

AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE IF THERE IS A MARKED DIFFERENCE IN
THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF INFANT ONE STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED
KINDERGARTEN AS OPPOSED TO THOSE WHO DID NOT.

SUBMITTED TO :
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENT OF A TRAINED TEACHERS'
CERTIFICATE.

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AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE IF THERE IS A MARKED DIFFERENCE
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BACKGROUND

Children begin learning at birth, and what they learn depends largely on their experience. The home is where most learning experiences take place. Books, toys and educational television programmes offer valuable learning experiences for the very young.

Since formal education¹. begins with early childhood education²., the researcher decided to concentrate on Kindergartens or pre-schools as they are usually called. Frequently, many parents and teachers pay little attention to the first years of education. They tend to pay more attention to the latter part of primary education, without realizing that the foundation is laid at the beginning of the child's education. When deploying staff, many principals tend to put the trained teachers at the middle and upper divisions, and put the inexperienced teachers at the Infant division.

What really caught the researcher's attention is the amount of pre-schools that are presently opened in the Orange Walk District. Statistics show that since 1980, there has been an increase in the number of pre-schools in the rural and urban communities in Belize. In Orange Walk Town, there are six pre-schools rendering their services to the community.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Throughout the researcher's six years teaching experience, the researcher has always heard Infant One teachers commending pre-schoolers on their work , and complaining about the academic performance³ of non-preschoolers. Most teachers say that non-preschoolers do not usually possess the fundamental skills that preschoolers have. This in turn hinders the preschoolers' progress in class. In most cases, the amount of non-preschoolers who can barely hold their pencils exceeds the amount of preschoolers in the same situation. Most non-preschoolers do not know that they should write from left to right. Many of them start writing at the bottom of the page, then go up and finish off at the middle of the page. Their attention span is relatively shorter when compared to the preschoolers' one.

A higher percentage of preschoolers tend to have more hand and eye coordination than most of the non-preschoolers. Due to this, preschoolers are able to colour pictures better. Whenever teachers are speaking to Infant One students, non-preschoolers seem to be lost because some of them do not understand English. Most Infant One teachers have noticed that non-preschoolers are performing academically lower than preschoolers. These are the most common problems that Infant One teachers encounter in their classroom whenever they have preschoolers and non-preschoolers together.

PURPOSE

Through this investigation, the researcher intends to make teachers and parents aware of whether their children would benefit academically from attending pre-school. The outcomes will help teachers to determine whether they should pay close attention to the first years of education or to the latter part of it. By understanding the importance of early childhood and primary education, teachers will give children the proper education they deserve in order to succeed in life. So that parents understand whether pre-schools play an important role in their communities. Through this investigation, the researcher intends to determine if there is a marked difference in the academic performance of Infant One students who attended pre-school and those who did not.

SIGNIFICANCE

The researcher believes that the outcomes of this research will be helpful to other researchers, at Belize Teachers' Training College, who will be willing to continue researching in similar areas of this study. To parents, who by understanding the significance of pre-schools, will make a decision on whether it is educationally beneficial to send their children to pre-school. The researcher is making a call to different N.G.O.'s⁴, who are interested in children's rights - the right to a sound education, to lobby for the betterment of education in Belize. The outcomes will definitely help pre-school curriculum developers to come up with better ideas whenever they are planning educational experiences to meet children's needs. To the Ministry of Education, so that when making policies or decisions related to pre-schools, they will make rational decisions on whether they will open more pre-schools or close down those that are currently operating.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE FIRST KINDERGARTEN

According to Cole (1957), Froebel taught that cultivating plants was just like educating young children. Through this idea, the term Kindergarten became associated with a garden of children happily engaged socially in an outdoor environment. To Froebel, the source of educational principles was the child. The child becomes educated by developing himself through his own creative activities. Since he considered the child to be the source of educational principle, he said that the teachers just followed where the pupils led. It is the child who becomes educated by developing himself through his own creative activities. Froebel thought that it wasn't the teacher's business to teach, but to keep out of the way and let the child grow. So, it can be said that Froebel exalted the interests and spontaneous activities of the child.

Cole goes on to say that self-activity was another principle of Froebel's approach to education. This approach is described as an activity determined by one's own interests, sustained by one's own power, and carried to conclusion in an atmosphere of freedom from interference by others. Froebel was willing to leave children free ; he discovered the great educational value of play, of handwork and of spontaneous cooperation among children.

Froebel's Kindergarten centered around three things - the use of his gifts, the singing of his songs, and the playing of

various educational games in the play-circle. His gifts consisted of blocks or other materials arranged as a unit in a box, from where the child took it out to play with and to which the child returned them to. The gifts were not just building blocks cut at random, but blocks which were used to illustrate certain relationships and to form a unified whole. The gifts lead children to examine, compare, arrange in order, measure, count and analyze. A great deal of both sensory and muscular education is inherent in the mere playing with the cut-out geometrical shapes.

The fact that children spontaneously play games in which they join hands to make a circle struck Froebel's mind. So, he incorporated this idea into creating play-songs for the children to sing in play-circles. Froebel's gifts have been modified and made more flexible, and other materials have been added to his gift collection.

John Dewey. Their view was that along with its emphasis on physical care, fresh air and exercise, the young child develops emotionally, socially and intellectually through play. Jealousies and frustrations, which are inevitable at this point, can be expressed and worked out through role play. Contact with other children leads to cooperative play and sharing. Through "discovery learning" in the course of the child's active exploration of varied materials, cognitive growth comes about.

Spodek (1986) said that play serves an important educational and developmental role in the early years of childhood. He also said that young children continue to use play to learn about the intellectual and social world as well as the world of symbols and language. Children process information that is different from what they already possess when they interact with peers. While they interact with other children, they must consider other persons' points of view. Spodek said that Wallach and Kagan(1965) defined the creative process as the development of associations that are unique and that incorporate a playful and permissive attitude. This definition highlights the relationship of play to creativity. Spodek also makes reference to Singer (1973) who showed that children grow more creative during the ages of three and four, and are able to play different kinds of imaginative

games. Dansky and Silverman (1973) concluded that play helps to develop children's creative thinking. Fantasy play relates to the development of social and cognitive skills (Bruner, 1972; Singer, 1973; Smilansky, 1968). Spodek stated that Smilansky found that young children develop creative skills through sociodramatic activities. Children entering the Kindergarten classroom are immediately cast into two social roles. One role is that of group members in a society of age-mates; the other is the role of student.

Parry and Archer (1975) stated that it is through play that a child becomes an inquirer, an experimenter, and an explorer. Play enables the child to test his competence in many ways without fear of failure, and this in turn builds up his concept of self and of self-esteem. The interaction and communication between a child and other members of his immediate circle is essential for language development.

Through dressing and undressing, washing and bathing and through play, children will have encountered some mathematical ideas such as : sorting and matching; size and shape; numbers and counting; measurement and possibly money. Speech develops as children are spoken to and listened to, and when they feel loved and secure. When children enter Kindergarten, a good relationship between children and staff is fundamental for the

development of language. This relationship is not in itself enough; it needs to be backed by the teacher's skills and his/her understanding of how language develops.

They continue to say that play enables a child to mix with other children; to discover how friendships are made; to observe other children's behaviour and reactions; to discover the relationship that results from being a boy or a girl; a leader or a follower; older or younger; weaker or stronger than the other children. Play stimulates a child to find language and enables him to develop the skills he needs to support him in tackling the complexities of the world. Through conversation with both adults and children, children extend their vocabulary and learn the structure of language. By placing objects made of metal or wood, corks, stones and sponges in water aids in the formation of the concepts of floating and sinking; under, on, in, top and bottom. Exploring the uses of wood provides children with many opportunities for eye and hand coordination, the use of the large muscles, and both emotional and physical release. It also encourages sharing, taking turns, working together and the care of tools. Blocks and bricks are essential items of basic equipment for Kindergarten children. They help children to acquire concepts of form, pattern and space, and to develop mathematical ideas and vocabulary.

EARLY SCRIBBLING AND SPATIAL QUALITIES

Pickering (1971) said that the first marks that children make are done in a random manner. These marks are done through the exploration of touch, and gradually these scribblings develop from an erratic state to one of control. This control usually runs parallel to the development of muscular coordination. The use of vertical and horizontal lines emerges from early erratic lines. A circular action is also very common during this stage. As the muscular coordination develops, so the tactile sensitivity tends to fade and the lines begin to emerge as shapes. The shapes are used to represent objects that exist within the limited world of the child and these shapes evolve as the child's knowledge increases.

Pickering goes on to say that it is impossible to isolate the early tactile experiences of young children from that of motion. Scribble is an experience of muscular coordination and therefore is an experience which must involve movement through the manipulation of arms, wrists and fingers. The various types of scribble, from the uncontrolled varieties to the controlled, are in fact a representation of the movement involved in producing them. During the period of symbolism in very young children, the use of a multiple image frequently appears in their drawings of animals. In these drawings, the legs of an animal may be

represented many times. This may be linked with a lack of number concept, but it may also be associated with the complexity of viewing a quickly moving animal which may appear to have many legs. A valuable contribution to the extension of a child's visual vocabulary is the use of a progression of drawings.

Children should also be encouraged to study objects with which they can create movement. They can be encouraged to discover for themselves what happens to smoke when the wind blows, or the movement of clothes on a clothes line. The earliest marks made by the very young children do not reveal any spatial qualities in the lines produced. With the emergence of generalised images or symbols, spatial relationships are still very vague and usually these early marks reveal a lack of understanding of relationships of the positions of various objects. The first indication of an awareness of space is when children begin to colour the linear areas of their drawings. A young child would usually use the bottom edge of the paper as the ground line. As the child's awareness of space develops, so the images gradually move up the paper and the relationship of one shape with another begins to have more importance. Children also enrich their understanding of spatial problems when they are playing with bricks, blocks and constructional toys. The use of drinking straws, cocktail sticks, matchboxes, nuts, bolts, paper clips and

other readily available units can form excellent materials for spatial constructions.

Recognition and awareness of shapes should form an excellent part of space discovery and an excellent link with early Mathematics. Children should be encouraged to find shapes in their environment and to name the shapes as well, which will help to extend their vocabulary. Once children are capable of producing their own shapes either by drawing or by cutting them out from coloured paper, they should be led to discover that certain shapes will fit together and others will not.

All these things can be developed in a child at a kindergarten. Children respond better if they are guided by someone. Their social skills are developed when they interact with their peers. At a Kindergarten, children can manipulate many objects which creates an awareness of space.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

PARAGRAPH I - METHOD

The sample of this investigation consisted of twenty Infant One teachers from seven purposefully chosen schools in the Orange Walk District. Four schools were chosen from Orange Walk Town and three schools from the villages.

A questionnaire consisting of two sections was used to gather information for the investigation. Section A consisted of seven questions and Section B consisted of twelve likert type questions. The questionnaires were distributed to the Infant One teachers by the researcher. The questionnaire was geared toward collecting biographical information about the teacher, and information concerning students who attended and did not attend pre-school.

The researcher contacted all principals before visiting each school. During the visit, the purpose of the study was presented and the questionnaires distributed to the Infant One teachers. On the due date, the contact person in each school collected the questionnaires. The researcher then collected the questionnaires from each contact person. A thank-you letter was sent to each principal.

Tally charts, bar graphs, frequency charts and circle graphs were used to present the data collected from the questionnaires. A narrative section also accompanies each table. This explains the outcome of each question.

Paragraph 2 - Sample

The population of this investigation consisted of all Infant One classes of all Primary Schools in the Orange Walk District. Seven schools were chosen purposefully from all the schools in the District. Four schools are from the Orange Walk Town and three schools are from the villages. These seven schools were chosen purposefully because most of the Infant One pupils in these schools attended Kindergarten before entering primary school. This means that the teachers in the sample are teaching both children who attended pre-school and those who did not.

The four schools that are located in the Town are : La Inmaculada School; Louisiana Government School; San Francisco R.C. School and Trial Farm Government School. The three schools that are from the villages are : San Estevan R.C. School; San Lazaro Methodist School and Yo Creek R.C. School. The sample included all Infant I teachers from the above mentioned seven schools. This is a total amount of twenty teachers.

The following table shows the amount of Infant One classes in each school and the amount of children who attended pre-school and those who did not attend pre-school before entering primary school.

