lenses into social phenomena (Rose, 2016).

The abstract nature of questioning teachers about their perceptions, values, and practices is challenging; however, the use of photo-elicitation interviewing helps to overcome this challenge. It allows teachers to provide rich information with deeper explanations (Harper, 2002; Richard & Lahman, 2015; Tobin, 2011; Torre & Murphy, 2015). It, therefore, helps the participants to express their feelings, which enables their truths, perspectives and feelings to be known (Richard & Lahman, 2015; Torre & Murphy, 2015). It can also prompt teachers to interpret school situations and settings through their eyes (Luttrell, 2010; Meo, 2010; Zenkov et al., 2011). For example, when the participants look at the photographs, they may see R & T play as it will be occurring on
the playground and share their perceptions about the play. They may share their likes and dislikes and the reasons for those feelings, as well as the affordances and constraints of the play.

Consistent with many other researchers (Harper, 1988; Harper, 2002; Torre & Murphy, 2015), Boucher (2018) posit that photographs allow for a more stress-free and rapport-building experience. Boucher (2018) and Harper (1988; 2002) believe that because the brain processes data in visual form, participants become relaxed to acquire a deeper insight into the subject matter instead of looking at the interviewer. For example, when I interviewed the participants, and we discussed the meaning of specific photos, I built a rapport with each of them. Rapport creates a comfortable and trusting relationship between people during the research processes. This strategy also has the effect of raising awareness and provoking action that leads to social and individual change (Richard & Lahman, 2015).

From a cultural perspective, Harper (2002) suggests that photo-elicitation would foster a deeper insight into a different part of human consciousness than when words alone are used in interviews. Photographs become something like a Rorschach inkblot in which people from different worlds pull out meaning based on their respective cultures. This strategy is fostered by the notion that two people can look at identical objects yet see different things. When this happens, the perception can become definitive, as well as compared, and can be understood as socially-constructed notions. In addition, photo-interviews require less need for eye contact, and the potential tension fostered by face-to-face contact is reduced by a mutual focus on a photograph (Tinkler, 2013). It also allows for a deeper connection between the interviewer and the interviewee when photos are examined during an interview (Tinkler, 2013). In this case, photo-elicitation functioned to stimulate the participant's talk regarding their perceptions of rough-and-tumble (R
& T) play. The photo-stimulated account (a means of describing phenomena) encouraged the participants to provide a detailed description of their beliefs and experiences on the subject matter as elicited by the photograph(s) they are viewing (Izumi-Taylor, Ito, & Krisell, 2016; Torre & Murphy, 2015). Along with the images I presented to the participants, I used open-ended questions prompting the participants to describe how they felt as they looked at the images. The participants were not asked to remember past associations (Theobald, 2012).

I conducted the photo-elicitation using visual information based upon two image production approaches as defined in the literature. The two approaches I employed were researcher-found, and researcher-generated visual data (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). Researchers found visual data can vary in format from photographs, digital images, drawings, painting, and other non-language-based media (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). Researchers found visual data should be inherently limited, in terms of available contextual information, as the original creator or mode of capture, time of documentation, and situational and environmental context may be missing from the attached descriptions (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). Researcher-generated visual data, according to Prosser & Loxley (2008) occurs when, “within a research process, researchers create an image (still or moving photography, drawings, paintings, diagrams and so on) and [describe] what kinds of technology are used to produce them” (p.10).

I began the second interview with researcher-found images. I collected the images of Saudi Arabian children engaged in R & T outdoor play. I entered a variety of phrases such as, “rough-and-tumble play in Saudi Arabia, kids playing rough in Saudi Arabia, rough-and-tumble play outdoors in Saudi schools, and rough-and-tumble play young children Saudi Arabia.” These search terms revealed photos of children engaged in R & T play in countries outside of Saudi Arabia,
such as Australia and the United States. After repeated attempts to find images of Saudi Arabian children engaged in R & T play that yielded no results, I changed my search strategy to look for any nationality of children engaged in R & T play.

While I cannot substantiate the limitation per se, my belief is that the lack of images of Saudi Arabian children playing in educational settings may be related to the religious and cultural expectations of our society and a sense of privacy. Female teachers are the only teachers of early childhood (ages three to seven) in SA. Women are also guided by the holy Quran to cover their faces in public. While working at schools, women do not have to cover their faces or wear scarves. Taking photos of children that may capture women without scarves would be considered a violation of cultural norms. Also, as I recollect my time as an early childhood teacher in SA, I recall during picture day, many families who adhere strictly to religious guidance refused to have photos taken of their children.

Given I was unable to locate images of Saudi children engaged in R & T play, I culled images from the following resources: Albany preschool website, Big Body Play by Carlson (2011), and Embracing Rough and Tumble Play by Huber (2017). The selection of Embracing Rough-and-Tumble Play (Huber, 2017) was made in large part due to the author being a long-time classroom teacher, and his self-professed coming of age as a teacher who found value in R & T play as a part of learning and the school day. His book offers dual teacher perspectives and images of R & T play to aid the reader in understanding his perspectives. The second resource, Big Body Play, by Carlson (2011). Dr. Carlson teaches undergraduate pre-service educators, and the book was endorsed and supported by the United States National Association for the Education of Young
Children. This is an important designation as NAEYC is a well-respected early childhood professional and academic practice, policy, and research organization in the United States.

With the research questions at hand to guide selection, I looked through the three resources for images depicting children having vigorous activity and body contact, such as wrestling, chasing, climbing, and play fighting on the preschool playground, in order to elicit teacher perspectives of this type of play. I looked for images that showcase children engaged in different forms of Rough-and-Tumble play.

In total, I compiled 80 photos from these resources. During the image collection process, I eliminated images that showed Rough-and-Tumble play in houses, or with adults, because my research question focuses on the perceptions of teachers about the Rough-and-Tumble play for early learners on playgrounds. The culling process revealed 11 of 80 photos that depicted children engaged in rigorous play on the school playground. The final 11 pictures that were selected showed different forms of Rough-and-Tumble play such as wrestling, chasing, jumping, climbing, and non-aggressive fighting to elicit teachers’ perspectives on R & T play. The photos depict a variety of children groupings to include: single children playing alone, more than one child playing together, and mixed and single-gender groups engaging in R & T play outdoors.

The selected photographs were then made into full-color hard copies before the day of the interview. I enlarged the size of the photos to 11 x 14 while maintaining proportional dimensions. I went to the ‘library store’ in Saudi Arabia and printed all the photos in high-resolution, full-color quality. The selected images were intended to elicit teachers’ perspectives based on a series of open-ended question prompts. For example, do teachers see the depicted play as safe or unsafe,
and why. The images were tied to the research question, adding to the overall study alignment (Jewitt, 2012).

Participants engaged in a three-part photo-elicitation interview. It was important to reduce inherent researcher biases in the selection of the images, by randomizing the presentation of the images to the participants (Lapenta, 2011). The images were randomly ordered by the following process: each image was given a figure number of two through thirteen. The image figure numbers were entered into a random number sequence assignment web application found at https://www.random.org/sequences. The random order was generated on December 31, 2019. The images were numbered two through thirteen to accommodate Figure 1, which is the image of the random generation sequence. The random sequence used to display the images to the participants appears in Figure 1. All of the selected images appear in an image gallery presented on the following page.

**Random Sequence Generator**

Here is your sequence:

```
11
4
12
3
9
5
6
2
10
8
7
```

Timestamp: 2019-12-31 06:39:56 UTC

**Figure 1.** Random Order of Selected Images
Figure 2: Thumbnails of rough and tumble play figures: (a) two males wrestling on a mat, (b) two males wrestling, (c) group tree climbing, (d) three females hanging on bars, (e) two males playing chase, (f) non-aggressive pretend swordplay word play, (g) Group of children engaged in R & T play, (h) group R & T play, (i) two males wrestling, (j) male playing on bars, and (k) girl upside down.


Figures (b, d, e, and i). Adapted from “*Big Body play*” by Carlson (2011). Copyright 2011 by Carlson. Used with permission.

Figures (c, f, h, and j). Adapted from “*Embracing Rough and Tumble Play: Teaching with the Body in Mind*” (Huber, 2017). Copyright 2011 by Redleaf Press. Used with permission.
The photo-elicitation portion of the interview sessions began with me laying out printed hard copy, high quality, and full color images in the random order indicated in Figure 1, on a table near the participant. Figure 3 shows the display teachers saw when they were asked to look at the images.

![Figure 3. Random Display of Images](image)

Each teacher was presented with the same random order, and that same order was reset for each interview. On the back of each image appeared the figure number to aid in reset and in the recording of participants’ perspectives as they self-selected images to discuss. The photo-elicitation portion of the interview occurred directly after rapport-building. There were two prompts involved in the first part of the photo-elicitation interview.

**Prompt 1.** Participants were asked to select three images of play that they would allow on the playground during the school day. Participants were told they can manipulate the images in any way that helps them choose (for instance, making a pile of yes, no, and maybe, as they narrow
the field of 11 images to three). Once the participant made the three selections, the following questions were asked:

1. Could you describe your photo selection process?
2. Please describe each photo, one at a time, that you have selected, sharing your perspectives of what you are seeing.
3. Why would you allow children to engage in this type of play?
4. How do you see this type of play influencing learning?
5. What social or emotional benefits do you see from this type of play?

**Prompt 2.** Select three images of play that you would not allow. Once the participant made the three selections, the following questions were asked:

1. Could you describe your photo selection process?
2. Please describe each photo, one at a time, that you have selected and share your perspectives of what you are seeing.
3. Why would you not allow children to engage in this type of play?
4. What do you notice about the gender of the children in the representations of play in these three images?
5. What can you share with me about gender and play and how it may influence your choice of safe and dangerous play?

**Researcher-Generated Photos**

In addition to using researcher-found photos, I also used researcher-generated photos (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). In these photos, the emphasis was placed on the physical space where outdoor play occurs. I took several photos of the Saudi school playground with no children
displayed in the Image Gallery Two. The playground was that of the participants’ school playground. I obtained the permission to take pictures of the playground and to use those pictures in this study. I protected the identity of the playground as much as possible.

**Figures 4**: Thumbnails of outdoor spaces in Almanhel school: (a) digital photographs of the outdoor spaces for free physical play, (b) sand play, and (c) bike riding at Almanhel school, taken March 2020, by Rana Alghamdi, the primary investigator. Photographed by permission of Almanhel school.

Having presented the three school playground photos to each participant, I asked the participants the following questions:

1. How do the ground material and amount of space for play influence R & T play?
2. Are there any obstacles presented on your playground for R & T Play?
3. If you could change anything about the play space, what would that be?

At the end of the second interview, I reminded each participant of the member check process. I also showed my appreciation for study participation by expressing gratitude. The interviews were conducted after getting IRB approval and permission from the school in Saudi
Arabia that allowed me to conduct the interview with the teachers. Prior to the interviews, I reiterated the purpose of the study and the length of the interview to the participants.

Data Capture

To analyze the gleaned data, I followed the suggestions by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). I audio-recorded the interview by using a digital recording device, with participants’ permission. I used a journal to record observations while I was interviewing. For example, I noted body language, voice inflection, and facial expression. To prevent interviewees’ distractions with excessive note-taking, I employed active listening in order to maintain the very meanings that are crucial to the topic and the interview objectives (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. Then, the interviews were transcribed verbatim in Microsoft Word. I transcribed each interview in Arabic and sent them by email to each participant for member check (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Upon the completion of member check, each participant returned an email to me to make the necessary changes. Utilizing a member check strategy, I verified the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Following the data collection process, each participant helped to confirm the accuracy of the interview transcription (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Shenton, 2004). There were no changes requested by the participants to the transcripts.

While I was primarily focused on responsive engagement with the interviewee, I used a field journal to record my observations while interviewing. For example, I noted body language, voice inflection, and facial expression. To prevent interviewees’ distractions with excessive note-taking, I employed active listening in order to “maintain the very meanings that are crucial to the topic and the interview objective” (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). I transcribed the recorded interviews verbatim, Arabic to Arabic, in Microsoft Word, and filed the dated interview transcript
along with my observation notes, in an electronic file on my password-protected laptop. I then engaged in the second translation of Arabic to English, which I reviewed multiple times in detail to correct or add any meaning lost or added during the transcription process. During the photo-elicitation, I made note of which images each participant chose using image figure numbers located in the back of each image.

Data Analysis

I obtained the results of semi-structured interviews in an orderly fashion and thematically put the responses through analysis. The gist of thematic analysis is to look at the qualitative data thoroughly by systematic, flexible, and useful research tooling (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Also, this analysis helps me identify and describe both explicit and implicit information, such as themes (Mack et al., 2005). Accordingly, all codes are used in the development of themes, which are linked to raw data.

Thematic analyses facilitate themes that are common throughout data sets. I focused on the themes that were germane to my domain of investigation and research. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), thematic analyses are easy, quick methods for making insights and are useful in policy development as a whole. Further, the thematic analysis aids in the summarization of key elements in a data set, while giving a great number of descriptive details. Thematic analyses offer a sophisticated and carefully scrutinized account of project data. These analyses uncover information that can be associated with a variety of theoretical frameworks. For that reason, I used inductive analysis to code data and respond to emergent themes (Krathwohl, 1998). When using inductive coding, researchers look for fundamental meanings of data sets and classify data according to key themes (Thomas, 2003). Research questions guided the course of this study.
together with thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guidelines, there are six important steps: (a) data familiarization, (b) code generation, (c) theme search, (d) theme review, (e) theme definition and naming, and (f) report production.