Name of School	Infant I classes	Preschoolers	Non-presch.	Total
La Inmaculada Infant School	A	22	14	36
	B	30	6	36
	C	28	10	38
	D	27	13	40
Louisiana Gov't. School	A	20	15	35
	B	17	18	35
	C	24	14	38
	D	15	23	38
	E	18	20	38
San Francisco R.C.School	A	12	26	38
	B	17	23	40
	C	23	17	40
	D	20	22	42
Trial Farm Gov't.	A	30	2	32
	B	14	17	31
	C	5	26	31
	D	12	20	32

Name of School	Inf. I classes	Preschoolers	Non-presch.	Total
San Estevan R.C.School	A	34	18	52
San Lazaro Methodist Sch.	A	18	4	22
Yo Creek R.C. School	A	22	6	28

Paragraph 3 - Instrument

A questionnaire for teachers was used to gather the information needed to determine if there is a marked difference in the academic performance of Infant One students who attended Kindergarten as opposed to those who did not. The questionnaire included Section A and B.

Section A was intended to collect biographical information about the teacher and students in the class. The teacher was only required to tick the appropriate response for each statement. Section A consisted of seven questions :

eg. Gender : Male _____ Female _____

Section B consisted of twelve likert type questions. The respondents were required to circle the letter(s) which indicated his/her choice.

SA- Strongly Agree A- Agree D- Disagree SD- Strongly Disagree

eg. Children who attend pre-school can orally express themselves better.

SA A D SD

The likert type questions addressed topics such as : children's performance in Infant One; children's attitude toward work; children's language; children's phonetical and social skills; children's mental and emotional developments; whether or not pre-school education should be compulsory. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

Paragraph 4 - Data Collection

The researcher contacted all seven principals before hand to make an appointment to visit the schools. During the visit to each school, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and asked for permission to visit the Infant One classes. While visiting each class, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and asked teachers for their cooperation. Since the questionnaire was a relatively short one, the cooperating teachers were given one week to complete it. The cover letter explained the purpose of the study; what the study was all about; the time span for completing the questionnaire; it assured respondents that the responses would be used for the sole purpose of the research; finally, teachers were thanked in advance for their cooperation.

The researcher asked a teacher in each school to be the contact person. Upon the due date, the contact person at each school collected all questionnaires. The researcher then collected the questionnaires from each contact person. A letter was delivered personally to each principal thanking him/her and the cooperating teachers for their help. All the twenty questionnaires which were given out were returned.

Paragraph 5 - Data Analysis

The researcher intends to present the biographical information from Section A of the questionnaire using tally charts. The responses for each statement will then be represented on a bar graph. This section will be very useful in identifying the number of years each teacher has been teaching at the Infant Level, and the amount of children in each class who attend pre-school. This will be very useful in determining the percentage of students who attended pre-school before entering Primary School. The population for each School's Infant Division will be calculated. The total amount of students who attended pre-school and the total amount of students who did not attend pre-school will be represented on a circle graph. The three hundred sixty degrees will be divided by the school's Infant population. This will give the amount of degrees that will represent each child. This amount of degrees will be multiplied by the amount of children who went to pre-school. This information will be represented on a circle graph.

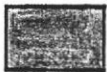
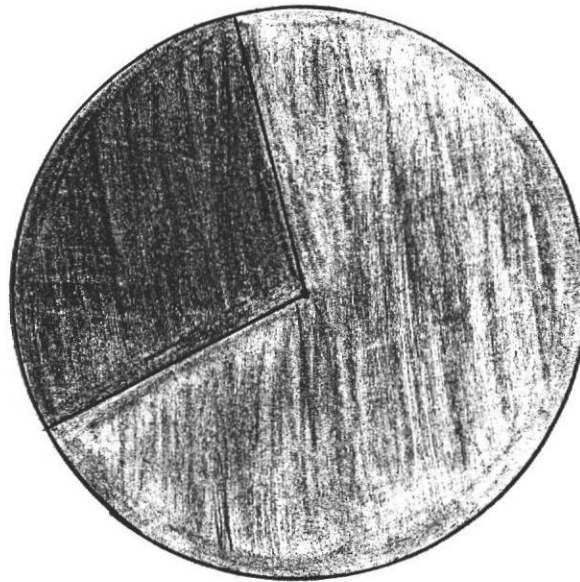
eg.

La Inmaculada's total Infant One Population 150 students
Children who attended pre-school 107 students
Children who did not attend pre-school 43 students

$$:- 360^{\circ} \div 150 \text{ students} = 2.4^{\circ} \text{ for each student}$$

$$:- 107 \text{ students} \times 2.4^{\circ} = 256.8^{\circ} \text{ (for pre-schoolers)}$$

$$:- 43 \text{ students} \times 2.4^{\circ} = 103.2^{\circ} \text{ (for non-preschoolers)}$$



PRESCHOOLERS



NON-PRESCHOOLERS

The likert type questions from Section B will be represented in frequency charts, and then illustrated on bar graphs. This section will pin point some of the skills that teachers think are possessed by children who attend pre-school.

A narrative section will also accompany each table in both Section A and B. This is intended to explain the outcomes of each question and will be helpful when stating the findings for this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

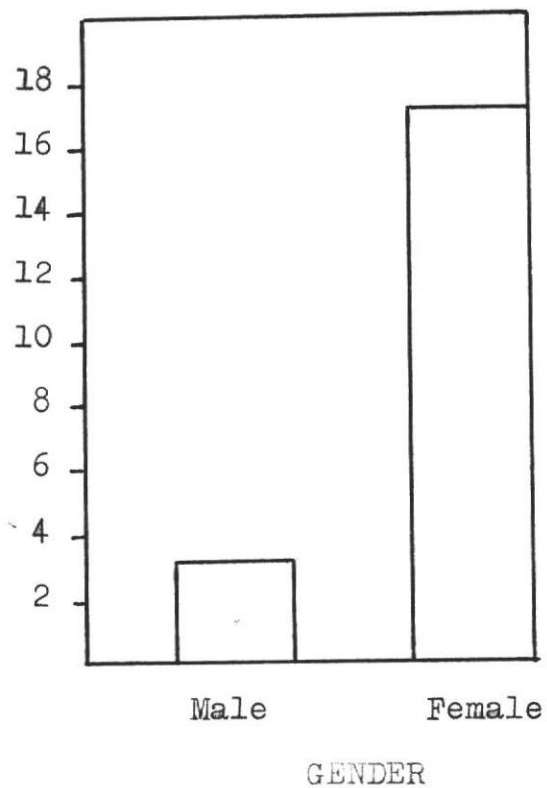
DATA ANALYSIS

SECTION A

1. Gender

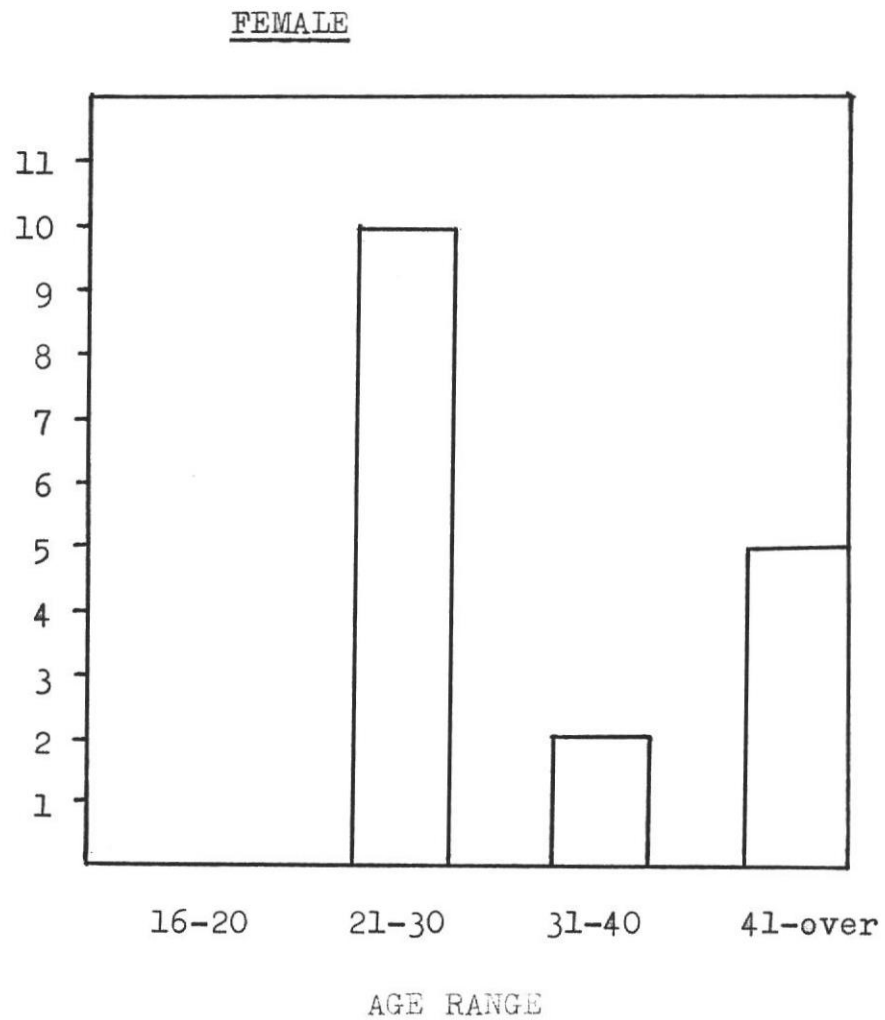
Gender	Tally	Frequency
Male	111	3
Female	11111 11111 11111 11	17

NUMBER OF
RESPONDENTS



From the seven purposefully chosen schools, almost all the Infant One teachers are females. Out of the twenty respondents, seventeen are females and three are males.

NUMBER OF
FEMALE
RESPONDENTS



Most of the females who responded to the questionnaire are from the ages of twenty-one to thirty. Two of them are from thirty-one to forty years old. The other five respondents are forty-one years and over.

3.) Educational Status

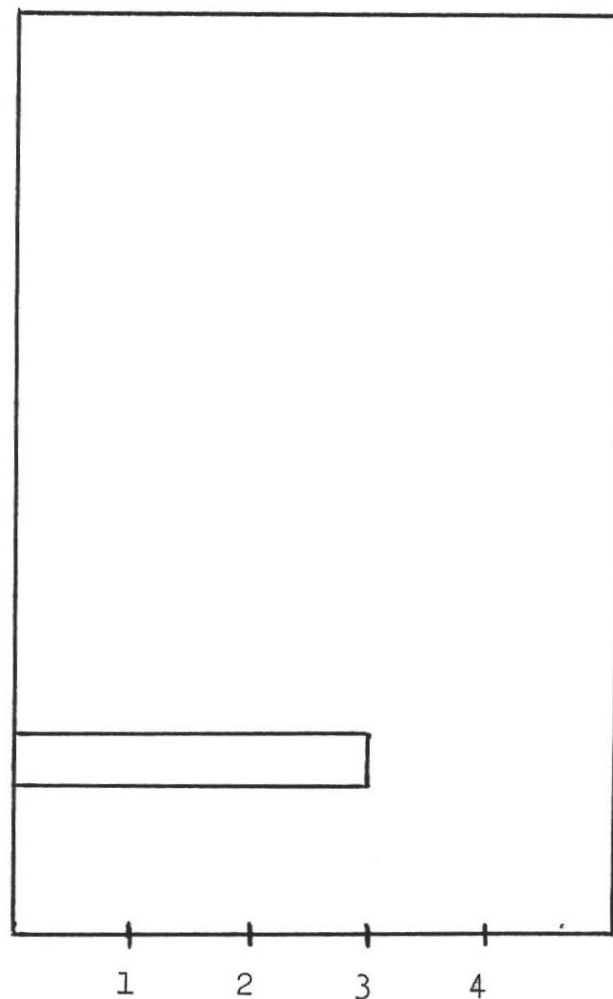
Educational Status	Tally	Frequency
1 st teacher's certificate		0
2 nd class tch.'s cert.		0
High School Diploma	1	1
1 st class tch.'s cert.	1	1
Sixth Form Diploma		0
Level I Certificate	11111	5
Level II Certificate		0
Trained (2+1 year course)	11111 11111 111	13
Bachelor's Degree		0

None of the respondents fall under the following educational statuses : First Teacher's Certificate, Second Class Teacher's Certificate, Sixth Form Diploma, Level II Certificate and Bachelor's Degree. One of the respondents has a High School Diploma. One other respondent holds a First Class Teacher's Certificate. Five respondents have a Level I Certificate. Thirteen respondents are trained teachers under the " 2+1 year course".