During phase one, I utilized verbatim transcripts as a way of working with data analyses. I became familiar with the data after data transcription. This process entails multiple readings of every field note, along with the interview transcriptions. Saldana (2009) reports that the process of using field notes and transcriptions creates idea conceptions based upon patterns and meanings. During this phase, I used the Arabic language to transcribe interviews. I had the belief that using English translations might negatively impact the accuracy and credibility of findings. With my stated use of a socio-cultural lens to explore Saudi teachers’ perceptions of Rough-and-Tumble (R & T) play. I assumed I would encounter cultural nuances portrayed through indigenous terms in the interview responses. By reading the interview transcripts closely, I became familiar with the phrasing of interview responses and the dialectical subtleties of each teacher. Next, I identified initial codes and, thereby, immersed myself deeper into the data set. The process of coding comprises text and visual data sets put into small categories in order to find evidence while labeling codes (Creswell, 2013). Using a line-by-line approach for transcribing interview data, I carefully scrutinized the data (Saldana, 2009). I used two approaches of coding known as “Descriptive coding and In Vivo coding” (Saldana, 2009). In Vivo Coding focuses on a word or phrase from a language in a qualitative data set. Whereas, Descriptive Coding involves the summarization of a basic, data passage topic found in a given word or short phrase (Saldana, 2016).

I chose these coding techniques because they align well with qualitative data sources. I used field notes as a way of documenting emergent codes coupled with the In Vivo Coding and
Descriptive Coding techniques. I used manual coding and did not utilize software. I made notations on the transcriptions with a colored highlighter to indicate possible codes. Figure 5 provides an example of the coding process I undertook in Arabic.

**Figure 5.** Arabic Transcript Highlighted for Possible Codes

After coding all of the data, I organized codes in files on my personal computer. The next step was to link the codes with data excerpts and copy data excerpts from transcripts, pasting them on a table next to each code. Figure 6 provides an example of this phase of coding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Vivo Code</th>
<th>Descriptive Code</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Space, floor is rough and concrete</td>
<td></td>
<td>Q: How does the ground material and amount of space of the outdoor playground influence R&amp;T play? A: First of all, the space is small and not suitable for active physical play, such as chasing game. Also, the floor is rough and concrete, and if they fall, they will get injured. So, they are not safe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.** From Arabic to English, Manual Coding, Transferred to a Word Document Table

As a researcher never knows what relevant themes might arise, I chose to code individual excerpts of data hoping to uncover a variety of themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). Thematic analysis
is a flexible process, and researchers find themes that emerge in different ways. Once the data was coded, I organized developed codes and related data codes into themes on a broader level. There are several techniques designed to process and identify themes. Some of these themes include repetitions, categories and typologies, metaphors and analogies, and even transitions. Ryan and Bernard (2003) emphasize that similarities and differences, linguistic connectors, missing data sets, theoretical materials, cutting and sorting, word lists, word co-occurrence, and meta-coding are part of theme identification. The more the same concept appears in the data, the more likely it is a theme (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I employed repetition to help me with theme identification. During repetition, I examined ideas and topics that were repeatedly found in the data texts. Figure 7 provides an example of the coding repetition process I undertook.

**Figure 7. Coding for Repetition**

Having completed the theme identification process, I reviewed and refined themes in order to gather accurate data representations. Then, I placed two themes together for the development of stronger themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) stipulate that simplistic themes are better in most cases because they are not filled with complexity and diversity. Being abstract, themes are connections
to expressions found in texts (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Therefore, I was cautious that the developed themes were simple and clearly represented the data. In addition, at this phase, I assigned clear names. Naming themes can emanate from different sources, such as the researcher, the participants, or the literature (Merriam, 1998). Themes are not the data itself, rather they are concepts indicated by the data. Themes are abstract constructs that connect expressions in texts (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). In this study, the developed themes emerged from the data based on common responses that the participants gave to the interview questions. Figure 8 provides an excerpt on the process I undertook to move from codes to themes. The full representation appears in Figure 8, Chapter Three.

![Figure 8: Codes to Themes](image)

**Figure 8.** Codes to Themes

The last stage of thematic analysis is the written report. This phase takes place once the research has obtained a final and satisfactory theme set. During this phase, I wrote a final report and considered my target audience (Merriam, 1998). Having completed the phase, I analyzed each theme carefully and supported excerpts from the data sets in order to validate the prevalent ones. Then, the member checking process was conducted with the interviewees. I employed Janesick’s (2011) system of analysis: (a) Listing corrections made to transcriptions to ensure that I will not
miss the nuanced expressions of interviewees; (b) sending the file to the participants for review and correction; (c) making the necessary adjustments after the document is returned; (d) removing unimportant discourse and immaterial text; (e) pre-coding the data from the digital recording and field notes; (f) making initial notes to have solid pieces of text from each interview and highlighting to initiate the analysis process; (g) creating the initial codes, and that creation will be the first session for codes identification; (h) Creating the secondary pattern codes, the stage where I will build themes; and (i) reviewing and refining the developed themes to determine if they were relevant to the data. This procedure assisted me in the preservation of trustworthiness within my research. I believe I was conscientious about ethical considerations for qualitative research in preserving the privacy of participants in this study.

The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for knowledge acquisition. I, therefore, hold fidelity to the reliability, understanding, and obligation to moral behavior and activities concerning research (Kelly, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Along with my awareness of ethical issues, my experiences within the Saudi context, and my knowledge of the research topic, question, purpose, significance, and methodology will be decisive aspects in the process of this study. I have had more than seven years of experience as an early childhood educator in Saudi Arabia. Being away from Saudi schools while pursuing doctoral studies in the United States of America equipped me with an arsenal of tools to augment the quality of my inquiry. I also perceived that my familiarity with the context of the inquiry will facilitate the openness of the participants. The participants are highly likely to share their thoughts, beliefs, and experiences with Rough-and-Tumble (R & T) play.
To facilitate ethical requirements, I followed the IRB process including completing the course for social and behavioral researchers and main personnel, and in so obtaining my IRB certificate. As the primary researcher, I believe I was insistent, determined, creative, well-organized, and assiduous, as suggested by (Janesick, 2011), and am willing to share the findings of this study reflecting the participants’ social-cultural environment.

To prepare myself for this role, I completed the necessary academic courses and requirements. I focused on structuring research questions appropriately and practiced interview questions that would explore the thoughts of participants and elicit in-depth and detailed information on the topic of the study. All the practice has enhanced my knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests in designing this interview-based study for my dissertation.

I held motivating expectations for the integration and/or increased integration of Rough-and-Tumble (R & T) play into the Saudi education system. I would love to see Rough-and-Tumble play as a common core in Saudi early education. Although my motivations seem warranted, I am still aware that the level of education, experience, and socio-cultural beliefs of participants as well as Saudi society may initially pose some challenges in its implementation. I am sensitive to the need for understanding Saudi teachers’ perceptions and practices regarding R & T play in starting the discourse on recognizing the importance of such play and integrating it into Saudi early learners’ classrooms and/or designated areas including playgrounds. I am hoping that the perceptions and practices of the participants will help me portray a rather comprehensive and true picture concerning R & T play and its place in Saudi early education schools.

I was excited to conduct this study as qualitative, photo-based research in my home town. As I am familiar with the language, nuances, culture, and education system, I did not foresee any
major issues or obstacles with my exploration into the perceptions, beliefs, and experiences of Saudi teachers in early education classrooms, and as such, none manifested. The participants appeared comfortable with the interview and photo-technique to elicit the data.

In addition to the above-mentioned aspects of my researcher-role, I hope that my ability to analyze and clearly share the data will assist stakeholders in understanding and applying the findings. In Chapters Four and Five, I have provided detailed descriptions of the participants’ perspectives, and have used simple, descriptive language to present a synthesized, evidence-based picture. In doing so, I have included quotes from the interviews to substantiate the results of the study.

**Ethical Considerations**

After getting approval from the University of South Florida (USF) Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study, all of the participants were treated in accordance with the IRB ethical guidelines. Participants signed a form of consent (see Appendix D) to participate in the study. The informed consent included an explanation of my research in a written document (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I shared the study purposes and the ramifications of participation, which included contact details, duration of research, risk and benefits, voluntary involvement, and the use of photographs, to the participant (BSA, 2006; Boucher, 2018) Participation in this study was voluntary, so teachers participated voluntarily and could leave the study without any repercussions. I gained consent from the website from which I obtained the pictures to use in my study (Boucher, 2018; Jewitt, 2012).

The study had no foreseeable risk of harm, and participants are able to withdraw from the study at any time. I provided sufficient background information and explained the purpose of the
study (Cox et al., 2014). In order to respect the anonymity and privacy of each participant, I took no pictures showing the participant’s face or other identifiable information or used actual names (BSA, 2006; Boucher, 2018; Lichtman, 2013). I used pseudonyms for all the participants and the school to protect their privacy (Boucher, 2018). I explained the confidentiality procedures to the participants (USF, 2016).

I collected the data on a digital device and stored it on a secure and approved cloud storage account. I did not share the recorded audio with my family members, friends, or other people. As per the University of South Florida (USF) IRB guidelines, I received permission to save my data securely in Dropbox for five years, after which the data will be deleted. For the visual images, I followed copyright ethics that pertained to “ownership of a specific visual image” (Rose, 2016, p. 367). This action indicates that the owner of an image is usually the one who created it. To use someone’s image, a person must request the owner’s permission before using the image in their publication (BSA, 2006; Boucher, 2018).

I used images from the Internet and textbooks in my interview, so permission from the copyright holder was required and secured, and appears in the appendices (Moss & Pini, 2016; Papademas, 2009; Rose, 2016). Furthermore, I used visual data that fit the purpose of the study to avoid repurposing the original photos (Moss & Pini, 2016; Jewitt, 2012). The original sources of the photos demonstrated the need for understanding visual data characteristics, such as history, content, purpose, and audience (Jewitt, 2012, p.3). The purposes of the photos mirrored my research question, which focused on the perceptions of Saudi early education teachers on rough-and-tumble (R & T) play since both encompassed the importance of R&T play for child development. I communicated with the participants how the photographs were to be used. In this
way, the participants had some information about the images (Boucher, 2018). I kept hard copies of the photographs locked up securely, rather than held electronically.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is an important phenomenon whose ultimate objective is to safeguard the transferability, integrity, and consistency of qualitative research. I used multiple data sources in this research, and that allowed me to gain more insight into the topic being studied and to enhance the quality of the research findings (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

To ensure information accuracy, I used a member-check strategy. I transcribed the interview in Arabic. After transcribing the interviews, I emailed the participants and asked them to confirm the accuracy of the interview transcriptions. This sort of member checking helps the participants see what they said and process if what they meant was recorded accurately. Member checking supports the correction of mistakes, clarification of ambiguities, and addition of details (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

For the reliability and validity purposes, I requested a peer review whereby the data was scanned and examined to establish whether the findings of my research were credible (Guba & Lincoln, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Before commencing the data collection process, I obtained the IRB approval and consent forms. The participants were all informed about the research plans to ensure that they were comfortable with the intentions of the project (Hatch, 2002).
Chapter Four: Presentation of the Data

The purpose of this study was to explore early childhood educators’ perceptions of Rough-and-Tumble (R & T) play in Saudi Arabia. The study aimed to describe, explain, and enhance the understanding of teachers’ perceptions and beliefs regarding R & T play. It also aimed to explore how and why the teachers’ perceptions are formed, particularly in the field of early childhood education. The research question guiding this study was: What are Saudi early childhood education teachers’ perspectives of rough and tumble play in school? This chapter presents my findings in relation to the research question. After introducing the teachers, I discuss their concerns about rough-and-tumble play, the benefits of rough-and-tumble play, and the cultural context of rough-and-tumble play in Saudi Arabia.

Getting to Know the Participants

Reem (Pseudonym)

Reem had been teaching at Almanhel school for seven years. She taught children between the ages of five and six. She generally worked with children between five and six years of age. From my personal journal, I noted that at the beginning of the interview Reem seemed anxious about the interview. So, I gave her a brief summary of the study, and talked more about my study as a way to build rapport. In doing so, I had hoped to aid in removing psychological barriers Reem might have been experiencing, and to open safe space to encourage her to speak freely. Reem expressed that she was nervous because this was the first time she had been involved in a research
I started the formal part of the first interview by asking general questions about her teaching experiences and about children’s play in general. Reem smiled as she became more open and shared with me her love for teaching and her profession:

*Since I was a little girl, I wanted to become a teacher. I also love to teach children and interact with them. For me, I find joy when I try to understand a child’s feelings when I sit with them and understand their needs, and thus I can set my teaching objectives and what I can focus on to meet these needs.*

Reem talked about what play meant to her and described it as, “It is the freeing of the child’s energy and, at the same time, a type of self-expression. Also, playing helps children learn.” As the interview progressed, I felt that the rapport is almost sisterly with Reem. She was smiling, seeming to open-up more easily, and laughed at times. During the participant’s sketch portion of the interview, Reem hesitated and told me she felt a lack of confidence in her personal artistic skills to produce a drawing. After some reassurance that the sketch was not going to be judged for artistic merits, she appeared to have some fun with expressing her feelings about R & T play in this visual manner.

Reem believed the most significant challenge was when she embarked on the education of young children: “the availability of the tools needed for the children, as well as external interventions from parents and the management.” Thus, Reem identified a lack of materials and perhaps mandates from parents and administrators as barriers for her to do the job as an early childhood educator. Reem was the most experienced teacher I interviewed and I felt a maternal bond with her.
Arwa (Pseudonym)

Arwa had been teaching for three years at Almnahel school, and she generally worked with children between five and six years of age. This interview was collapsed from the initial play of two sessions over two days, due to Arwa’s family’s concerns regarding the pandemic of COVID-19. Arwa appeared to be comfortable with the interview process and did not have any outward signs of being nervous. Thus, after a couple of rapport-building exchanges about the study purpose and my background, we jumped right into the interview. Arwa’s interview was different from Reem’s in that Arwa’s approach was business-like and to the point, resulting in more limited journal entries due to her very efficient demeanor. There was just one point that Arwa became animated when I asked her about the issue of the provision of professional development courses in early childhood. She was visually very upset, and her facial expressions revealed she had a sense of dissatisfaction with the way that things are. She voiced clearly that she felt more courses for teachers were imperative, as she saw early childhood as the most important stage of learning in school. When I asked Arwa about her preparation and what play meant to her, she opined:

*First, I majored in kindergarten education. I chose this major because I love teaching children, and I feel that I am able to deal with and understand children and their needs more than any other age group...I think that playing reflects internal expression. For example, a child who plays calmly has a calm personality and does not suffer any internal emotional problems. On the other hand, a child who plays rough and fiercely may suffer internal emotional problems; I notice that such children hurt others and are not able to self-control. So, I think that the way a child plays reflects what is inside. A normal child would play and follow the rules. For example, the child who plays violently will be punished by not being allowed to play in the Learning Corners. Before playing, I usually give the children some rules to follow, and whoever does not apply these rules and hurts the other children will be punished. So, when rules are not followed there will be punishment.*
During the less formal portion of the interview, Arwa recollected from her childhood memories about play. She shared a story that on multiple occasions, a friend would come to inquire if Arwa could play outside in the backyard. Arwa’s mother did not allow Arwa to go outside and play. In this way, Arwa stated that her family had very strict rules regarding play, and that Arwa felt disappointed with the lack of outdoor play opportunities.

**Farah (Pseudonym)**

Farah had been teaching at Almnahel for four years. She taught children between the ages of three and four. Farah had a sunny disposition I perceived. She was very friendly and smiling during the interview. In discussing why Arwa chose to work with young children, she said, “I chose to specialize in early childhood education because I love children and communicating with them. I like having conversations with them.”

In terms of Farah’s evaluation of play, she expressed “It is interesting for children as it [play] develops their social and mental skills. Also, moving is part of what makes them children.” Farah told me that in retrospect, she was overly protected, and that this impacted her ability to seek out and participate in a play. Farah shared that she was the only child, and for this reason, she felt her parents held her very closely within their reach. She talked in brief about the physical environment surrounding her as not being conducive to outdoor rough-and-tumble play as there was no public park within the walking distance. During the times the family ventured out to a park, she was restricted from activities that might have been viewed by her parents as risky including climbing and running.
Sarah (Pseudonym)

Sarah had been teaching at Almnahel for three years. She taught children between the ages of five and six. Sarah was eager to share her thoughts about the definition of rough-and-tumble play with me:

*It’s a physical activity [play] that is undertaken for enjoyment. I see that play is very important to children, whether in or outside the school, especially for 3 to 6-year-olds. For example, running is a great exercise and helps overweight children lose weight and stay healthy. Children also need to play in order to develop their social skills, as, through it, they can make friends and learn how to deal with life in the future.*

Sarah was quiet and reserved and she offered little outside of the pointed response to the formal questions I asked. Sarah spoke about her family life as a child as being highly religious and conservative. From the viewpoint of a Saudi Arabian, her family was considered to be extremely strict, which led to a very solitary life, consumed with religious study and traditional gender role duties. An interesting point that Sarah shared was that her mother memorized the Holy Quran entirely, a book with 604 pages.

**Looking into the data**

To understand and analyze the data, I followed the qualitative coding process described in Chapter Three. As a result of that process, I identified three themes as they emerged from the data: concerns about rough-and-tumble play, the benefits of rough-and-tumble play, and the cultural context impacting teachers’ perspectives of rough-and-tumble play in Saudi Arabia. Figure 9 offers a visual representation of the evolution of the three main themes and subthemes as derived from coding exercises. A discussion of each of the three themes follow
Figure 9. Themes and Sub-themes, a Visual Representation.
Teachers’ Concerns About R & T Play

Using the interview transcripts, participants’ drawings, and photo-elicitation interviews, I identified four sub-themes for concerns about rough-and-tumble play (a) physically dangerous play, (b) unstructured and rules-driven play, (c) injury and parental concerns, (d) space and safety of the playground.

Interestingly, Reem, Sarah, Farah, and Arwa showed agreement in their individual assessments that concerns about R & T play stem from fear, despite later discussions of the diverse and developmentally critical benefits of R & T play. Reem, Arwa, Farah, and Sarah indicated there existed a palpable fear that children would become injured if involved in most types of R & T play. This shared fear also resonated between the teachers in terms of their professional duty. Reem, Arwa, Farah, and Sarah shared (each with strong emotion) the desire to avoid being held liable for the possible injury of a child due to what they often referred to as “dangerous” play. Fear of reprimand by parents and administration emerged as an In Vivo code within the larger theme of concerns regarding R & T play. While the participants were interviewed separately from one another, the core of their perspectives on the concerns about rough-and-tumble play was homogenous.

Physically Dangerous Play

Evidence from the sketch drawing portion of the interviews revealed a strong connection between aggression and roughness in play. When asked to draw a rendering of rough-and-tumble play that each teacher may have seen happening at school. Arwa and Farah drew examples they later described as aggressive when asked to talk about what they had drawn.
For instance, Arwa’s example of rough-and-tumble play was described in this way “[an example of R & T play is when a] fight that occurs between children and one of them pulls or pushes the other off the slide or swing, or when they jump from a high place when climbing. I think that all of these types of playing are rough. It’s more engaging in aggressive play. In the first half [of the drawing], I drew a child hitting and pulling another child. Here we can see that the second child may be in danger because of the aggressive behavior. So, there should be a teacher watching the children.”

Figure 10. Arwa’s Drawing of an Example and Non-Example of R & T Play.

The link between aggression and rough-and-tumble play can be seen in a second response. Likewise, Farah’s drawing depicts a game of chase and may have been considered non-aggressive had the child not pushed his friend. She stated “in the first drawing, which represents R&T play, there are two children chasing each other, and the second child pushes his friend. I drew it because he used aggressive play and did not follow the rules.” Here, the teacher associates pushing (with enough force to result in the playmate winding up on the ground), with aggression. She added
“…the child used aggressive behavior by pushing his friend, and this may cause injury.”

Consistent with previous studies on rough-and-tumble play, teacher concerns over the injury and aggressive behavior may have prevented a possible developmental role of playful aggression where the intent is known and could be instructive on the resolution of differences (Hart & Nagel, 2017). The findings strongly suggest that aggressive play is a significant concern for two of the four early childhood teachers, and they literally drew associations of rough-and-tumble play defined as aggressive play.

Related to the characterization of rough-and-tumble play as aggressive play, teachers spoke repeatedly about rough-and-tumble play as physically dangerous play. Farah described an example of R & T play as “We have climbing equipment in the playground for children. Usually, they climb in a dangerous way, so I feel that it is dangerous and worry they might hurt themselves… I mean some children, especially boys, jump off from high places, and the surface
(flooring) in our school is not safe. Also, some kids stand on the swings and when they start to play, they fall on the ground.” When I asked another teacher, Arwa, to describe her example of rough-and-tumble play with hitting (see figure 10), she expressed “because most of the time the rough play ends with harm and injuries, and that’s why there should always be supervision.”

As the discussion about examples of rough-and-tumble play became more detailed, the lines between play, rough play, aggression, dangerous play, and injury began to blur. The data support that the teachers’ perspectives of R & T almost always involved physical contact between two children. Reem’s drawing of R & T play offered a pictorial evolution of a classic children’s field game (tug-of-war) from innocuous start to immediate roughness, and then onto the assumed injury.

Figure 12. Reem’s Sketch Drawing of an Example and Non-Example of R & T Play.

Reem described her visage of rough-and-tumble play in this way:

The first thing that came to my mind when I heard R&T play is the tug-of-war game. You can see here; I drew this game because it requires strength and pulling. Here in drawing 1, you can see that the children are pulling the rope, and drawing 2
indicates rough playing. As you see, the children are strongly pulling the rope and falling over, and they will get injured. I feel it’s so dangerous.

When pressing her further about her reaction to this kind of play, she said:

if it is harmful to the children, such as fighting, I will immediately stop the game because I am responsible, and I fear that someone might get injured. In my class, there are some children, especially boys, who like to play roughly such as chasing and pushing, and when they start to do that, I directly supervise them by reminding them about my rules. However, when they start hurting each other I directly stop them.

Similarly, Sarah also drew tug-of-war as an example of R & T play and stated “it is a rough game and involves some pushing that causes injuries to children.”

![Figure 13. Sarah’s Sketch Drawing of an Example and Non-Example of R & T Play](image-url)
Sarah displayed more than one example in her drawing of R & T play. In her discussion about what she drew, she introduces a new factor in the characterization of rough play as it relates to the number of children formed a group. She suggested that larger groups are more prone to cause injuries and that they are more difficult to manage. She asserts that more than two children together form a type of play that children do not have the right to engage in: “As for the ball drawing, once the ball is kicked strongly, it may cause injuries to children, so I see that it is possible to play with it, but not where more than two players are involved, in order to avoid injuries. I see that children have the right to play, but not in groups, so that I can manage them (e.g. two in a single play), because when the numbers are large, there could be injuries.” So, not only did the teachers describe R & T play using the terms being physically dangerous, but also the concept of severe injury was also associated with it.

During the photo-elicitation portion of the interview, teachers were asked to select a field of multiple photos depicting different types of rough-and-tumble play (see figure 2). Reem chose figures a, b, and f. Reem shared:

For example, in the first photo, the children are fighting, and one of them could hurt the other by hitting him from behind. So, I feel that it is dangerous, and the children need to be watched. Also, in the second photo, I noticed that the children are wrestling, and one of them could break the other’s arm because I see that he is pulling his arm violently. Also, by looking at the facial expressions, I can see that the other child is being hurt. Therefore, I would stop such playing immediately. In the third picture, [the play] is likely to cause major injuries because they are playing with spongy sticks and could hit each other in the head, particularly the eye.

A focus on the size of the group of children engaged in play continued during Sarah’s photo-elicitation interview. She chose at least one photo with more than two children and noted that the size of the group of children leads to an injury.
When asked why she chose the above images to represent R & T play that she would not allow to happen, Sarah noted it was due to dangerous nature of the play:

*I think that these games are dangerous as they may cause injuries to children, that's why I selected them and will never allow them. First, I will start with this photo [figure 2, c]. Children are climbing in a high place. If it weren't that high, and there were fewer children, I would allow this play. But it is clear that there are many children and they are crowded, and they can push each other in the process. In the second photo [figure 2, b], children are wrestling and this is very dangerous because it is possible that a child would not agree with this kind of play, and maybe they would start off normally and quietly, and then the playing gets rougher, and they start beating each other up. In the third photo [figure 2, k], I think that it is dangerous because the girl is leaning backward and it is possible that she will not pay attention and topple down.*

In addition to the teachers’ characterization of rough-and-tumble play as aggressive and dangerous, concerns about R & T play evidenced a fear of children becoming seriously injured. Several participants discussed playtime monitoring includes watching the faces of the children to determine if they are enjoying the play, or if they are experiencing pain. During photo-elicitation with Arwa, she pointed out that the face of the child in figure 2 (i) raises the red flag for her to intervene and stop the play. She said:

*I try to monitor their facial expressions. So, if I see them laughing, I try not to interfere. But I always stop playing if they are beating each other up, especially in the face. The first photo [figure 2, i] shows children fighting, and the child's facial expressions indicate that he is uncomfortable. Therefore, injuries could happen, and the children may have [an] arm or leg broken, and I feel that it is rather violent play.*

Other participants tended to have similar perspectives, and drew (figure 11) sketches that introduce rough-and-tumble play as potentially dangerous. In her drawings, Farah brought up the idea of a child playing alone in a safer situation.
She explained:

*In the second drawing, which does not represent R&T play, I drew several children, each one playing alone, which is not rough (one is using the slide, and the second is sitting and playing). You can see how they are so happy with their facial expressions. In the first photo [figure 2, b], children are wrestling, and it is clear from their facial expressions that they are uncomfortable, or may harm each other. So, I would stop this game immediately and wouldn’t allow it.*

Similarly, the idea of using a child’s facial expression to determine the appropriateness of the play was continued when I interviewed Reem. When I asked Reem to choose photos that she would allow and those that she would not allow to happen, she chose the images (b) and (d) see figure 2.

Reem shared how facial expressions guided her judgement: “In the second photo (see figure 2 (b), I noticed that the children are wrestling, and one of them could break the other’s arm because I see that he is pulling his arm violently. By looking at the facial expressions, I can see that the other child is being hurt. Therefore, I would stop such games immediately, because it is
likely to cause major injuries.” I asked Reem if she would allow the play to happen as shown in figure 2 (f), because the children were happy and having fun in the photo. She stated she would stop it, “…because I will fear that something bad might happen, and I will be held responsible for that.” Reem felt that the girls in figure 2 (d) were playing safely, as they were smiling. The playground was not crowded, and they had facial expressions of happiness. Reem concluded that “…they are fine and safe.”