MALE

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

1st Teachers' Certificate
2nd Class Teachers' Certificate
High School Diploma
1st Class Teachers' Certificate
Sixth Form Diploma
Level I Certificate
Level II Certificate
Trined (2+1 year course)
Bachelor's Degree



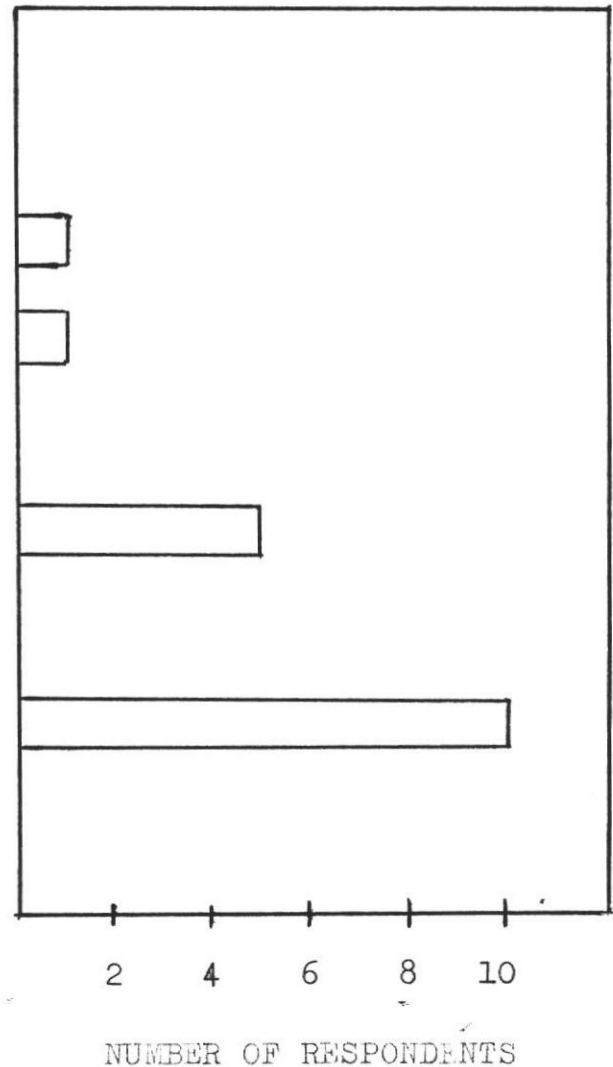
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

All three male respondents to the questionnaire are trained teachers under the " 2 + 1 year course ".

FEMALE

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

1st Teachers' Certificate
2nd Class Teachers' Certificate
High School Diploma
1st Class Teachers' Certificate
Sixth Form Diploma
Level I Certificate
Level II Certificate
Trained (2 + 1 year course)
Bachelor's Degree



Out of the seventeen female respondents to the questionnaire, one has a High School Diploma. One of them has a First Class Teachers' Certificate. Five of them hold a Level I Certificate and ten females are trained under the " 2 + 1 year course ". So, most of the female Infant One teachers are trained teachers.

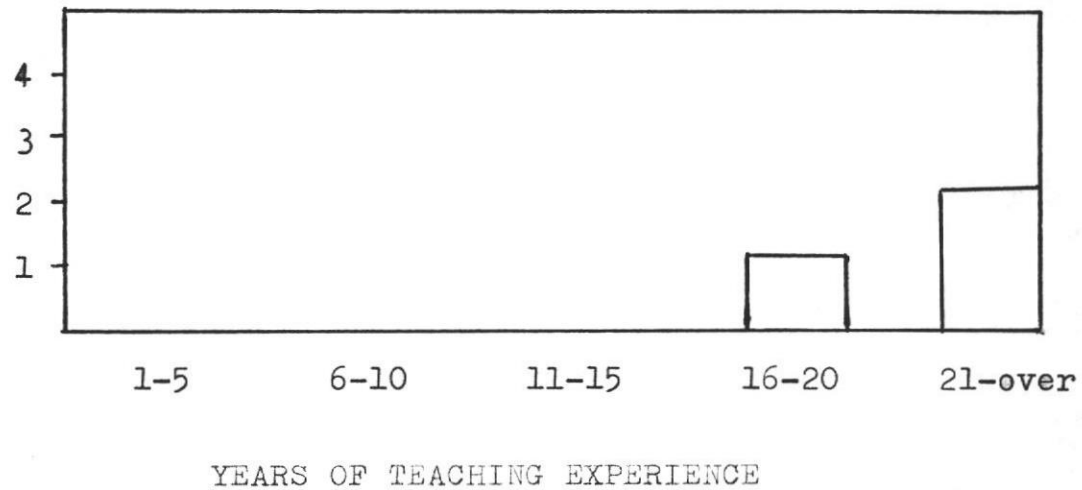
4.) Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Tally	Frequency
1-5 years	lllll	5
6-10 years	lllll	5
11-15 years		0
16-20 years	llll	4
21-over years	lllll 1	6

Five of the respondents have been teaching for five or less than five years. Five of them range from six to ten years teaching experience. Four respondents fall under the range of sixteen to twenty years teaching experience. None of the twenty respondents have eleven to fifteen years teaching experience. The majority, being six respondents, have been teaching for twenty-one years or more.

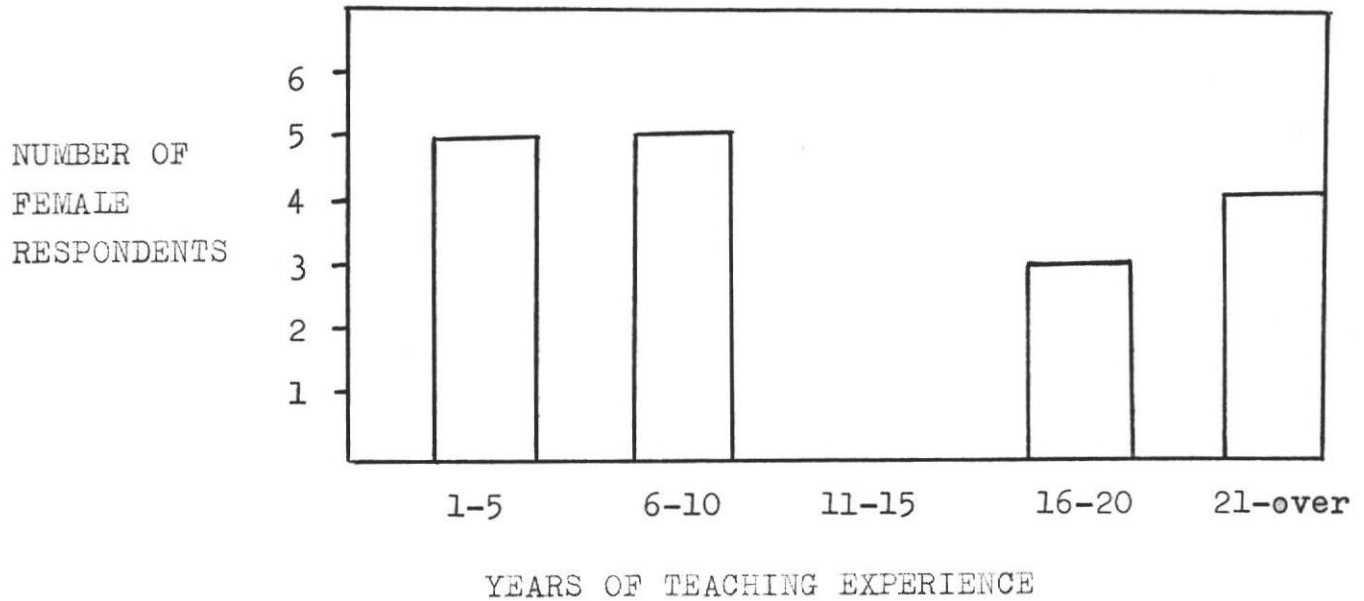
MALE

NUMBER OF
MALE
RESPONDENTS



Out of the three male respondents, one has been teaching for sixteen to twenty years. The other two male respondents have been teaching for twenty-one years or more.

FEMALE



Five of the seventeen female respondents have been teaching for five or less than five years. Another five fall from six to ten years teaching experience. Three of them fall from sixteen to twenty years teaching experience. Four of them have been teaching for twenty-one years or more.

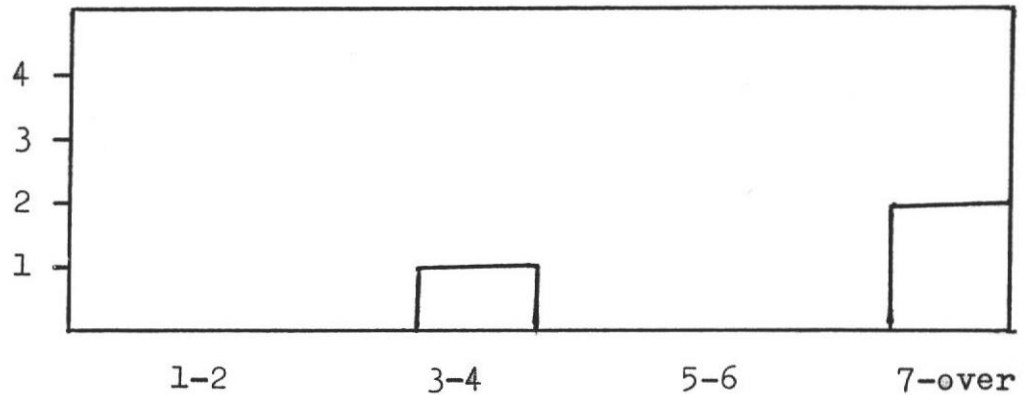
5.) Number of years teaching at the Infant Level

Number of years teaching at the Infant Level	Tally	Frequency
1-2 years	lllll 1	6
3-4 years	lll	3
5-6 years	lll	3
7-over years	lllll lll	8

Six teachers have been teaching at the Infant Level for one to two years. Three of them have been teaching at the Infant Level for three to four years. Another three have been teaching at the Infant Level for five to six years. Eight teachers, the biggest number, have been at the Infant Level for seven years or more.

MALE

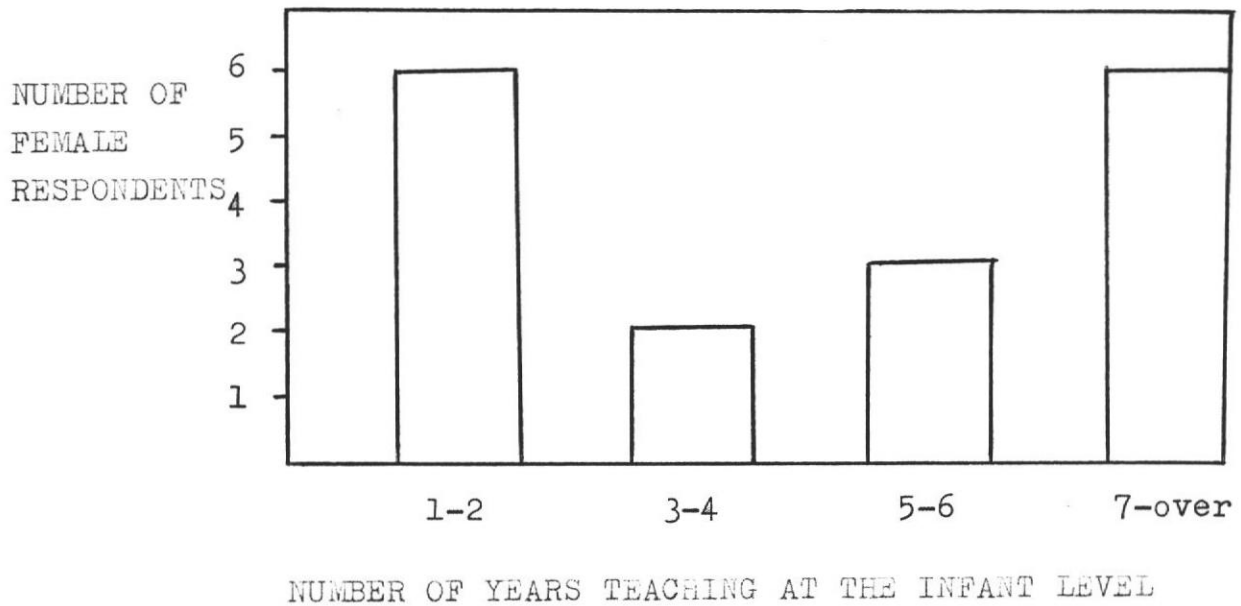
NUMBER OF
MALE
RESPONDENTS



NUMBER OF YEARS TEACHING AT THE INFANT LEVEL

One of the male teachers has been teaching at the Infant Level for three to four years. The other two teachers have been at the Infant Level for seven years or more.