**Unstructured and Rules-Driven Play**

The data strongly suggest that aggressive play is a significant concern for two of the four early childhood teachers. They defined rough-and-tumble play as aggressive. Viewing a photo of children on a tree (see figure 2, c) Sarah connected R & T play with a lack of structure that may lead to injury. Sarah remarked, “First, I will start with this photo. Children are climbing high places. If it weren’t that high and there were fewer children, I would allow this play. But it is clear that there are many children and they are crowded, and they can push each other in the process. I always prevent any kind of unstructured play like [the one] in this photo.” Reem expressed “R & T play conceptually as an activity with disorganization, and may lead to injury. For me, R&T play is that kind of playing that is disorganized with no rules in it, like playing tag. On the other hand, non- R&T play is to me, like riding the bicycle. Because it mostly involves sitting and it does not require any strong physical movement.” Interestingly, Reem added the terms, “strong” to her definition of R & T play as dangerous. While the teachers were not directly asked about the embodiment of play, the concept of strength as a negative in play is novel. This may be a topic to explore in depth in another research project, especially given trends in the literature in the last decade regarding embodied emotionality in children and the use of mindfulness, yoga, and strength
training as means to self-regulation (Pandey et al., 2018). Reem discussed what first came to her mind when asked to define R & T play. She referred to her drawing (figure 12) as an example:

The first thing that came to my mind when I heard the R&T play is the tug-of-war game; as you can see here, I drew this game because it requires strength and pulling. Here in drawing 1, you can see that the children are pulling the rope, and drawing 2 indicates rough playing. As you see, the children are strongly pulling the rope and falling over and they will get injured. I feel it’s so dangerous and disorganized play.

Figure 12. Reem’s Sketch Drawing of an Example and Non-Example of R & T Play

It may be further construed that the teachers have a common language in the usage of the term “unstructured play.” Arwa, for example, in an interview session used the same terminology. When asked to explain the difference between structured and unstructured play, she connected the word, “rough,” to a lack of structure. She mentioned “for structured play, they follow the rules when they play, and the dangers are less in this type of play. In contrast, rough, unstructured play or free play is more dangerous so they need to be watched and supervised all the time.” In general, there was a strong preference among the teachers interviewed for a rule-driven, structured play that is carried out by a child, or in very small groups.
Injury and Parental Concerns

Rough-and-tumble play was associated with injury, sometimes severe in nature, by all four teacher participants. In defining images of rough-and-tumble play, the teachers repeatedly characterized such physical activities with words such as, “dangerous, hurtful, injurious, and harmful.” In terms of R & T play, parent concerns implied that R & T should not be practiced at schools. One participant stated R & T plays are “wrong.” A blatant fear from parents’ criticism formed the perceptions of teachers about the play. Farah stated “I have mentioned before that the playground area is small. That’s why I exclude these games for the children's safety. If something happens to the children, their parents will come and complain.” Reem agreed and further noted that parents would show up in person if R & T play was allowed. She said “Firstly, it is the parents [who shape perceptions of R & T play] because if something happens to their child during play, they immediately complain about it. For example, when there is an issue, some parents come directly to the school and talk about their fear and concerns.” Arwa felt that R & T play was “wrong,” as she explained “it’s a dangerous play and it could hurt the child. Let’s take the climbing game for example, when the child starts climbing, I say to them you must use both hands. If they climb using only one hand, they could fall on the ground, get injured, or may fall on other children. In this case, I will be held liable as parents will make complaints.”

Focusing on the teachers’ concerns about rough-and-tumble play, the findings revealed that teachers’ concern for the possibility of injury, and their concerns for being held liable impacted the range of activities that children were allowed to do. Also, teachers’ attitude regarding what is rough and what is not rough changed the rules of the game. Despite the obvious inclination of the teachers to restrict R & T play, Reem talked about the need for R & T play because it contributes
to child development. She said “as you know children need a vigorous, physical activity or free play to develop and grow properly. School administrators and teachers must understand that strong and vigorous physical play is important. So, it is necessary to conduct meetings with the parents to clarify the importance of this play for the child's physical, mental, and social development. Also, the school administration needs to set an appropriate time, at least 60 minutes per day, of vigorous play, and also provide the appropriate environment for this type of play.” Again, we begin to see a possible opening for the acceptance of R & T play.

**Space and Safety of the Playground**

In this section, I bring the participants together to discuss play space at Almanhel school. To provide a more cohesive picture of how the teachers as a group view the play space they have available at their school. The interview data about the space-related questions are being reported communally in tabular format. During the time I spent with teachers, they were shown a series of three digital photos (see figure 4) of the play space at Almanhel school. The photos were taken days prior to the interviews, to assure that the play space images were current representations of what actually existed at the school. Table 1 organizes the teachers’ responses about play space during the play space photo-elicitation portion of interviews.
Table 1. Four Early Childhood Teacher’s Perspectives of the Current Play Space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher(s)</th>
<th>Current description of play space</th>
<th>Changes desired to play space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reem, Arwa,</td>
<td>full of equipment, barrier to free play</td>
<td>reduce equipment or enlarge space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah, Sarah</td>
<td>not suitable for active physical play</td>
<td>put equipment in one area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah, Sarah</td>
<td>floor is rough; not safe</td>
<td>install soft flooring surfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah, Sarah</td>
<td>not conducive to safe running</td>
<td>redesign layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah, Sarah</td>
<td>tag doesn’t work in this space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah, Sarah</td>
<td>the space is too small for R&amp;T play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reem</td>
<td>small sand area; too small</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arwa</td>
<td>somewhat suitable for 16 children</td>
<td>cover hard floor in grass or foam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arwa</td>
<td>equipment is not too high</td>
<td>move to a more suitable building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah</td>
<td></td>
<td>widen the play space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah</td>
<td></td>
<td>put down a rubber floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td></td>
<td>equipment made from plastic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, the teachers viewed the outdoor playground space as a cause for concern when it came to Rough-and-Tumble play. Given the number of children on the playground, the available equipment, the layout of the space, equipment, and the building materials used to create the surface of the play space. To better understand their concerns, I also asked them to discuss potential ways to address those concerns and asked them what they would change if they were able.

In talking about the current set-up of the play space and R & T play, teachers expressed concerns about the space as a barrier to activities such as vigorous running, jumping, and climbing. Arwa was particularly passionate about this discussion. She offered, “As you can see from the photo, the playground equipment is suitable and not so high as to cause the children to fall and get injured. The area is somewhat suitable for figure 4 (b) for children. But engaging in R&T play, such as tag and jumping, does not work here because they need a wider area and lesser equipment so that they can run, jump, and play freely. Also, you noticed that there is a small sand area (see figure 4 (c), however, I think it is unsuitable for kids to play roughly there because they might throw the sand and hurt their eyes. Besides, it’s too small. Also, we have an area with a concrete ground for children to ride bicycles. I don’t allow kids to play roughly there, because of the concrete ground.” When asked about the limitations of the space to R & T play, Arwa discussed ground coverings and overall size as primary barriers. She detailed her concerns and also what she would do it change things to allow more activities she characterized as R & T play, “…the play area should be wider in all schools. I expect 50 % of the school to be a playground. If the area becomes wider, the children will be able to play freely. They will be able to run and climb up. But if the area is small, I will have trouble controlling them and injuries will happen. I think that the flooring should be covered with grass or foam because most schools put a green carpet on concrete
grounds. I wish that all schools would replace them [concrete surfaces] with grass, as this will protect children if they fall down. But the problem is that the weather in Riyadh is very hot in the summer and very cold in winter, and rain is scarce. I would change the playing area so that it becomes larger for the children to play strong, physical games comfortably and freely. Also, the flooring should be safe for children, so that they do not get injured when they play these games. The sand area should be large enough for kids to play freely. Also, the building should be suitable for educational purposes. For example, the building is a rental villa, and for this reason, the area is not suitable for children to play roughly.”

Similarly, Sarah highlighted the school’s play space in terms of overall size, as problematic. She said, “the outdoor playground is not suitable for children to engage in this rough play. When a child plays running games, he passes too closely by the children playing on the swings and those on the bicycles, so there will be injuries. So, this is just wrong and inappropriate. If the space of the outdoor playground was larger, I would allow them to play games like tag. There needs to be enough outdoor playground space in which I can allocate a particular place for them to play, as it is the child's right to run, chase, jump, and roll. With more space, it would be possible to allocate spaces, draw lines, and tell them not to pass them.” Sarah indicated during her interview that she held hopes that all early childhood play spaces would be changed in the future to include more space as the ministry of education in KSA has made early childhood a focus for increased funding in the coming years. Sarah’s wishes around the surface of the play space included transforming the concrete to rubber, widening the overall surface, and placing foam mats underneath certain apparatus. With these improvements, Sarah expressed more confidence in being able to allow forms of rough and tumble play. Sarah shared, “If things changed, and the playground
surfacing was rubber and space was wider, then I would allow some rougher games like climbing. If things changed, the place would be safer… it is important to have tools that we can use outside, such as foam pads that we can put underneath the various equipment, like slides or climbers, for more safety measures. Also, I hope that we will have more buildings that are dedicated to early childhood in the future, as there are major changes and buildings being dedicated to this stage of childhood. Most of the investments in learning and education we have are being devoted more to this stage.”

**Benefits of Rough and Tumble Play**

In turning to the benefits of R & T play, the coding process revealed two sub-themes of participant perspectives in two distinct areas, development of thinking and language skills and building friendships and a sense of self. The portion of the interview when I asked the teachers about the possible benefits of R& T play was noticeably different in tenor than the other parts of the interview. For example, in looking at my field notes, I described Reem’s persona as she thought about the benefits of play: When I asked Reem about the benefits of playing socially, her facial expressions were very enthusiastic, she smiled more than she had prior to this question, and acted out her responses by moving her hands. For example, when she spoke about one of the sense of self benefits of play, which from her perspective is that a child learns to control himself through controlling his feelings, I noticed how Reem’s tone of voice changed and rose, as she spoke about the importance of play and how she feels it helps to exercise self-regulation in children.

**Development of Thinking and Language Skills**

Reem felt that children learn through play, and there is a better understanding of certain concepts that can be gained through play versus traditional methods. She described the thinking
and language benefits of play as “…it develops thinking abilities. For instance, in climbing, I notice that some children invent different ways of climbing, such as climbing using only one hand. Other than that, in the hide-and-seek game, children learn how to discuss each other, and so can they talk about the roles in a game, as well as how to throw and catch when using a ball. Also, when they are wrestling. These are all cognitive skills the child acquires by playing.” She also remarked that “It may take time, but if you allow the child to learn by playing, he/she will understand better.”

In terms of academics, Farah provided a rich description of the language benefits of play, as seen from her perspective. “They [children] may increase their linguistic skills [through play]. Some children are shy and prefer not to speak in academic domains. On the contrary, during strong or rough physical activities, they are speaking, repeating words, or may use new words. Mostly, children can acquire cognitive skills like learning numbers or learning to count as they hop. Sometimes, they also play tag, where the child closes their eyes counts to a certain number, and then starts chasing their friends once done. They learn social skills like making friends and taking turns. As for mental skills, they can use their mind and thinking abilities when faced with a problem or dangerous situation. Children by nature love to constantly move, it increases their concentration and is an outlet for their energy, allowing them to focus on academics.” Reem, Arwa, Farah, and Sarah agreed that children learn how to better use language during play, and problem solve. They also agreed that movement is a natural part of a child’s life, and talked about it in relation to the developmental benefits of R & T play. For Arwa, play represents the larger functions of life, and is a way to allow real-time and real-world problem solving. “I think that they learn life-related matters from playing. For example, during running and jumping, they learn that jumping from a high place is dangerous and they slowly learn how they should act when they are faced with
problems in their lives. They react by holding onto something so that they do not fall and get hurt. If they come across a similar situation in their daily life, they will recall play-time, and they will adapt the same actions so that they do not fall or get wounded. They thus learn how to solve problems they face in real life. This skill is learned through playing...children need to move and play. This is a child's right, because most of the time they have academic classes and they need to have enough time to play in order to concentrate in the other classes they have in their schedule. If the children do not play, they will tend to fidget and lose their concentration during academic classes, such as Arabic and Religion.” Arwa continued, “The child learns to follow the law and rules. Moreover, they learn how to be cautious, avoid danger, and solve the problems they encounter during the play time. For example, in the climbing game, the children learn to move their hands as they climb or will hold on tight with both hands so as not to fall. In addition, children learn new words, for example, one child said to me “I went up and fell”, and another child replied, "You mean, jumped”. Here, the child had learnt a new word, jump.

In sum, the teachers appeared to coalesce in perspective regarding the development of thinking and language skills involved in the play, and in particular around problem-solving and language development. The group perspective appears to indicate the teachers place a cognitive value on the play, however, just one participant indicated specifically the nature of rough and tumble play as beneficial cognitively. Reem, Sarah, and Farah spoke more from a general play perspective.

**Building Friendship and Sense of Self**

The teachers described the social and emotional benefits of play categorized by gender. For instance, Farah said, “Social skills are acquired by forming friendships for children. It is
notable when respecting others’ turns while playing together and taking rounds in any game (ex. it's Anwar's turn, then Ahmed's).” In this response, Farah uses two male named children to illustrate her point. She further uses the pronoun “him” as she talks more about the social and emotional benefits of rough and tumble play, “For example, children always love the kid who plays roughly, and they like to imitate him. This type of play also increases self-confidence, especially when a child plays something dangerous like jumping from higher spots. Other than that, it boosts their self-confidence, particularly when playing a risky game, like jumping or climbing from a high point and hearing others encourage them.” Sarah’s responses too, indicated a male child as the example of beneficial rough and tumble play, “when a child plays, he engages with his peers, makes new friends, and becomes more sociable. 

Also, I notice that the child who acts rough and strong is loved by the other children and he attracts friends easily. Once in the outdoor playground, I saw a child who was riding the swing and it was really high, and he jumped from it. I saw that the children had started imitating him and playing with him. Of course, I stopped them from playing because it is dangerous.” Interestingly, no examples of using female children were given in the interviews by the teachers to describe the social and emotional benefits of rough and tumble play. In thinking about the previously reported concerns of R & T play, and where female children were used by the study participants to talk about R & T play, examples were made when talking about what is culturally considered to inappropriate play for girls, and in the characterization of girls as wanting more docile, quiet forms of play.

Many of the teachers, despite having one-to-one interview sessions, created the same example of how young male children become popularized by attempting daring feats on the
playground. Arwa shared, “As for the social and emotional dimensions of playing, they learn how to create friendships. For example, when children see one of the others boldly jumping, they will be attracted to that child, want to imitate him, and try to play with him.” Reem’s interview produced further depth to the question of the benefits of R & T play socially as she talked about cooperation and participation. Reem shared, “When a child, for example, sees his friend is about to fall or slip, he will warn him, and by that, the child will learn to assume responsibility towards others. Other than that, there will be cooperation and exchange of roles between them. When playing "It", they come to an agreement that when someone is tagged it'll be their turn to chase them around.”

In terms of gender-neutral responses regarding the social and emotional benefits of rough and tumble play, study participants offered forth a plethora of examples including social tolerance, self-restraint, risk-assessment, cause and effect, self-awareness, and self-confidence. Sarah homed in on the idea of self-regulation as a social-emotional benefit of R & T play. She said, “…when children play with others it means they must notice things that are social, such as the talking that is going on, and the listening to another person’s perspective — key aspects to developing empathy. When the children play, they share their ideas and express feelings while negotiating and reaching compromises. Also, in terms of emotional development, children learn self-regulation as they follow rules and norms and pay attention to experiencing feelings like frustration. Also, play teaches kids how to set or shift the rules, and when to lead or to follow in games of play.” She provided an example too, of social-emotional development dealing with self-confidence in saying, “When a shy child goes and plays with his friends, he becomes less shy, begins making friends, plays with them, and his confidence increases as a result.” Sarah further related the socio-emotional
benefits of R & T play to the future real-world needs of children. She talked about these future needs in the context of mental toughness and problem solving towards the feeling of overcoming challenges, which may be related to perseverance. She relayed, “…they know how to deal with tough situations, sometimes children face problems while playing with their friends so through the rules they try to discipline themselves and not injure anyone, thus learning self-restraint. While playing, they also might face difficulties in climbing for example, so they try to face said danger and overcome it.” Reem’s perspective included a similar idea about self-regulation and perseverance, “if children know the rules of a game, they will obey by them. As seen when a child chases another, he/she learn what harms someone while running in a crowded area, and controls his/her actions, even when wrestling each other. If a child is about to fall, they will act quickly to save themselves and find a solution. In addition, play increases self-confidence as they experience the risks.”

While the term respect was not repeated by every participant, Reem’s statements when asked about how R and T play is related to social skill building, appear to capture the general sentiments of all four participants regarding friend-making and respect. Reem stated, “…through play children make new friends, for example, children learn to respect order and wait for their turn, we see that when playing tag or jumping. They learn how to take turns so that every child would have a chance to play.” We can see that in Reem’s response, there is an air of empathy-building with the forwarding the idea that children would want each child involved in a particular activity, to have a turn, as a child not getting a turn would likely result in unhappiness and/or the feeling of being left out.
The benefits of play for the teacher participants in this study held a clear area of focus, that of the establishment and nurturing of friendships, while at the same time the development of self. While it was not specifically talked about, it is curious to note that the teachers did not bring up gender when talking about the establishment of friendships. It is therefore unknown as to if the teachers were assuming the friendships, their referencing was restricted to those in the same-gender groups. Given the nature of the findings in the subsequent section on cultural context, I believe we can assume the default for the teacher’s perspectives on friendships was for those friendships between like genders. Some of these assumptions may be confirmed when considering the examples teachers used to talk about friendship.

**Gender Differences in Rough-and-Tumble Play**

**Conceptualization of Gender Appropriate Play**

The data collected to answer the research question also aligns with evidence from the literature, when it comes to gender roles in play. Gender differences concerning outdoor play and physical play in early childhood education settings remains prevalent in society no matter the geographical locale nor the majority religion. This is markedly so in the Muslim cultural context of Saudi Arabia. An entry from my researcher field notes acts as a living diorama of the experience I had with each participant when it came time to select images of play that were not acceptable to them.

When I asked Arwa to choose pictures of play that were impermissible in her opinion…she caught my attention in making her third selection, an image of a boy wrestling with a girl. Her choice was fast and without hesitation and was made in less than a second. When she told why she chose the picture, she said, “I don’t accept this kind of play, as there is physical touching between
both genders.” I noticed the teacher’s persistence and recurrence of a theme in which she did not allow play that did not clearly maintain a distance between both genders. In discussing another digital representation of play, Arwa talked about how she might modify the play to bring it more in line with her expectations for how males and females ought to play.

“I would allow the play in the first photo [figure 2, g], but I would let each child enter the circular ring alone, and without the physical contact between girls and boys shown in the photo. I would change the rules of the game to make some distances between children, so that the girls do not jump or fall over the boys.” In asking why the rules change, she stated, “Because I don’t want there to be any physical contact between them. It’s better the child learns from a young age that there shouldn’t be any physical contact between the opposite gender(sex) and they should also be alert because of customs, tradition, and religion. Like I stated before, we took a course on sexual harassment so the child should be taught from an early age.”

It appears that in teacher education in KSA, sexual harassment is linked to such things as proximity between males and females. Arwa went further to talk in brief about the psychological aspects of distancing between males and females in KSA culture and brought up the idea that being too close to one another can bring shame to either party. She shared, “I allow them to play together, but if there is close physical contact, I will try to keep them away from each other. For example, I like to do wrestling, however, I will not allow both genders to wrestle together. In our culture, it’s shameful to see a girl play roughly with boys. As I mentioned before, I feel this kind of play [wrestling] is suitable more for boys.”

Sarah also chose figure 2 (g) as a representation of play she would modify to assure males and females do not come into close proximity. She discussed her ideas for the medication in order
to make the play “safe”: “I see this as structured play, and it is safe if every child enters the circle alone. I could also make boys play it on their own, and girls play on their own as well so that they do not fall onto each other, or boys end up behind girls. Also, in order to avoid holding hands between girls and boys, I would modify the rules. I think every teacher should do the same thing. Sarah further shared her perspective of gender in KSA culture as something that is better talked about and prepared for from a very early age. She attached physicality in play to males as she talked about what play she finds more suited to one or the other gender. “In our culture girls are calmer than boys. When girls play rough, others will usually say to them that you’re a boy, which may have an effect on her that continues throughout her life.” In this instance, in comparison to gender and play in another country like the United States where being called a tomboy does not necessarily carry a stigma, is it stigmatized for females in KSA from early childhood onward. This may explain why Sarah shared her preference that play between males and females be avoided at all costs. She said, “I don’t prefer it (mixed gender play) even if they are children and don’t think about physical contact. If they learn from a young age then it will stick with them until they grow up.”

During Reem’s interview, the idea of a young female playing rough and tumble was too, linked to that child being seen as out of character for the manner in which females ought to behave in society. Reem, in talking about figure 2 (h), which portrays mixed-gender plays in close physical contact related, “In our culture his kind of play is suitable just for boys, and if we see a girl playing with boys, we call her “tomboy”. I think not just in Saudi Arabia, but also in many cultures, boys are more likely than girls to engage in rough and tumble play. However, in this picture, I see the boy is wrestling with the girl and they have physical contact, so we usually talk to them about
avoiding this behavior again, or they will be punished.” Figure 2 (h) elicited strong responses from the participants, and Farah reiterated Reem’s thoughts when she described her reaction to the type of play and the children involved. Reem said, “Culturally speaking, it is frowned upon, and it is forbidden in our religion to have physical contact in any way between males and females who are not legally married. Thus, children must learn from a pivotal young age that there should not be any physical contact with another party of the opposite sex. It will be taken into consideration as they grow. I prefer to exclude games where there is close physical contact, like in this photo. I see that we must teach children from an early age about this, especially if it happens repeatedly. We took a training course on avoiding physical contact, and we must apply it.”

In addition to close physical contact, Sarah described what more she felt is acceptable play for female students as, “playing in the playground or sandbox, we have a sandbox and I feel it is more suited for girls rather than rough play like climbing, that is suited to boys.” She described her uneasiness with figure 2 (k) as, “I think that it is dangerous because the girl is leaning backward, and it is possible that she doesn’t pay attention and topples down. I also see that these games are not suitable for girls, as their school uniform may reveal parts of their bodies in front of the boys, and this is just inappropriate according to our customs and traditions.”

Farah also commented on this image and the issue of a female child engaging in the type of physical movement being represented, “I do not think that it is suitable because she is a girl and this game is more suitable for boys.” Farah was accepting the idea that the female in the photo was playing alone, and viewed that as acceptable, more acceptable than a girl playing with a boy. Reem believes females are prone to engage in more peaceful plays, “Of course girls in their nature like to play quietly, so I always notice them sitting together outside or playing together in groups. Boys,
on the other hand, prefer rough play such as tag or jumping. I don’t encourage girls to do rough plays such as wrestling…because it has strong physical contact.”

Girls are inherently quiet in play Farah mentioned during the sketch drawing portion of the interview. When asked to describe a non-example of rough-and-tumble play, she used two female children as her example in figure 11. “Here I drew two girls each playing on the swing quietly. Usually, playing outdoor games like the swing and slide are organized and quiet. As you may notice, I drew two girls here because I always link quiet and organized play with girls, and rough plays with boys, like in the first drawing.”

![Figure 11. Farah’s Sketch Drawing of an Example and Non-Example of R & T Play.](image)

Farah’s views on the nature of girls were echoed by Arwa, “We all know boys like to play stronger and more physical, rough type of play. It’s rare to see girls play in this way. For example,
when I was young, I remember when I played with my cousin, and my mom always prevented me from rough play. She always said, “don’t play like a boy.”

In short, it is within the cultural norms and expectations regarding gender that we find perhaps the most intense influencers of both the perceptions of and the attitudes towards, rough-and-tumble play amongst four teachers in an early childhood setting in Saudi Arabia. The guiding theoretical framework for this study was Rogoff’s (2003) sociocultural theory, which purports that human behaviors and attitudes will be guided by culturally-shared experiences and the values formed thereof. The perspectives shared unanimously by the participants in this study appear to confirm the theory, especially in the domain of cultural influences on gender roles of young children during play. The idea of guided participation, a developmental process discussed in Rogoff (2003) whereby social and cultural values direct group activities, seems thoroughly displayed amongst this group of teachers given the ways in which they report managing play by both written and unwritten rules, regarding gender roles with the KSA culture. Those roles are tied to religious guidance and legal boundaries between males and females. There are guided participation in daily life activities including play. With schools as government-sanctioned institutions, and government as religiously sanctioned, teachers mentioned that they are bound to uphold gender role expectations. While non expressed angst over the upholding of their duties, they appeared to relegate R & T play to males, and then looked for ways in which to make the carrying out of that play a safer endeavor in terms of bodily harm, than they felt was currently available to them.

Rogoff’s (2003) sociocultural theory maintains that it is not merely culture that influences individuals, people, and whole societies, rather, it is a reciprocal process that is at work. People
contribute to the development of cultural processes. These cultural processes contribute to the
development of people (Rogoff’s, 2003). The data collected in this study align with the
sociocultural theory in terms of four teachers’ perspectives of rough-and-tumble play in Saudi
Arabia. This could be best seen in the saturated nature of the talk around gender roles and physical
proximity as it relates to acceptable forms of play. Gender roles in SA are expected to be
maintained as a part of the nation’s religious mandates and cultural status quo, and from the data
collected, it appears this maintenance begins at home and at school, from the earliest ages.
Teachers in the school acted in accordance with the hypothesis offered by Rogoff (2003). The
hypothesis posits that institutional rules and practices are the results of social and cultural norms
and guide individual actions. Rogoff’s sociocultural theory states that when a behavior or practice
such as those in academic settings, aligns with what is culturally acceptable, there is a greater
likelihood that the behavior or practice will prevail over behavior or practice that is considered
culturally unacceptable. Over and over in the teachers’ responses, we saw adherence to
sociocultural norms present in the SA, with regards to the concerns related to rough-and-tumble
play. In this next section, the adherence to Saudi norms is detailed when discussing the teachers’
perspectives related to gender, culture, and R & T play.
Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe, explain, and enhance understanding of teachers’ perspectives, beliefs, and practices regarding rough-and-tumble play in Saudi Arabia, and how and why they are formed, particularly in the field of early childhood education. This qualitative study explored the perspectives of four early childhood teachers regarding rough-and-tumble play at an urban kindergarten in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Qualitative interviewing, participant-generated drawings and photo-elicitations were used to gather data. The data were then analyzed using in vivo and thematic coding to explore the teachers’ multivariate experiences with rough-and-tumble play.