FEMALE

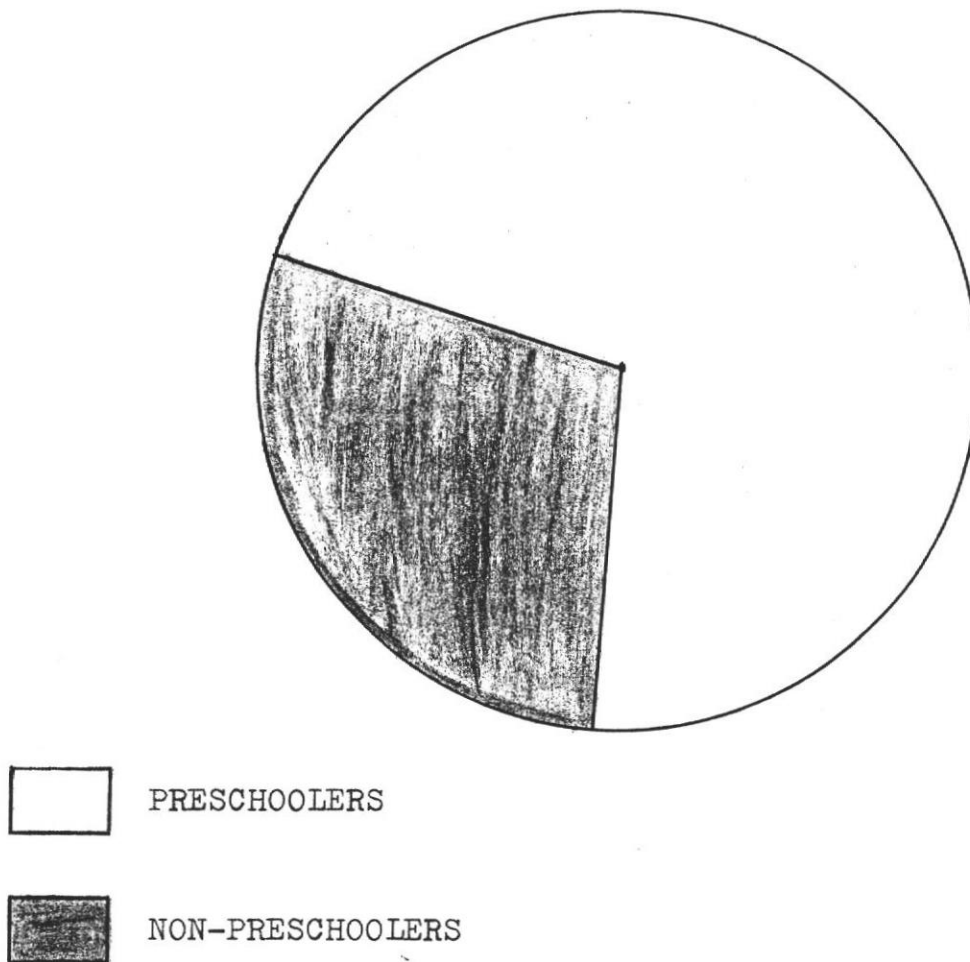


Six female teachers have been teaching at the Infant Level for one to two years. Two of them have been working at the same level for three to four years. Three females have been at the Infant Level for five to six years. The other six teachers have been working at the Infant Level for seven or more years.

Name of School	Infant I classes	Preschoolers	Non-presch.	Total
La Inmaculada Infant School	A	22	14	36
	B	30	6	36
	C	28	10	38
	D	27	13	40
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	C	24	14	38
	D	15	23	38
	E	18	20	38
San Francisco R.C.School	A	12	26	38
	B	17	23	40
	C	23	17	40
	D	20	22	42
Trial Farm Gov't. School	A	30	2	32
	B	14	17	31
	C	5	26	31
	D	12	20	32

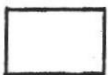
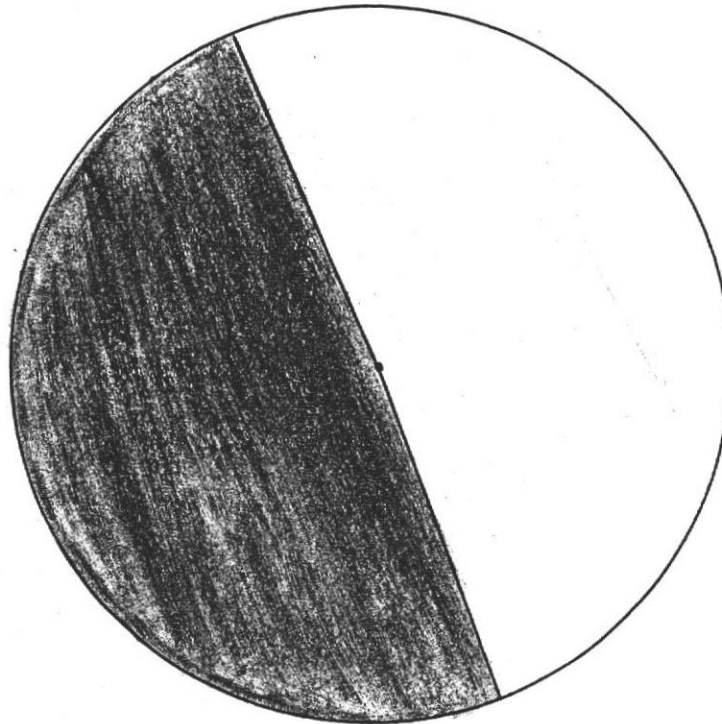
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San Lazaro Methodist Sch.	A	18	4	22
Yo Creek R.C.School	A	22	6	28

LA INMACULADA INFANT SCHOOL



The total Infant One population for La Inmaculada Infant School is one hundred fifty. One hundred seven students attended pre-school before entering into Primary School. Forty-three students did not attend pre-school. A little more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the entire Infant population attended pre-school.

LOUISIANA GOVERNMENT SCHOOL



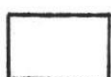
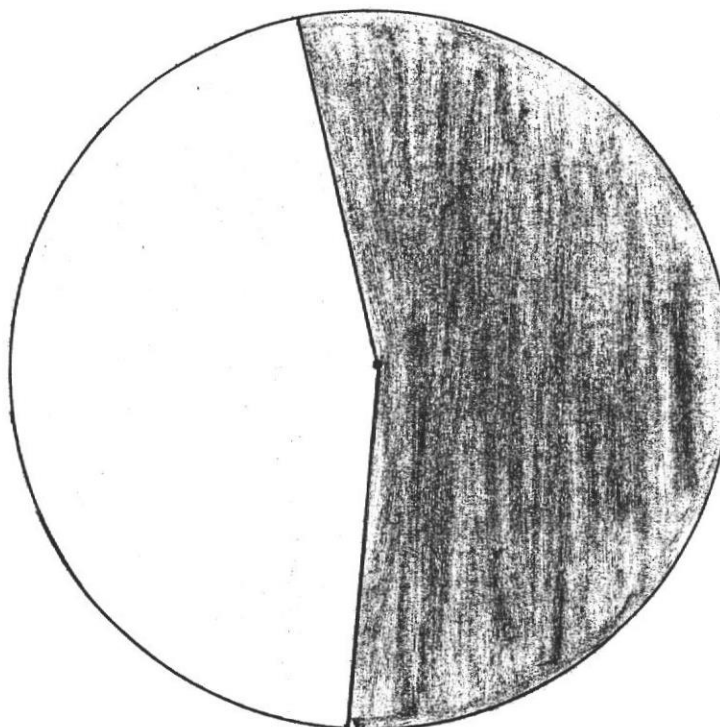
PRESCHOOLERS



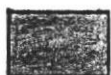
NON-PRESCHOOLERS

The total Infant One population for Louisiana Government School is one hundred eighty-four. Ninety-four students attended pre-school before entering into Primary School. Ninety students did not attend pre-school. A little more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the entire Infant population attended pre-school.

SAN FRANCISCO R.C. SCHOOL



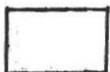
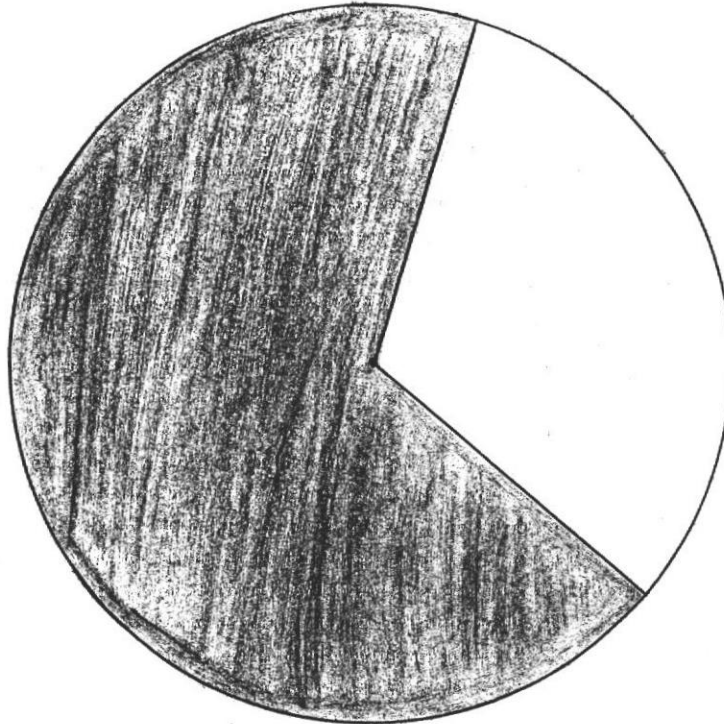
PRESCHOOLERS



NON-PRESCHOOLERS

The total Infant One population for San Francisco R.C. School is one hundred sixty. Seventy-two students attended pre-school before entering into Primary School. Eighty-eight students did not attend pre-school. The majority of the Infant One students did not attend pre-school.

TRIAL FARM GOVERNMENT SCHOOL



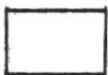
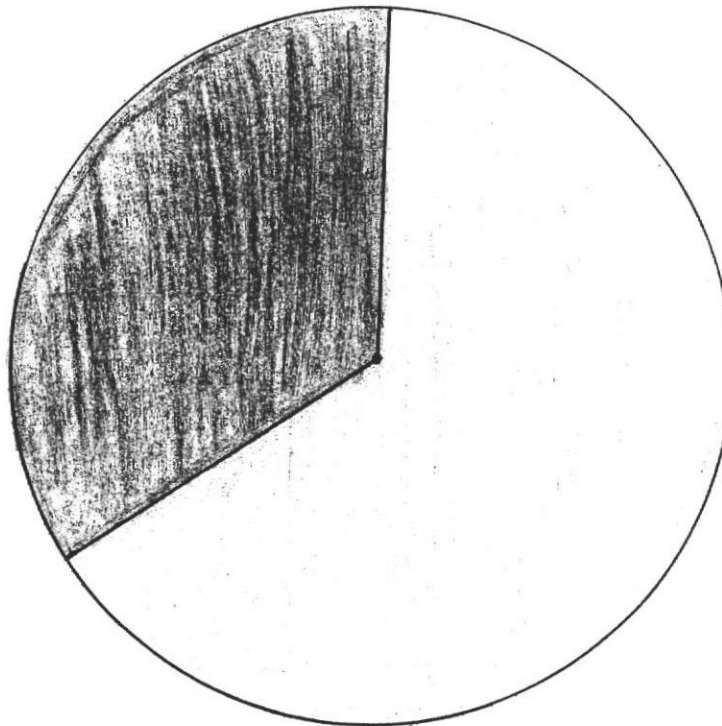
PRESCHOOLERS



NON-PRESCHOOLERS

The total Infant One population for Trial Farm Government School is one hundred twenty-six. Sixty-one students attended pre-school before entering into Primary School. Sixty-five students did not attend pre-school before entering into Primary School. A little more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the entire Infant population did not attend pre-school.

SAN ESTEVAN R.C.SCHOOL



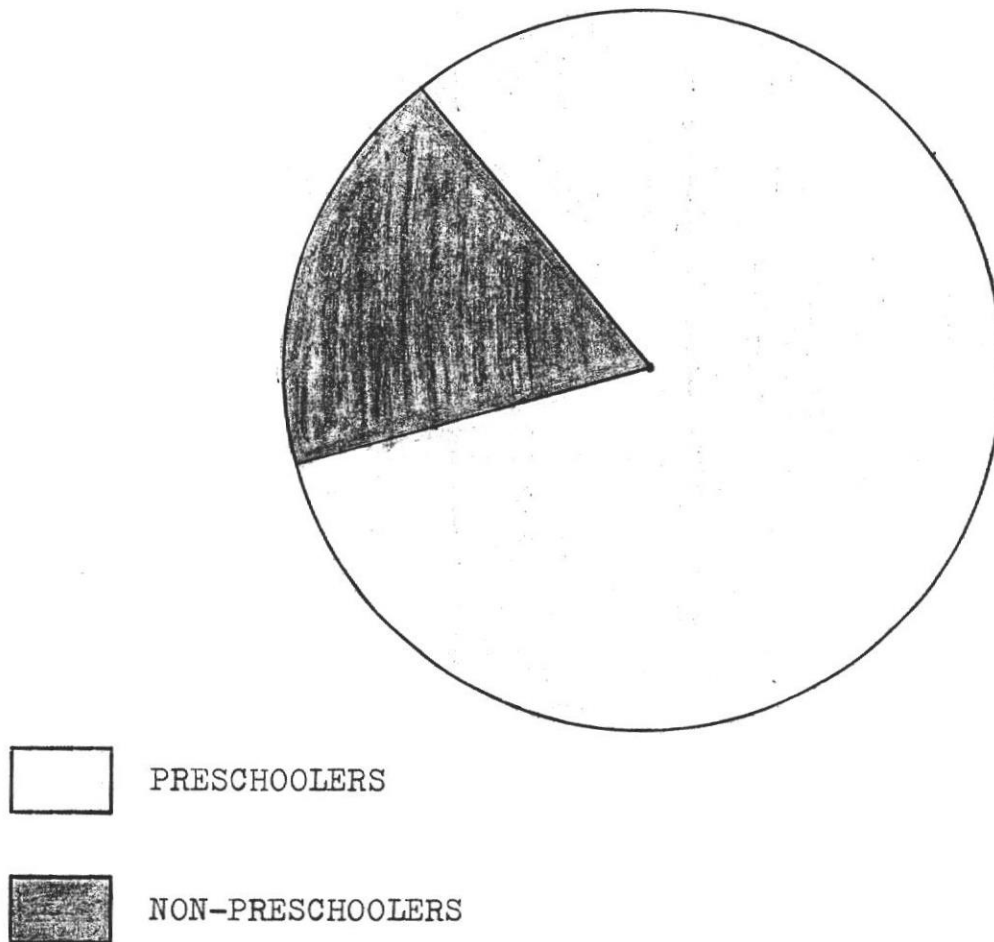
PRESCHOOLERS



NON-PRESCHOOLERS

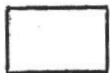
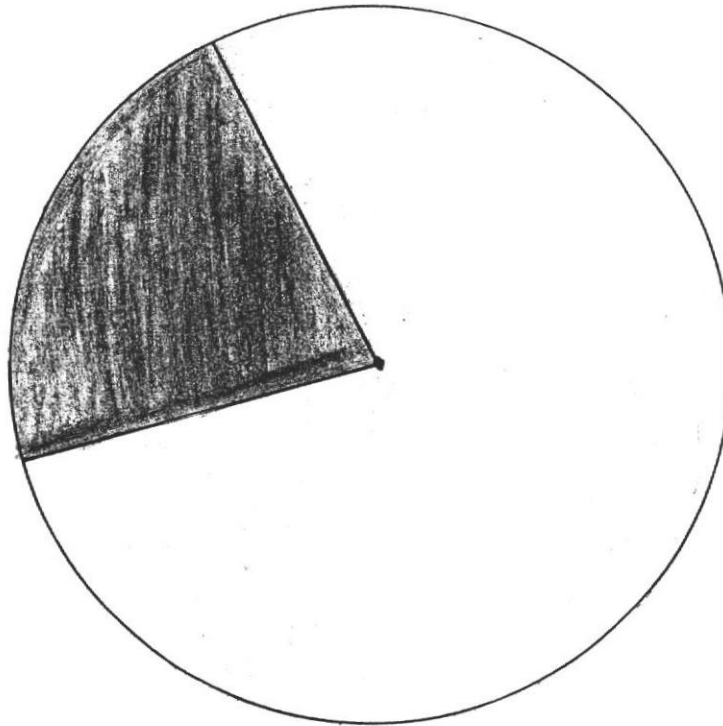
The total amount of students in the Infant One class at San Estevan R.C.School is fifty-two. Thirty-four of these students attended pre-school before entering into Primary School. Eighteen students did not attend pre-school before entering into Primary School.

SAN LAZARO METHODIST SCHOOL



The total amount of students in the Infant One class at San Lazaro Methodist School is twenty-two. Eighteen students attended pre-school before entering Primary School. Only four students did not attend pre-school before entering into Primary School. A little more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the entire population attended pre-school.

YO CREEK R.C.SCHOOL



PRESCHOOLERS



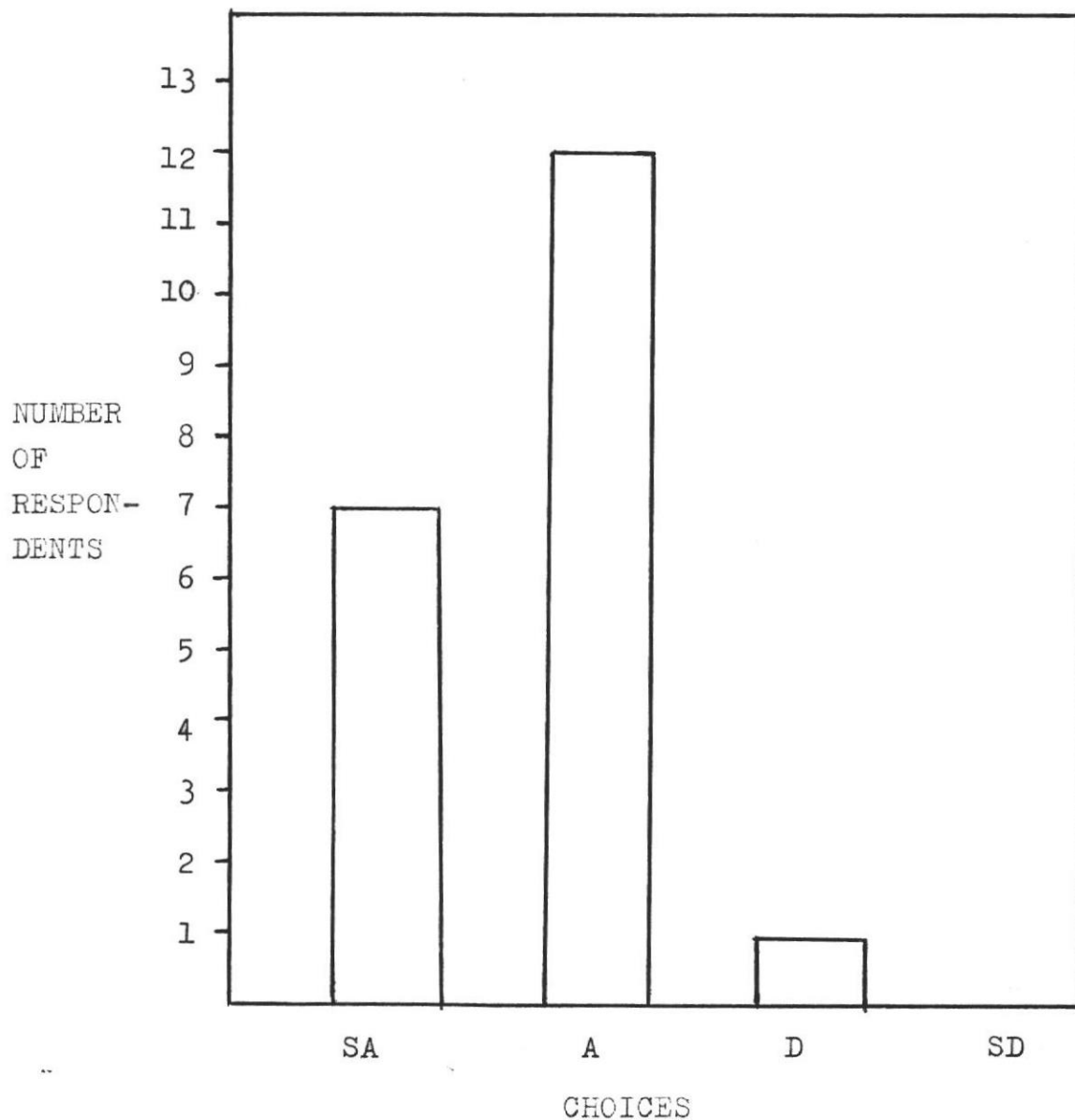
NON-PRESCHOOLERS

The total amount of students in the Infant One class at Yo Creek R.C.School is twenty-eight. Twenty-two of them attended pre-school before entering Primary School. Six of them did not attend pre-school. A little more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the entire Infant population attended pre-school.

SECTION B

1. Children who attend pre-school can orally express themselves better.

Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strongly Agree (SA)	11111 11	7
Agree (A)	11111 11111 11	12
Disagree (D)	1	1
Strongly Disagree (SD)		0

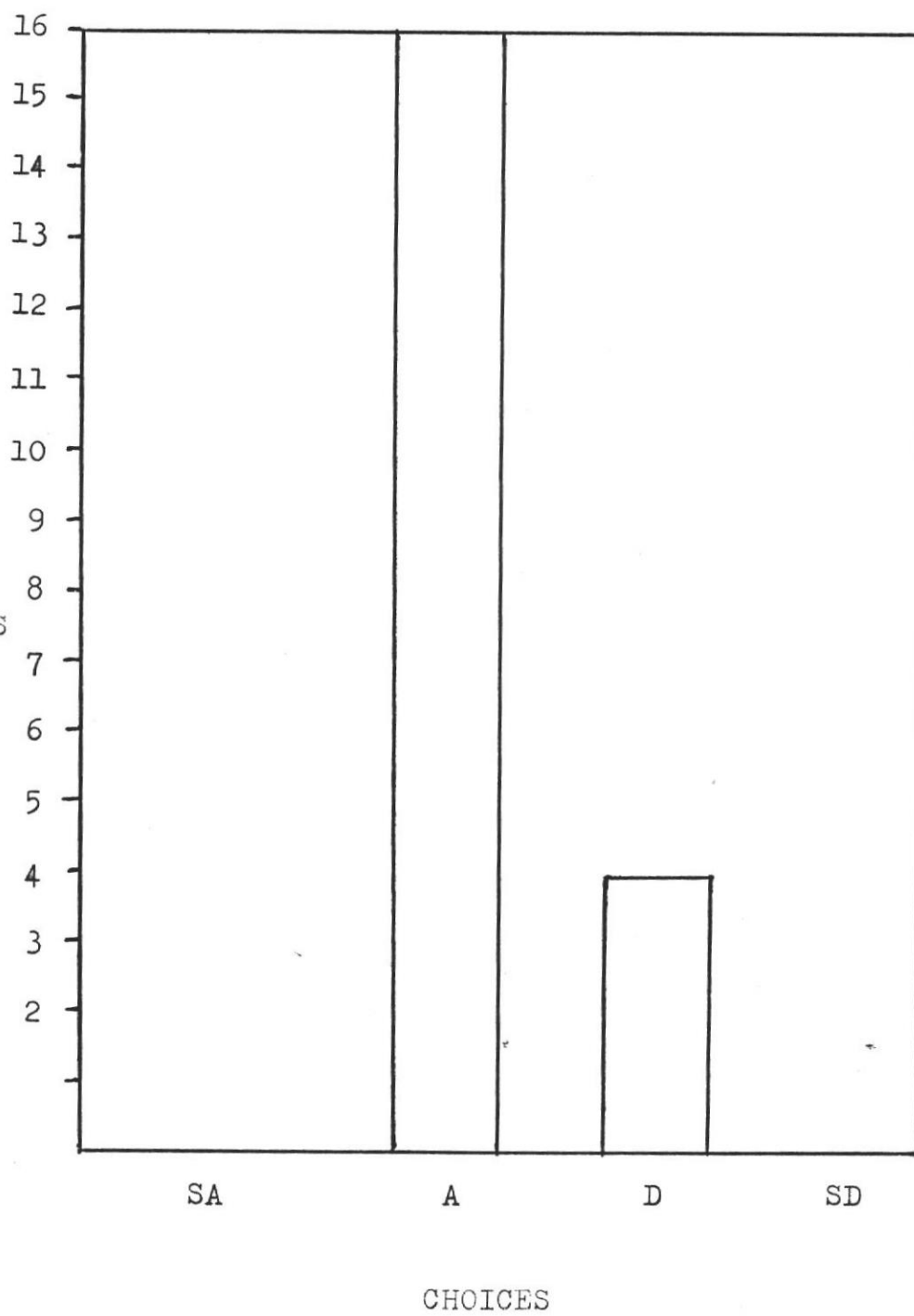


Seven respondents strongly agreed that preschoolers orally express themselves better. Twelve respondents agreed with the statement. One respondent disagreed and none of them strongly disagreed. Nineteen out of the twenty respondents supported the statement positively.