The importance of this study is germane to opening a door for discourse regarding rough-and-tumble play in Saudi Arabia, a culture that is influenced by religious guidelines that direct many aspects of public education and influence norms for play. Such a pervasive and intensely influential context of religion needed a theoretical research lens through which I can discuss the implications of the findings. Findings in this study can construe how teachers apply cultural morays within institutional boundaries. Rogoff’s sociocultural theory coupled with the hypothesis that Saudi preschool teachers’ perceptions of Rough-and-Tumble (R&T) play would be linked to culturally shared experiences and values, emanating from religious overtones present throughout all aspects of life in Saudi Arabian society. Rogoff’s “collaborative nature of learning” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 283) emphasizes that individuals experience development in their thought processes as
they interact within their respective communities with the use of symbols, verbal and body language, “narratives, routines, and play” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 285).

Prior to this study, no other study could be found in the literature that unlocked early childhood teachers’ perspectives regarding rough-and-tumble play in Saudi Arabia through participant-generated drawings and photo-elicitation. Given the evidence surrounding the benefits of rough-and-tumble play presented in Chapter Two, and the impending transformation of the early childhood system of education in Saudi Arabia (The kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019), this study was timely and may offer findings that inform policymaking and teacher education in early childhood in SA in the future.

The following discussion seeks to compare the findings of this study to the major trends presented in the literature regarding rough-and-tumble play and highlight the intersections where the findings both meet with and digress from the literature. Prior to embarking on this study, I expected culture would indeed be a profound mediator in the teachers’ perspectives about rough-and-tumble play, especially when it comes to the consideration of gender roles. The teachers’ voices aligned with this presupposition and evidenced a collective window on what Rogoff refers to as “guided participation” (Rogoff, 2003).

Rogoff’s (2003) sociocultural theory is based her work on culture and human development. Rogoff argues that human development is best understood through cultural processes and beliefs. Rogoff asserts cultural processes give understanding to human development on the individual, group, and whole society levels, and that culture cannot be ignored. Rogoff advances that sociocultural perceptions are used for evaluation in every context. As such, the discussion of this study reveals some of the challenges and opportunities a new Saudi cultural transformation may
have in transforming gender-based roles in early childhood education. The chapter includes findings as they relate to the research question and existing literature, a discussion of recommendations and limitations, and my reflections.

**Rough-and-Tumble Play in a Saudi Context**

This study explored the research question “What are Saudi early childhood education teachers’ perspectives of rough-and-tumble play in school? As the research question was open-ended in its construction, the findings were quite diverse. The in-depth investigation of this question with four early childhood teachers from the same school led to a number of consistent themes including but not limited to: (a) teachers’ concerns about rough-and-tumble play that were largely associated with issues of male/female proximity and the appropriateness of types of play by gender and guided by cultural morays, (b) the potential for bodily harm (injury) rough-and-tumble play represented to teachers, (c) teachers’ characterization of the benefits play including the social developmental aspects of play, the opportunities for cognitive growth (especially in language development) and the chance to practice and hone motor skills, and (d), discussions of design related to playground space that hinders or enhances, opportunities for rough-and-tumble play.

The four kindergarten teacher participants offered important insights into rough-and-tumble play at their school and within their individual groups of children. In an update of her work, Rogoff et al (2018) stressed the importance of children’s lived experiences in academic understandings of human development. One area this study did not explore was the children themselves, and their perspectives on rough-and-tumble play. Had I investigated children’s R & T play perspectives; further insight may have come into view from a child’s perspective. While not
a part of this study, it may be useful in the future, or as a follow-up study, to ask children to express meaning and thought around various types of play.

Fundamentally, a teacher-created operationalization of rough-and-tumble play emerged that was consistent across participants, and that was markedly different from Carlson’s (2009) views about rough-and-tumble play. Carlson’s work guided much of what the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has published about rough-and-tumble play. NAEYC recommendations are used in Saudi Arabia to guide curriculum development. Carlson defines rough-and-tumble play as play that engages the entire body, is highly physical (meaning children come into close physical contact), and teeters on the edge of the most intensive kind of play that does not result in the actual fighting or intentional injury (2009). Rough-and-tumble play is intense while being lighthearted and fun, with children’s faces expressing joy through smiles and laughter (Carlson, 2009).

The teachers in this study drew sketches of rough-and-tumble play, and then described what they had drawn. Through the drawings, a collective definition of rough-and-tumble play emerged that the teachers shared while being separately interviewed. The teachers’ characterization of rough-and-tumble play included words such as “dangerous,” “risky,” “unstructured,” “harmful,” “injurious.” When it came to boys and girls undertaking body play together, teachers language included the terms, “inappropriate” and “not allowable.” Drawings of children used to elicit the teachers’ operationalization of R & T play were detailed and included facial expressions. Teachers consistently identified R & T play with strained children’s faces, tears, and frowns or anger. The teachers’ definitions were consistent with the prevailing myths about
rough-and-tumble play in that is it inherently dangerous and injury can be expected (Carlson, 2009).

When asked to define rough-and-tumble play through participant-generated drawings and photo-elicitation, teachers did not make a clear link between dangerous play and rough-and-tumble play. Also, the teachers’ ideas were not the same. While I never asked them, it may have been interesting to discover if they had ever seen a serious injury on the playground, or if they had ever actually been reprimanded for allowing certain types of play, they defined as R & T.

In contrast to the divergence between the definition of R & T provided by Carlson (2009) and the definitions of R & T play voiced by the teachers in this study, there was a strong link between the participants’ contextualization of R & T play with Rogoff’s (2003) sociocultural theory. Saudi preschool teachers’ perceptions of rough-and-tumble play were linked to culturally shared experiences and values. With rather remarkable coherence to one another, Reem, Sarah, Arwa, and Farah evaluated rough-and-tumble play with strikingly similar descriptors and perspectives. Adherence to cultural norms was never questioned by the participants. There was an overwhelming tone of loyalty to the gender roles of Islamic culture in SA that was not easily overshadowed by the opportunity to share perspectives, nor the potential developmental benefits of rough-and-tumble play. Rogoff (2008) believes that the personal plane is inseparable from the interpersonal and community planes, and the findings in this study revealed perspectives consistent with the Rogoff’s ideas. Each teacher had a unique story about their personal life, yet as professionals, each teacher told a very similar story when it came to R and T play.

Still, after voicing strong and clear opinions about Rogoff play as being undesirable and a cause for interruption by the teacher while children are playing, each teacher detailed about
benefits of rough-and-tumble play. Teachers embraced the cognitive development they saw happening through play, and expressed support as a group, for more time, space, and proper equipment for their students. The teachers’ expressions of the benefits of play, however, were constrained by the characterization of appropriate play. It should be noted that they found rough-and-tumble (wrestling, fast chasing, high climbing) as inappropriate types of play, especially for girls, and definitely between boys and girls. This reiterates the fact that mixed gender play is forbidden in the Saudi culture.

While the influence of adult supervision on school-based activities arguably exists in every cultural context, as noted previously by Sedwick (2001), there is an influence on early childhood education in SA that does not exist in Western public education. This influence includes the official guidelines and policies regarding curriculum that emanates from the national religion of SA (Sedwick, 2001). Children are to be taught by their teachers under the imperatives of Islam as they develop their physical, spiritual, and intellectual selves. Children’s behavior is governed by religious rules that also are the basis of the legal system in SA.

The perspectives of the teachers in this study echoed strongly Rogoff’s guided participation as highlighted by governmental and religious-based, gender-segregated education system, as well as gender role expectations in Islamic culture. Rogoff’s ideals state that cultural values and social norms are the overarching and driving force for interpersonal activities and behaviors (2003). Reem, Sarah, Arwa, and Farah shared their willingness and intention to abide by gender roles and enforce those roles within play of any sort. When confronted with photographs of rough-and-tumble play, it was interesting that the teachers’ perspectives of single child play for girls held a different set of play rules than for boys. For instance, when shown a photo of a young female child
swinging upside down on a monkey bar, several participants noted they counted the photo as rough-and-tumble play and would not allow it to happen due to its impropriety for girls. Thus, the teachers acted as agents and guided the participation of the female students to play that was, in the teachers’ cultural paradigm, acceptable for girls.

The level of sensitivity amongst the teachers about issues of gender in play was significant. Teachers attached the cultural norms of gender roles in SA to young children during play, and extrapolated those norms to issues related to employees’ reprimand if they were to ignore those roles. While the study did not make direct observations of teacher and children engaged in active play at the school, I kept a field journal and noted that when it came time to discuss rough-and-tumble play with mixed genders and physical contact, body language and sometimes animation and tone amongst the participants markedly changed. I perceived these changes in demeanor as negative. This could be assumed to be a natural reaction within the context of religious guidance in SA. This is an important point to consider at the early childhood system in SA. Saudi Arabia begins a ten-year plan for transformation, which includes a parent’s right to opt into education after age 7 for males, which happens in mixed-gender schools with female teachers. This study reveals an entrenched ethos resulting in deep guided participation within the context of four teachers in early childhood and may stand as a signpost for the kind of professional development that may be required for teachers to trust that mixing genders in play will be culturally and professionally tolerated by school leaders and parents.

In many remarks made by the teachers, it was evident that an individual child does not appear to develop their identity, but that a young child’s identity is determined by the child’s gender. Not only is the child absent in the talk of development, but they are also identified as
problematic or different if they do not follow the narrative for their assigned gender. In terms of individual identity development, this factor is quite personal and can be considered a representation of Rogoff’s (2008) concept of participatory appropriation. The students of my participants in the study were consistently and without fail, driven towards expected gender roles through play, and none were allowed to have rough-and-tumble play.

This phenomenon can be viewed in terms of stages of educators’ identity development. Rogoff (2008) views participatory appropriation as a process of “becoming,” versus a process related to mastery or acquisition. Reem, Farah, Arwa, and Sarah shared their process of becoming educators through a regimented course that is not surprising given the expectations of Saudi society.

In general, the educators in this study preferred the use of rules as a safety precaution during play, rather than a way to add structure to rough-and-tumble opportunities for play. As Carlson (2009) writes, rough-and-tumble play can occur in several dimensions of power, as in child to child, teacher to child, and teacher to multiple children in a group. The teachers who participated in this study operationalized rough-and-tumble play as unstructured and without rules. They then appeared to extend that foundation of relative chaos to increased risk for injury and child to child harm. In many ways, these perspectives echo Rogoff’s (2008) explanation of community behavior through the process of apprenticeship. It would have been interesting to ask each participant where they first learned the “rules” of play as females growing up in Saudi society. Perhaps then it may not have been as surprising that none of the teachers shared the view of Carlson in defining rough-and-tumble as a type of structured play (2009). If all you ever know as a little Saudi girl is that R & T play is for boys, and that engaging in it equates to a chaotic life, a bad reputation, and brings
displeasure to the adults around you, then it’s not too far from a stretch to imagine these same little girls as teachers, transmitting similar apprentice information to the female children on the playground.

According to the literature, a change in this mindset might be achieved through professional development, which Farah, Arwa, Reem, and Sarah noted was lacking in terms of their understandings of apprentice information play. Farah, Arwa, Reem, and Sarah unanimously recognized the need for more professional learning opportunities about the benefits of play and how to manage play. A lack of pedagogical exposure to the concept of organized big body play and the rationale for big body play (apprentice information play), maybe one reason the teachers characterize apprentice information play as disorganized and probably going to lead to injury. Teachers sought a measure of control over the children’s play through the use of rules established by religious mandates. In essence, they acted in the only manner they could deem as possible.

Logistically, Farah, Reem, Sarah, and Arwa remarked that fear of injury increased due to small play space and concrete ground, was the primary motivator for stopping rough-and-tumble play between same-sex peers, with the always present qualifier that rough-and-tumble play between opposite-sex peers is never allowed.

With guarded enthusiasm, Farah, Reem, Sarah, and Arwa did speak about the benefits of play, with the rough-and-tumble delineator being lifted away as they spoke only about the play they perceived as docile, safe, organized, and gender appropriate. In effect, while the question prompt regarding the benefits of R & T play included the exact phrasing, “rough and tumble,” the participants responded solely based upon their beliefs about definitions of play that are not characterized as R & T.
Implications for Early Childhood settings in Saudi Arabia

Gender Roles

Traditionally, teachers in Saudi Arabia working with children after age 7, have been assigned to classes of single-gender students representing the teachers own gender (i.e., male students with male teachers, in all-male schools). Recent changes in this policy, however, are part of a cultural transformation that is occurring in SA under the direction of the King of Saudi Arabia. Parents of young children will now be offered a choice of whether to send their male children to school with girls after the age of 7. While this does not directly affect the current structure of kindergartens, which are mixed-gender environments, it does signal a wave of cultural transformation happening in the nation. The teachers in this study did not mention these changes in education, despite Vision 2030 being communicated across the country. Teachers focused their talk of educational transformation related to Vision 2030 in the physical design of play spaces and the opening of early childhood centers or schools in dedicated, new spaces that are not former residential properties. It is interesting to note that there was the lack of comments or discussion from the teachers on the changes to education in SA that will undoubtedly be controversial and gender-based. It is unknown if the teachers were simply not aware of the details of the transformations, or if they felt talking about it was not something they were able to do at the time.

Outdoor Play Areas

The teachers in this study were very specific about their desires for changes in terms of the physical play space available to them. Unanimously, they felt that the current play space was discouraging rough-and-tumble play given the concrete play surfaces, equipment, and small size number of children in the school. They felt that there was not enough space for typical rough-and-
tumble games such as tag, which includes running and might include friendly physical contact. Equipment was a common item tagged by teachers as needing adjustments. The teachers’ voices in terms of play space and equipment are in the process of being heard nationwide in SA, as the new early childhood vision is being implemented with changes in play space (The kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019).

The play environment is critical in the types of play that can happen in any given space. The teachers seemed acutely aware of this fact, and were in a sense, advocating for a much different type of play space than the one they currently had. In fact, given the school was located in a former residential villa, the teachers were actually advocating for an entirely new school building (or new location), given the re-design potential of the villa would never allow for an increase in the square footage of play space. Space and the physical design elements were two important elements for the teachers. It is interesting to imagine what their perspectives might have been on rough-and-tumble play such as tag if the children had wide-open spaces and soft surfaces on which to play tag. In their current environment, the teachers voiced much concern over the game of tag due to small space, and rough, hard ground.

Training

Training programs are often necessary for childhood educators who work with young children in outdoor play settings. Accordingly, the four teachers in this study were disappointed by the lack of play training in their coursework. There has been much research comparing the effects of pre-service and in-service training programs, and it has been established that in-service learning can contribute to positive outcomes concerning teacher beliefs and play activities (Vu, Han, & Buell, 2015). All of the teachers who shared their perspectives in this study echoed the
need for more training in the area of play. The teachers expressed a need for school leaders and parents to understand the nature of free play as something not to be feared, but to be in some ways, embraced. There was an air of palpable constraint in the teachers’ mediation of play as directed by the fear of parent and supervisor complaint and reprimand. I believe the participants hoped to have had teacher educators with more knowledge on this topic. Teachers desired more training in play than what they had been exposed to or had access to. This is an important consideration as Vision 2030 is starting to be implemented, and resources should be put into a teacher, leader, and parent training regarding play.

**Directions for Future Research**

As discussed in Chapter Two, the review of the literature exposed a gap in the current research that this study addresses in a politically timely manner, given the Saudi Vision 2030 to transform early childhood settings. The research results indicated that big body play consisting of intensive, strong, and close physical proximity (rough-and-tumble play) is critical for social and cognitive development in young children. During this study, the responses from four teachers were weighted most heavily towards distrust of rough-and-tumble play. They attached the risk for injury and disobedience to the contextual and cultural norms of a society and all forms of rough-and-tumble play.

The literature suggests rough-and-tumble play is different from the play that is intentionally aggressive and harmful. While teachers pointed to the use of observation of children’s faces during play to determine the intention of the play, they also were hesitant to allow play that falls in the rough-and-tumble category, despite the children smiling and being happy and engaged in R & T play.
The participants’ drawings and photo-elicitation indicated that the teachers unanimously believed that there is a link between dangerous play and rough-and-tumble play. According to the literature, this is a primary myth concerning rough-and-tumble play, and part of the amelioration of such a myth can be achieved through professional development, which Farah, Arwa, Reem, and Sarah noted was lacking in terms of their understanding of rough-and-tumble play.

While not considered previously in the literature, these findings reveal a new question. In terms of the established benefits of rough-and-tumble play in the literature, what further assessments must be made to determine if those benefits remain constant across different cultural contexts? It was teachers’ responses in discussing the trajectory of a female’s life in SA (the formation of her reputation and character, happening as early as kindergarten), that acted as the catalyst for this new question. It becomes thus unclear, whether the developmental benefits of big body rough-and-tumble play outweigh the costs of such play for female children in the current cultural context of Saudi Arabia.

For the teachers, it was clear that the social costs to females engaging in R & T play were greater than the benefits. All four teachers shared their fervent concerns over potential parental complaints and possible reprimand from school officials for allowing children, especially girls, to engage in different forms of R & T play. Some of the examples provided by the teachers to substantiate this positioning include repeated references to what they learned in training classes in sexual harassment of female students by male students as young as four years old. One teacher attached the broader legal basis for her stance, in relating that in SA females are not allowed to touch (and vice versa) males until they are married. Because mixed-gender playgroups are quickly
frowned upon in this school, these plays will be immediately broken up by the teachers to avoid cultural issues.

Despite the obvious cultural and peer-related costs associated with mixed-gender play in SA, teachers offered their perspectives on the benefits of play for early learning. Teachers’ statements on this point aligned with the literature in terms of developmentally appropriate practices from a more universal, pedagogical stance. The teachers acknowledged the sense of self benefits as well as academic benefits in terms of language development. Reem, Arwa, Sarah, and Farah also talked about risk-taking in relation to navigating high climbing equipment as a social benefit. There was an interesting comment made by one of the participants that children who were able to escape the purview of adults and climb very high on the play structures and then jump off successfully became popular among other children. These examples were, however, confined to male students. The idea of play as a mechanism for generating popularity was not explored in the previous research, but nonetheless emerged as an element of the teachers’ perspectives on rough-and-tumble play. This idea cultivates a question as to popularity amongst children in tightly controlled cultural environments of behavioral expectations across mind and body: How do rule-breaking and risk-taking influence an individual’s popularity within tightly controlled cultural environments? This study revealed that there are many ecological questions involved in play that impact teachers’ beliefs about the benefits and development of play in early childhood.

As changes are occurring in early childhood education in Saudi Arabia given the country’s “Vision 2030,” policymakers and school planners will be in search of ways to address contemporary models of mixed-gender play including that which may be rough-and-tumble. As such, further research into teachers’ perspectives is needed in SA. Future research might seek to
articulate teachers’ perspectives on how to accomplish a cultural transformation from a school perspective. Teachers will have many questions about the implementation of the new directions for early childhood. Qualitative research projects employing methods such as interviews and focus groups might serve to provide teachers with a voice, as well as offer steps for change. As the teachers’ voices and practices fell completely in line with L’Abate’s explanation that from culture to culture, the significance of play is perceived differently and replicates the customs of society (2009), moving forward to a new vision of mixed-gender play will require careful planning.

One aspect of this study that I appreciated was the power of reflection for the participants. They were given time to think about their experiences with play and rough-and-tumble play. One aspect of the study that might have strengthened teacher reflection may have been to probe more in-depth through follow-up questions about the nature of rough-and-tumble play. Teachers tended to default to talk about play in general, versus rough-and-tumble play in particular. This can be seen in the results chapter when the teachers discussed the benefits of play. They reported benefits of play, but were not especially keen on any benefits of rough-and-tumble play.

Closing Reflection

“Dreams don't work unless you take action. The surest way to make your dreams come true is to live them.” Roy T. Bennett.

There is nothing more beautiful to me than people living out their dreams. This research study has been a big part of my personal and professional dreams. The work I have put in has challenged me in ways I have not been challenged before in my life. I even completed this work in a language that was not my native language. I am also the mother of four children. In my life, I have had two dreams that I wished to achieve. One of them was to finish this study and make a
contribution to my field and to give teachers a voice. The other one is now, to raise my voice to talk about the importance of rough-and-tumble and big body play for our young children in Saudi Arabia, a nation that is just beginning to be curious about what new gender roles could look like in education and in mixed-gender play.

The journey to achieving my first dream wasn’t easy at all, but I will say it has been an interesting one. When I went to Saudi Arabia to collect the data for this study, my family informed me that the schools were closed because of COVID-19. I was shocked, as the decision to close the schools was taken while I was on an international flight from the United States to Saudi Arabia. I had no idea how my study would get done, and for some time, I was uncertain if I could finish it at all.

Through these historic times, I have learned that necessity is the mother of invention. I found ways to meet each participant in different places that were socially distant, given the schools were closed. The participants were interactive and authentically engaged with me during very stressful times. I enjoyed listening to them, and I felt that they truly enjoyed participating in the study. The school principal, the staff, and the participants were communicative, collaborative, and very helpful.

This research, now completed, will serve as a catalyst for me to raise my voice for children, and what I believe to be their right, to engage in rough-and-tumble play. As a Saudi Arabian mother of four children representing both genders, I have evolved in my own personal thinking. I served as a former teacher who taught others to avoid rough-and-tumble play, yet, I am an advocate of big body R & T play. I am prepared to talk in larger circles about R & T play as a normal part of a child’s development to aid my country in transforming rules for play at schools.
As a mom of girls, I want educators in SA to know that rough-and-tumble play does not just appeal to boys. Girls also love this type of play, and we can encourage them while maintaining important features of Islam that shape our cultural practices. As a parent and an educator, part of my dream lives in the evolution of the role of women in my culture, and then what we are allowed and not allowed to do based upon them. Play is such an integral part of human development, and Vision 2030 offers Saudi scholars like myself an opportunity to influence the policy and design in early childhood. The effort and completion of this study is just the first step to implement the findings of this study for the Saudi Vision 2030.
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doi: 10.1007/s10643-007-0196-1


Appendices
Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Script

I began the interview by posing some introductory, biographical questions intended to get at the interviewee’s educational and work history as follows:

1. Tell me about you as a teacher, what do you enjoy most and what are your challenges?
2. Tell me about your teaching experience, what ages have taught, how long have you been teaching?
3. To what training program in early childhood education did you have access?
4. How would you describe play?
5. What are some of the things you value about play and learning?
6. I will pose a group of more specific or concrete example questions related specifically to physical outdoor play and the cultural context that may emerge in part, through participant-generated visual data. A script for the participant-generated drawing follows:
7. Researcher: I would like you to draw two things. On one half of this paper, please draw what comes to your mind when you think of R&T play. On the other half, please draw a non-example of R&T play. (Participants will be provided with blank white paper and a pencil with an eraser)
8. When a participant indicates the drawing is complete, I will seek interpretation of the drawing by asking participants to describe its meaning.
9. Next, I will transition from drawing back to semi-structured interview, asking the following questions:
10. Describe an example of R & T play you’ve seen at school.
11. When you see R&T play, what is your reaction?
12. What do the children normally do when they are outdoors? In what kind of outdoor play do you allow your kids to participate and why?

13. What are some of the things in the school context that shape your perception of R&T play? For example, how do policies, parental expectation, and physical environment influence the amount of outdoor play time in your daily schedule?

14. What policies would you change or seek to improve concerning of R&T play?
Appendix B: Photo-Elicitation Interview Script

Participants were asked to select three images from image gallery one of play that they would allow on the playground during the school day. Participants were told they could manipulate the images in any way that helped them chose (for instance, making a pile of yes, no, and maybe, as they narrow the field of 11 images to three). Once the participant made the three selections, the following questions were asked:

1. Could you describe your photo selection process?
2. Please describe each photo, one at a time, that you have selected, sharing your perspectives of what you are seeing.
3. Why would you allow children to engage in this type of play?
4. How do you see this type of play influencing learning?
5. What social or emotional benefits do you see from this type of play?

Photo-elicitation prompt 2:

Select three images of play that you would not allow. Once the participant has made the three selections, the following questions will be asked:

1. Could you describe your photo selection process?
2. Please describe each photo, one at a time, that you have selected and share your perspectives of what you are seeing.
3. Why would you not allow children to engage in this type of play?
4. What can you share with me about gender and play and how it may influence your choice of allowable and non-allowable play?
Researcher-Generated Photos

In addition to using researcher-found photos, I used researcher-generated photos. In these photos, emphasis was placed on the physical space in which outdoor play occurs. I took several photos of the Saudi school playground with no children. I presented the photos in image gallery two and asked participants the following questions:

Photo-elicitation prompt 3:

1. How does the ground material and amount of space for play influence R & T play?
2. Are there any obstacles presented on your playground to R & T Play?
3. If you could change anything about the play space available to you, what would that be?
4. At the end of the second interview, I will remind each participant of the member check process. I will also show my appreciation for study participation by expressing gratitude.
Appendix C: Found Image Copyright Permissions

Frances Carlson <fcarlson@chattahoocheetech.edu>
Thu, 12/17/2020 3:19 PM
To: Alghamdi, Rana

To whom it may concern:

Rana Alghamdi has permission to use images from my book, *Big Body Play* (C. Brown and N. Bennett, photographers) as well as images I sent him on 12.17.2020. The permission for these images is for them to be used in the scholarly dissertation. Feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Frances Carlson

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Albany Preschool Teacher Nancy <teachernancy@albanypreschool.org>
Fri, 10/23/2020 3:00 PM
To: Alghamdi, Rana

Hello Rana Alghamdi,

Congratulations on finishing your PhD program. You have my permission to use two of my photos in your dissertation. In fact, I feel honored you asked to use them! Best of luck in your future endeavors.

Nancy Marting
Executive Director
Albany Preschool
Hi Rana,

Thank you for your query. Yes, you may use the four images referenced below from Embracing Rough-and-Tumble Play. Consider this email approval.

Best of luck on your dissertation.

Cheers,
Meredith

Meredith Burks | Product Marketing & Customer Experience Manager
(She/Her/Hers)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Think Small and Redleaf Press' physical office will remain closed as our staff work remotely to meet the needs of those we serve and to stay safe. Our priority will be to avoid disruption of publishing and resource availability and services to the child care providers and families we serve. Redleaf Press Customer Service phone line is open. If your message is left outside of our usual business hours (M-F 8am-5pm CT) your call will be returned the following business day. Think Small/Redleaf Press staff will be available by phone and email during this time.
المكرمة الابحاثة / رنا السامدي

نقدم لكم نحن للطفلة المبكرة بالرياض بالسماح للباحثة لاتخاذ صور الملعب الخارجي وننا تناقش على نشرها في مجلة العلم.