2. Children who attend pre-school possess better phonetical skills.

Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strongly Agree		0
Agree	11111 11111 11111 1	16
Disagree	1111	4
Strongly Disagree		0

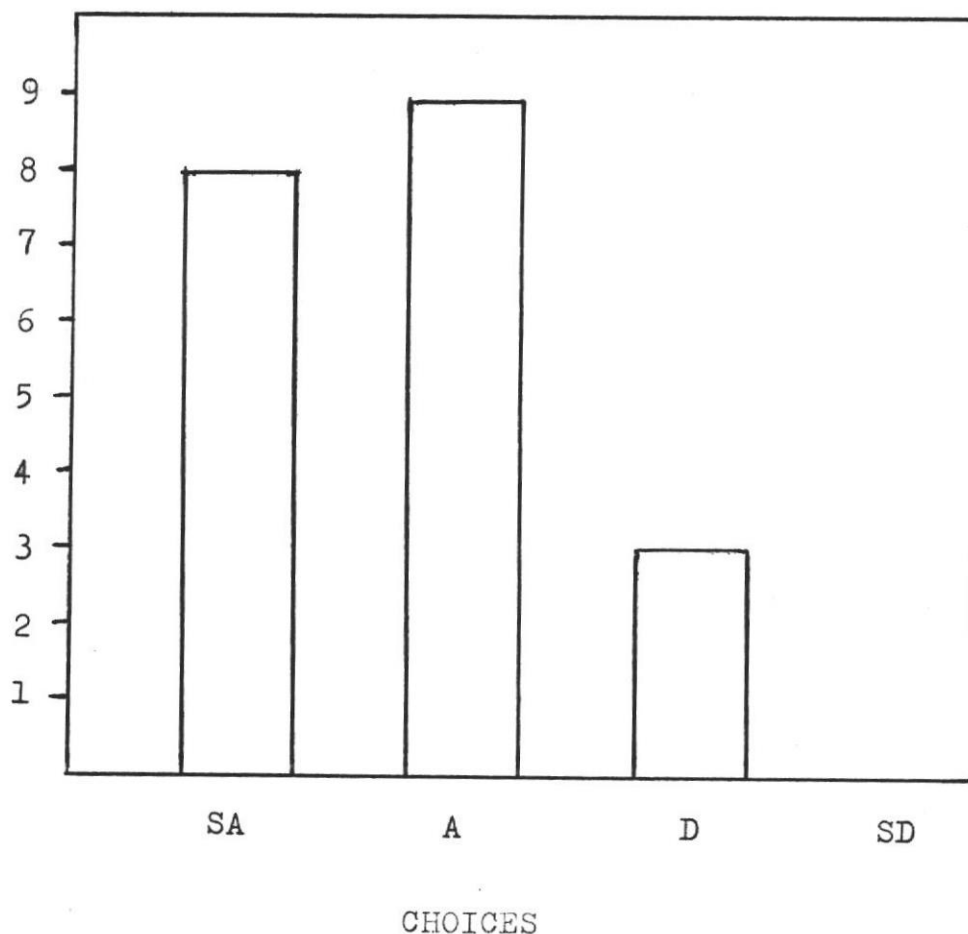
NUMBER
OF
RESPONDENTS



3. Children who attend pre-school develop better social skills.

Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strongly Agree	11111 111	8
Agree	11111 1111	9
Disagree	111	3
Strongly Disagree		0

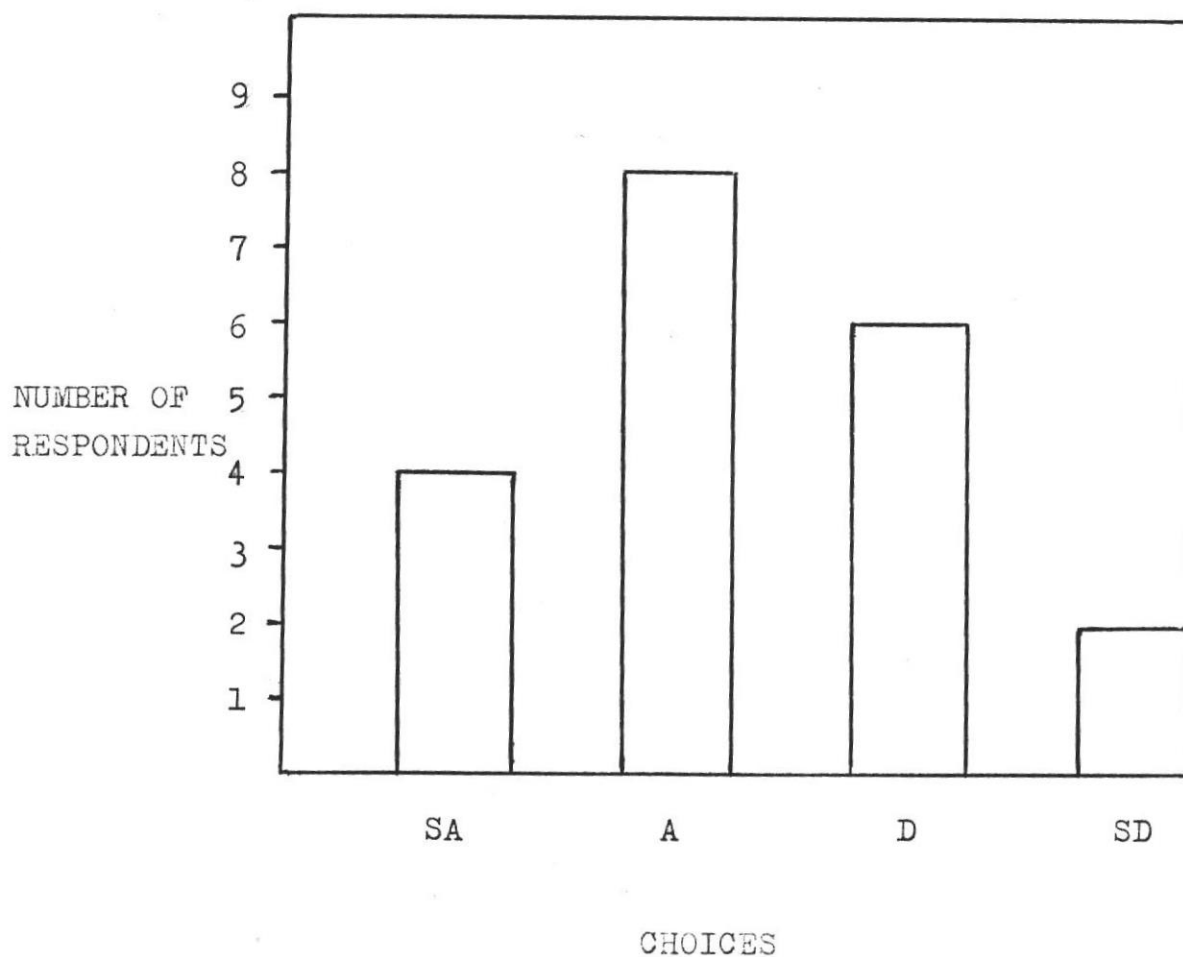
NUMBER
OF
RESPON-
DENTS



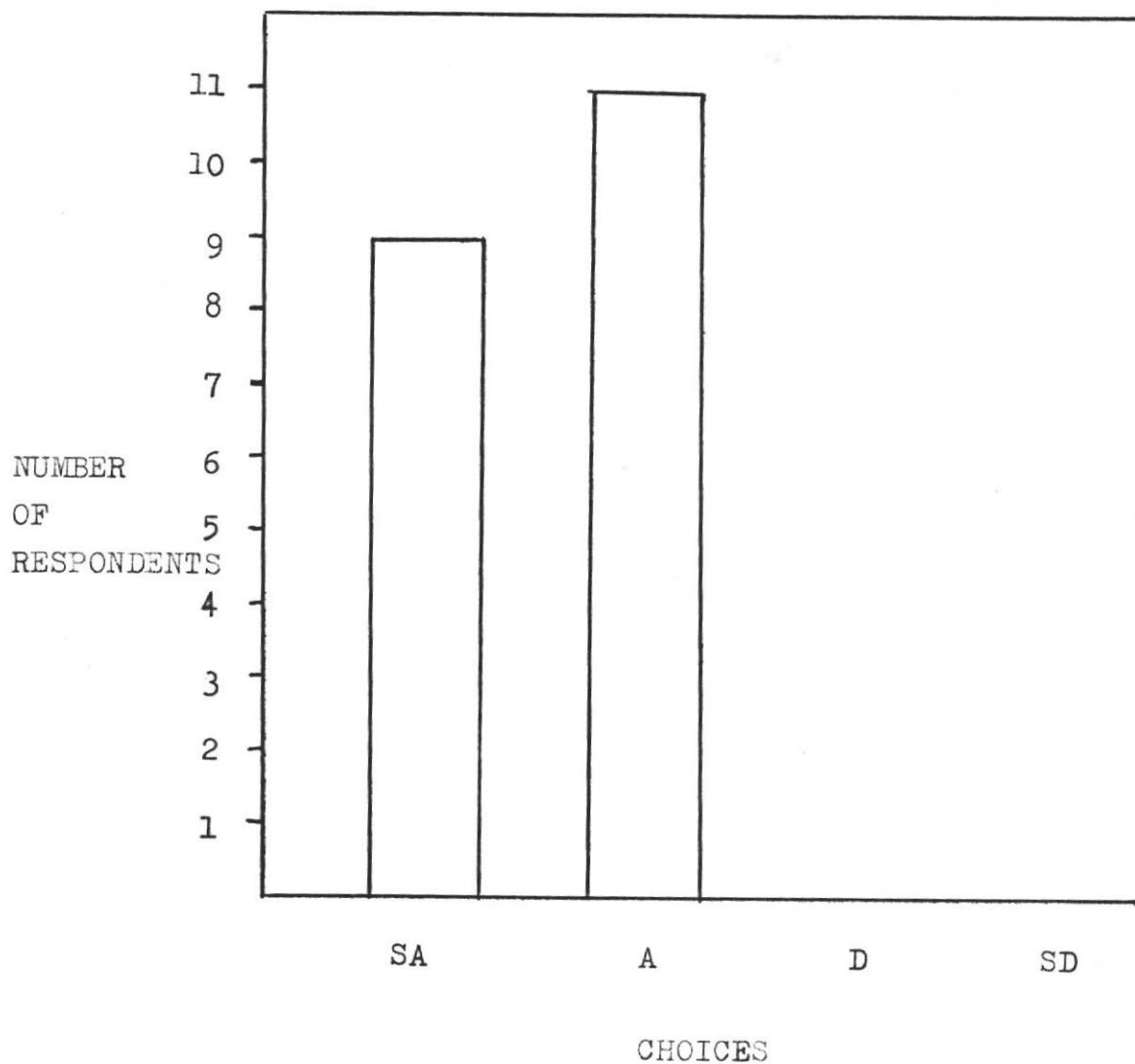
Eight respondents strongly agreed that preschoolers develop better social skills. Nine of them agreed with the statement. Three respondents disagreed with the statement, and none of the respondents strongly disagreed. Seventeen respondents supported the statement positively.