مسعدة لكم دوام التوفيق والنجاح...

قائدة المدرسة:

الختم:
Appendix D: Informed Consent English

Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk
Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

Title: Saudi Teachers’ Perceptions of Rough and Tumble Play in Early Learning

Study #000382

Overview: You are being asked to take part in a research study. The information in this document should help you to decide if you would like to participate. The sections in this Overview provide the basic information about the study. More detailed information is provided in the remainder of the document.

Study Staff: This study is being led by Rana Alghamah who is a Principle Investigator at The University of South Florida. This person is called the Principal Investigator. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Jolyn Blank. Other approved research stuff may act on behalf of the Principal Investigator.

Study Details: This study is being conducted at Saudi private early childhood school. The purpose of the study is to find out how early childhood educators perceive rough and tumble play in Saudi Arabia. I will use a qualitative interview study with photo elicitation and each interview will be lasted for one hour.

Subjects: You are being asked to take part because you are an early childhood teacher who have more than two years working with children.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to participate and may stop your participation at any time. There will be no penalties or loss of benefits or opportunities if you do not participate or decide to stop once you start. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your job status, employment record, employee evaluations, or advancement opportunities.

Benefits, Compensation, and Risk: We do not know if you will receive any benefit from your participation. There is no cost to participate. You will not be compensated for your participation. This research is considered minimal risk. Minimal risk means that study risks are the same as the risks you face in daily life.

Confidentiality: Even if we publish the findings from this study, we will keep your study information private and confidential. Anyone with the authority to look at your records must keep them confidential.

Why are you being asked to take part?

You are being asked to take part because you are an early childhood teacher who have more than two years’ experience working with children.
Study Procedures:

At each visit, you will be asked to:

- Participate in two interviews conducted by the researcher. These interviews will be audio recorded for later analysis. The interviews’ location will be in your place of employment (During school hours or after school hours), in a quiet private room offered by your school. The duration for each interview will be between 60-120 minutes.
- The first interview will be introductory questions of physical outdoor play. These questions will be related to daily schedule, polices, value of vigorous physical play and two of the questions has a drawing component.
- The second interview will be photo elicitation interview, I will present photos related to rough and tumble (R&T) play and ask you some questions related to your selection. The questions will elicit your perception on rough and tumble (R&T) play.
- Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or explanations necessary. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be used in the analysis. In terms of protecting your anonymity, your name will not appear on any part of the data, the research results, or in any written or oral discussions of the study.
- Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by being stored in a file on my laptop and only accessible by the researcher. However, your complete anonymity is full guaranteed.
- I will store data on a secure cloud-based storage system called Box that is password protected. No data will be stored on my personal computer.

Total Number of Subjects

Between four and six early childhood teachers will take part in this study at early childhood school in Riyadh, which is the capital city of Saudi Arabia. Teachers will participate in the study at their place of employment.

Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study.
Benefits
There are no direct benefits to you from this study. However, this work may add to the knowledge of the field and support teachers in enhancing their practices to better serve the needs of their children development.

Risks or Discomfort
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation
You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Costs
It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality
We will keep your records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. These individuals include:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, study coordinator, research nurses, and all other research staff.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and its related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, and staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints.
If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call Rana Alghamdi at + (966) 550033838.
If you have questions about your rights, complaints, or issues as a person taking part in this study, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu.
Consent to Take Part in Research

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study ___________________________ Date __________

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study ___________________________

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent and Research Authorization

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent ___________________________ Date __________

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent __________________________

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Appendix E: Informed Consent Arabic

نقرة عامة: سوف تشاركك المعلومات المربعة أدناه في هذا البحث بالمشاركة في هذا البحث المسمى لإجراء المقابلة.

شروط البحث: تشمل هذه المعلومات العامة معلومات تفصيلية عن طبيعة الدراسة المرتبطة أدناه.

تفضل البدء: في هذا البحث، سوف تشاركك المعلومات الخاصة بموضوع البحث للمشاركين الذين يختارون المشاركة.

المشاركين: جميع المشاركين داخلون على درجة البكالوريوس في المعلومة المكتوبة وأيضاً أعدم سنوات خبرة لا تقل عن سنين في مجال تدريس مرحلة المكتبة.

المشاركة الطبيعية: مشاركاتك في هذه الدراسة ضرورية بالكامل. لم تكن لديك الخبرة في المشاركة وتشجيع الإجابة في أي وقت.

المشاركات: سوف تشارك في هذه الدراسة بشكل كامل في حالة تكملتها في المشاركين في هذه الدراسة. ووافق عالم مشاركتك أن يركز على تحليل البيانات.

الإفادات: نود أن نؤكد أن البيانات المرتبطة بهذه الدراسة هي أشياء التي نتوقعها في يوم.

المزيد: ربما تكون تابعاً نتائج هذه الدراسة. إذا كنت بذلك، كل المعلومات المرتبطة بك ستطبع بشكل سري وخصوص. أي شخص لديه سلسلة للنظر لمعلوماتك سوف يعرف سري.

لماذا تطلب منك المشاركة؟
لأولى معالمة حاسمة على شهادة في الطفولة المبكرة وأدايا خيرة لا تقل عن مبتدئين في تدريس هذه المرحلة العمرية.

إجراءات الدراسة:

في كل زيارة ستطلب ملك ما يلي:

1- المشاركة في مقابلات شخصيتك مع الباحثة. سوف يتم تسجيل المقابلات صوتياً وذلك للعودة لها أثناء تحليل البيانات.

2- سوف يجري كل مقابلة في يوم متصل عن الآخر. سوف تقوم الباحثة بإجراء المقابلات في نفس مكان عمل المشاركات.

(إذا تم تكرار في وقت الزمن debugging أو بعد انتهاءهما). سوف تكون المقابلات في غرفة مغلقة بسبب اختيار إدارة المدرسة. هذه المقابلة الشخصية لكل مشارك حوالي 12 دقيقة.

- المقابلة الشخصية الأولى سوف تركز على مجموعة من الأسئلة التي تتعلق بالممارسات والسياسات التي تدعمها الراوحة للحرب الجوية. الأسئلة الأخرى سوف ورقة بشكل كبير على العلاج الحركي والعليج، وكذلك سوف يطلب منك القيام بالرسم.

- المقابلة الشخصية الثانية تركز بالكامل على الحروب الحركي والعليج من خلال عرض مجموعة من الصور مرور فيها مجموعه من الأطفال بمارسون أوغ متخللة من لعبة الحروب الحركي والعليج أثناء وقت اللعبة الجوي. سوف يوم الباحث يعرض هذه الصور وسؤال المشاركات عن تصوراتهم عن هذا النوع من الحروب.

- مشارك في هذا البحث طفولة بالكامل يمكن أن يتصل بالباحث في حالة الإقرار بإرسال من المشاركة. لن يتم استخدام بياناتك في التحليل، فيما يتعلق بحماية هويتك، لن تظهر شكل على أي جزء من البيانات أو نتائج البحث أو في أي مناقشات مكتوبة أو شفية للدراسة.

5- ستصبح معلومات معلمة وبيانات الدراسة بسرية كاملاً من خلال تحريرها على وحدة تحريين آمنة محمية بكلمة مرور.

العدد الكلي للمشاركين

سوف يشاركون من أربعة إلى ست مسلمات طويلة مبكرة في هذه الدراسة وسوف تجري المقابلات الشخصية في نفس مرحلة العمل المعلمة.

البدائل/ المشاركة الطوعية/ الإنسحاب

المشاركة في هذه الدراسة طوعية بالكامل. لا ينبغي أن تشعر بأن هناك أي ضغط عليك للمشاركة في الدراسة. لديك الحرية في المشاركة في هذا البحث أو الإنسحاب في أي وقت. لن يكون هناك أي عقوبة أو فقدان لموارد مستحقة لك في حال توقفك عن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة. وقرار عدم المشاركة لن يؤثر على حالتك كعملية.

الفوائد
ليس هناك أي فوائد مباشرة تعمل على المشارك في هذه الدراسة. لكن تكمن أهمية هذا البحث بأنه سيساعده في ارساء المكتبة العربية والبحثية. وتعمق في تدريس ممارسات تجاه لحب الأطفال وذلك لخدمة احتياجاتهم البديلة والمعرفية والاجتماعية.

المخاطر أو عدم التشار في الراحة

هذا البحث لا يحمل أي مخاطر. تأكد أن المخاطر المرتبطة بهذه الدراسة هي نفسها التي تسريحها كل يوم. لا توجد مخاطر إضافية.

التعليمات

ليس هناك أي أجر أو تغريزة جزاء المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

التكاليف

المشاركة في الدراسة لن تنتج أي تكاليف.

الخصوصية والسرية

كل البيانات والسجلات محتفظ بشكل أمن وسري. الاحترام على السرية سيكون محدود ومقتصر على أفراد معينين وسيتم ذلك بشكل أمن. الأفراد الذين يحق لهم الطلع هم:

1. فريق البحث، بما في ذلك الباحث الرئيسي ومنشق الدراسة والممرضات الحكية، وجميع موظفي البحث الآخرين.
2. بعض أفراد الحكومة والجامعات الذين يحتاجون إلى معرفة المزيد عن الدراسة. على سبيل المثال، قد يحتاج الأفراد الذين يقدمون الإفصاح على هذه الدراسة إلى النظر في مجلتهم.
3. الحاجة للتأكيد من أنتا لكي تحوز حقوقك وسلامتك.
4. الموظفين المسؤولين في لجنة (المؤسسة المراجعة المؤسسية) التابعة لجامعة جنوب ثوريدا والذين لديهم مسؤوليات الإشراف على هذه الدراسة من حيث التزامة وسلامة وصحة البيانات.

قد يتم نشر نتائج هذا البحث مع ذلك، فإن تقوم بوضع اسمك وأن نسمح للقارئ بمعرفة هويتك أو أي معلومات عنك.

يمكنك الحصول على إجابات لأسئلتك، والمخاوف، أو الشكاوى

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة، مخاوف أو واجهت أي مشكلة غير متوقعة، اتصل بالأستاذة رنا العامدي على هاتف نقال 555338838. إذا كان لديك أسئلة حول حقوقك كمشارك في هذه الدراسة، أو مخاوف أو اهتمامات ترغب في مناقشتها مع شخص من خارج إطار البحث، اتصل على لجنة المراجعة المؤسسية في جامعة جنوب ثوريدا على الهاتف: 813-356-4739.
إقرار الموافقة على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة

أقر أنا الموقع أدناه موافقًا على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة وبطاقتي جزائي. كما أعلمه بأن هذا الإقرار، فإني سأكون قد وافق على المشاركة في البحث. كما وقد تلقى نسخة من هذا النموذج لأخذها معى.

توقيع الشخص المشارك في الدراسة

الاسم العلمي للشخص المشارك في الدراسة

بيان الشخص الحاصل على إقرار الموافقة

لقد شرحت بداية للمشارك في هذه الدراسة كافة إجراءات البحث وما هو متوقع من مشاركته. كما أنني أؤكد على أن شرح الإقرار وكذلك إجراءات البحث قد تم تتم باللغة الأساسية التي يتحدث بها المشارك في هذا البحث وهي اللغة العربية. كما أن المشارك الموقع أعلاه قد تلقى موافقة عامة على المشاركة في البحث ويشكل قانوني.

توقيع الشخص الذي حصل على إقرار الموافقة

الاسم العلمي للشخص الحاصل على إقرار الموافقة
Appendix F: Letter of Invitation

Participation Invitation Letter
Pro# 000382

Dear Invitee,

My name is Rana Alghamdi. I am a doctoral student at University of South Florida in early childhood program. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting titled: Saudi Teachers’ Perceptions of Rough and Tumble Play in Early Learning. The intention is to explore early childhood educator-perception of Rough and Tumble (R&T) play in Saudi Arabia. The study will describe, explain and enhance understanding of teacher perceptions, beliefs regarding R&T play, and how and why they are formed.

The study involves two interviews sessions: The first part of the interview will consist of introductory questions regarding physical outdoor play and perceptions of play. The second part of the interview is a two-part photo elicitation. The time it is estimated that it will take to participate in this study is 2 hours.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is completely anonymous; therefore, it does not require you to provide your name or any other identifying information.

If you would like to participate in the study please read the Informed Consent letter below.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Rana Alghamdi, Doctoral Student, University of South Florida
Appendix G: Institutional Review Board Approval

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

March 9, 2020

Rana Alghamdi
20617 Whitewood way
Tampa, FL 33647

Dear Mrs. Rana Alghamdi:

On 3/6/2020, the IRB reviewed and approved the following protocol:

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<th>Application Type:</th>
<th>Initial Study</th>
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<td>IRB ID:</td>
<td>STUDY000382</td>
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<td>Title:</td>
<td>Saudi Teachers’ Perceptions of Rough and Tumble Play in Early Learning</td>
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<td>Funding:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protocol:</td>
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The IRB determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Please note, as per USF policy, once the exempt determination is made, the application is closed in BullsIRB. This does not limit your ability to conduct the research. Any proposed or anticipated change to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB oversight must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant a modification or new application.

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Sincerely,
Tabassum Tasnim

Institutional Review Boards / Research Integrity & Compliance
FWA No. 00001609
University of South Florida / 3702 Spectrum Blvd., Suite 165 / Tampa, FL 33612 / 813-974-5638
Certificate of Completion

Rana Alghamdi

Completed USF IRB Student Researcher Workshop

on Tuesday, October 8, 2019

Certificate ID#: 51253