4. Children who attend pre-school perform academically better than children who did not attend pre-school.

Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strongly Agree	llll	4
Agree	lllll 111	8
Disagree	lllll 1	6
Strongly Disagree	ll	2



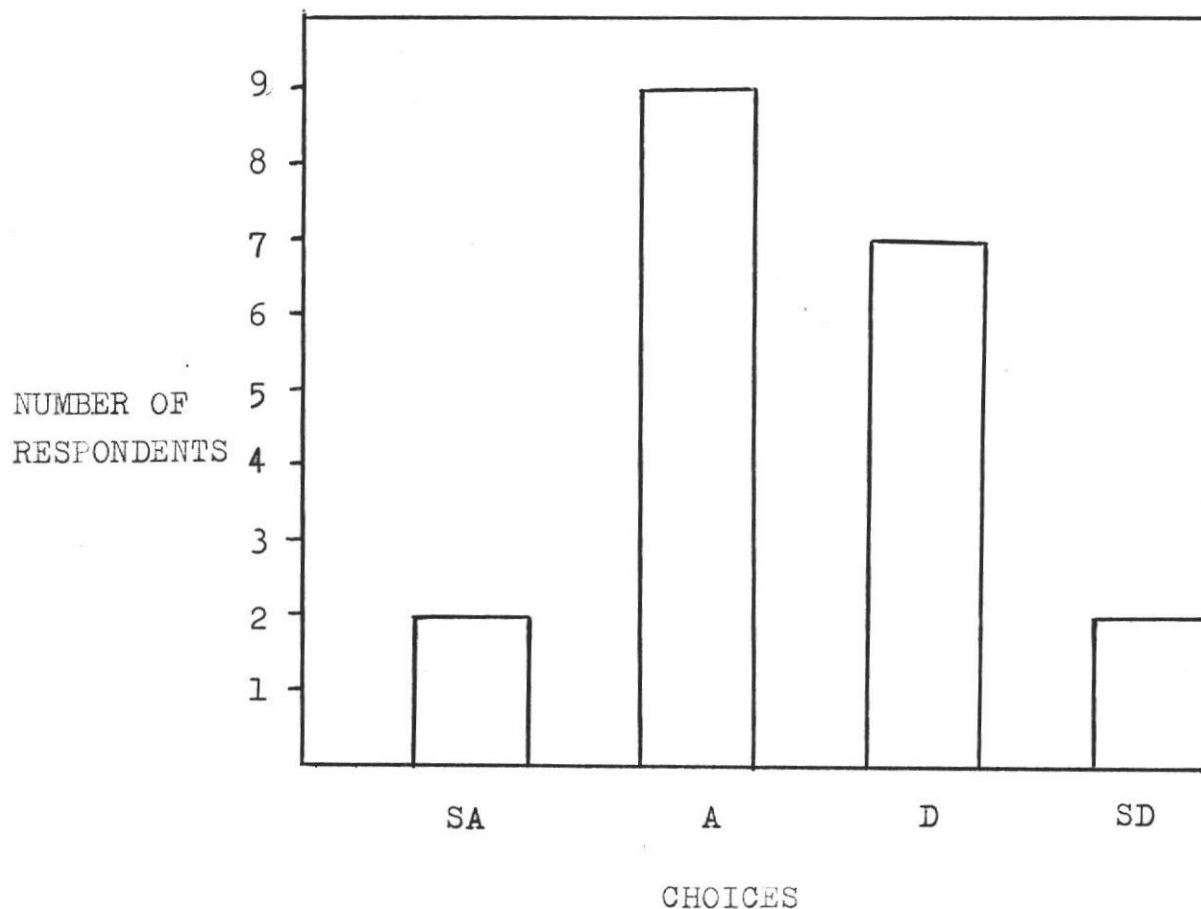
Four respondents strongly agreed that preschoolers perform academically better than non-preschoolers. Eight respondents agreed with the statement. Six respondents disagreed, and two of them strongly disagreed. Twelve out of the twenty respondents supported the statement positively.



Nine respondents strongly agreed that preschoolers tend to adjust to the classroom environment faster. Eleven respondents agreed. None of the respondents disagreed nor strongly disagreed. All twenty respondents supported the statement positively.

6. Children who attend pre-school tend to deviate from their work during class time.

Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strongly Agree	11	2
Agree	11111 1111	9
Disagree	11111 11	7
Strongly Disagree	11	2



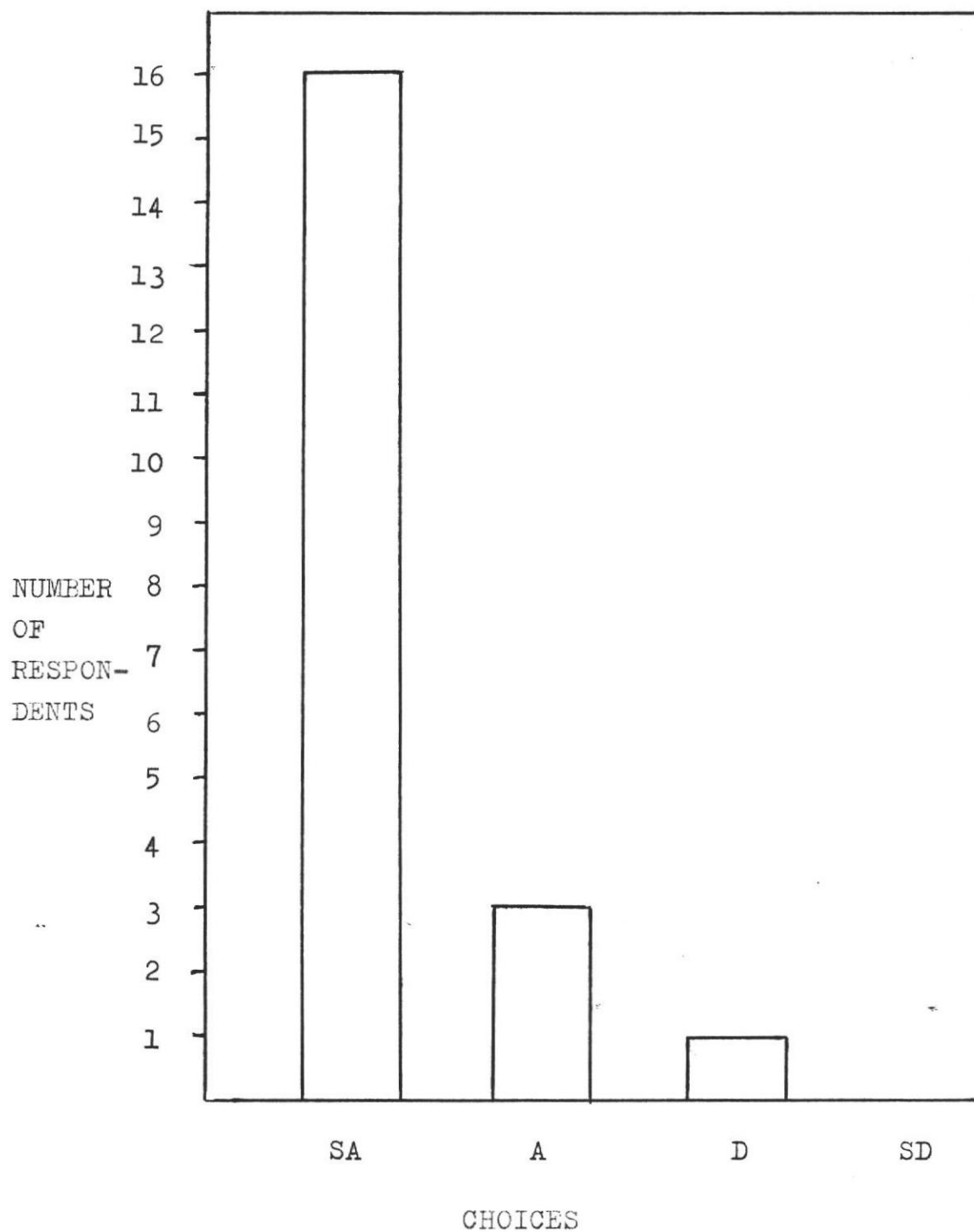
Two respondents strongly agreed that preschoolers tend to deviate from their work during class time. Nine of them agreed with the statement. Seven respondents disagreed with the statement. Two respondents strongly disagreed with it. Eleven out of the twenty respondents supported the statement positively.

7. Children who attend pre-school are more play-oriented.

Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strongly Agree	11111 11111 1	11
Agree	11111 1111	9
Disagree		0
Strongly Disagree		0

8. Pre-school helps children to develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

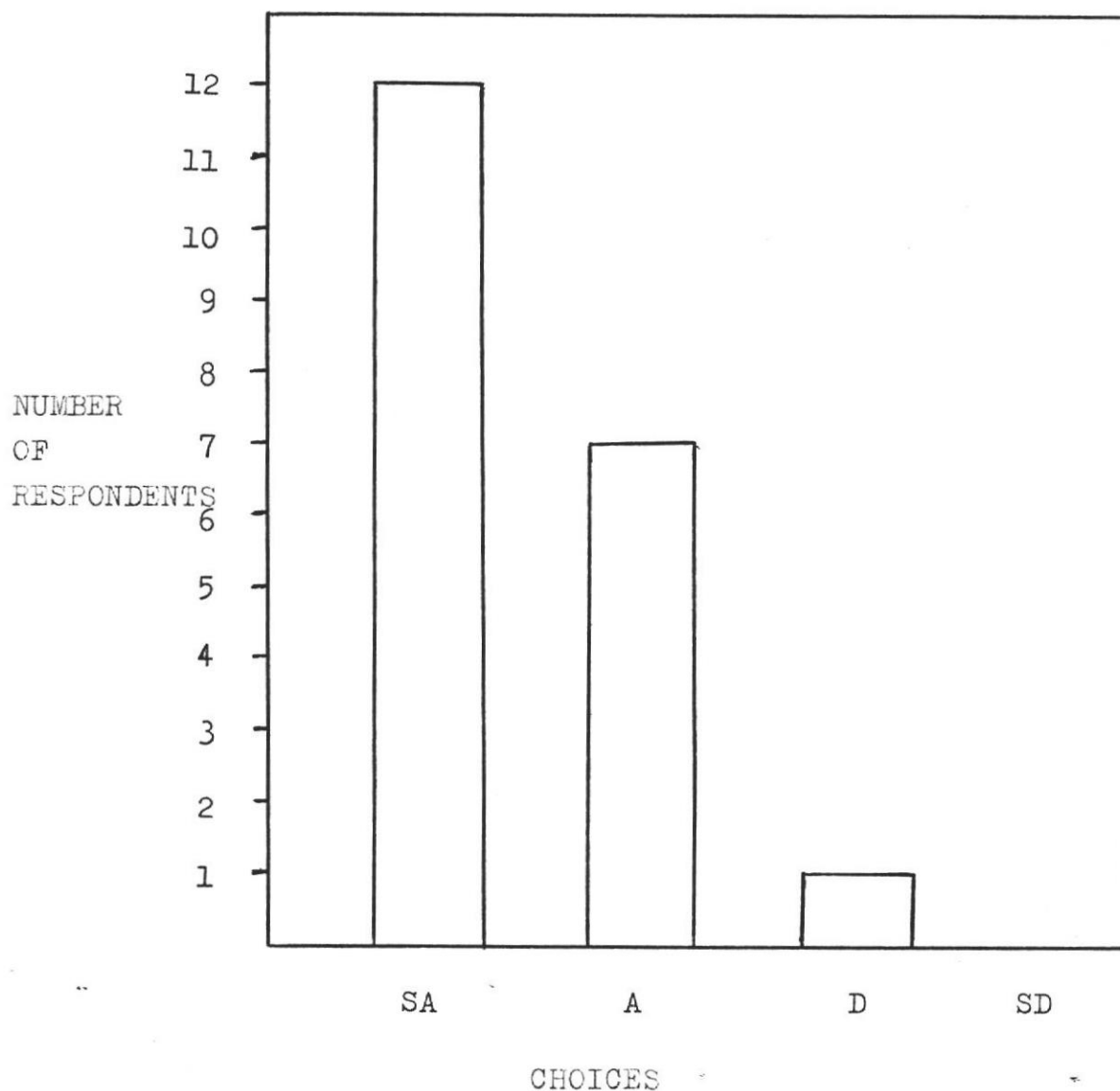
Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strongly Agree	11111 11111 11111 1	16
Agree	111	3
Disagree	1	1
Strongly Disagree		0



Sixteen respondents strongly agreed that pre-school helps children to develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally. Three teachers agreed and one disagreed. None of the respondents strongly disagreed.

9. Pre-school experiences give children the opportunity to explore and understand their world.

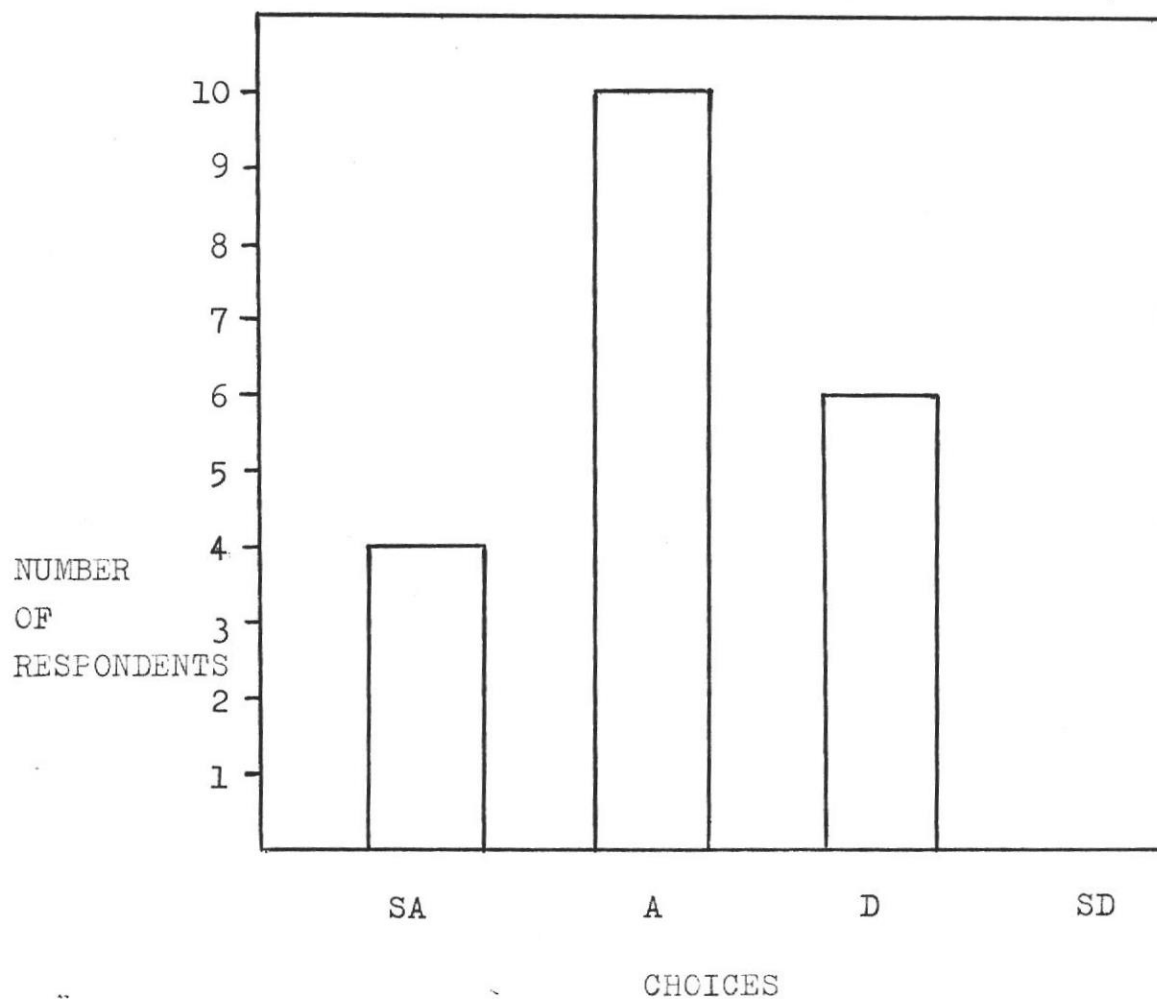
Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strongly Agree	lllll lllll ll	12
Agree	lllll ll	7
Disagree	l	1
Strongly Disagree		0



Twelve respondents strongly agreed that pre-school experiences give children the opportunity to explore and understand their world. Seven teachers agreed with the statement. One respondent disagreed, and none of the respondents strongly disagreed.

10. Children who attend pre-school tend to display a positive attitude toward school work.

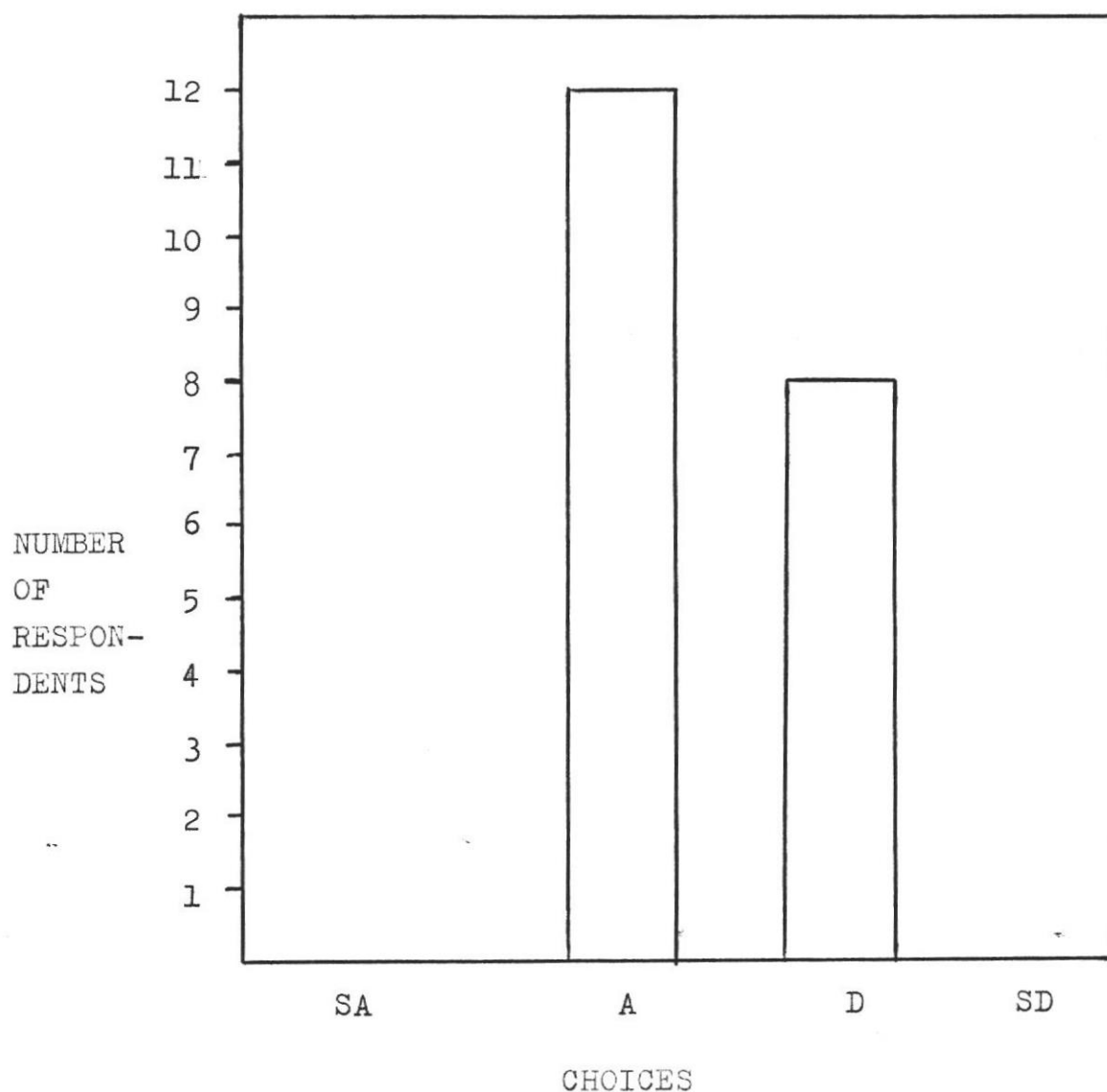
Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strongly Agree	1111	4
Agree	11111 11111	10
Disagree	11111 1	6
Strongly Disagree		0



Four respondents strongly agreed that preschoolers tend to display a positive attitude toward school work. Ten respondents agreed with the statement. Six respondents disagreed and none of them strongly disagreed. Fourteen respondents positively agreed with the statement.

11. Children who attend pre-school tend to grasp concepts faster.

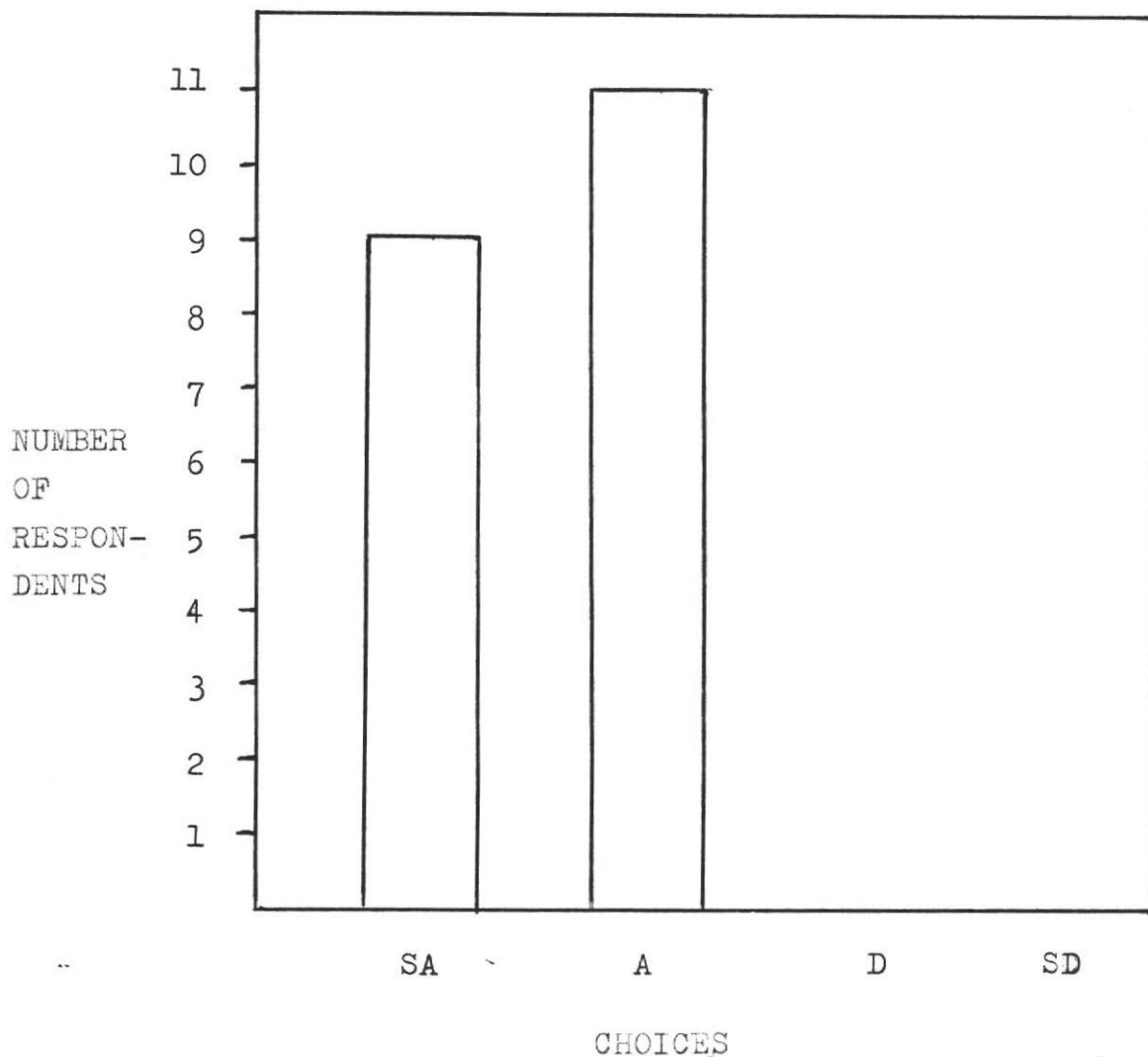
Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strongly Agree		0
Agree	11111 11111 11	12
Disagree	11111 111	8
Strongly Disagree		0



None of the respondents strongly agreed that preschoolers tend to grasp concepts faster. Twelve of the respondents agreed with the statement. Eight respondents disagreed with the statement, and none of the respondents strongly disagreed.

12. All children should attend pre-school before entering into
Primary School.

Choices	Tally	Frequency
Strogly Agree	11111 1111	9
Agree	11111 11111 1	11
Disagree		0
Strongly Disagree		0



Nine of the respondents strongly agreed that children should attend pre-school before entering into Primary School. The other eleven respondents agreed with the statement. None of them responded negatively to the statement.

FINDINGS

From the responses to the questionnaire, it can be deduced that pre-schoolers can orally express themselves better. This helps them in language whereby they have to listen to someone talking to them or when they have to express themselves by talking back to the person.

The majority of the respondents agreed that preschoolers possess better phonetical skills. At pre-school, they may not be taught Phonics as a subject, but they are introduced to new words in English. They are taught nursery rhymes. Here, they practice the English Language and learn a bit about rhythm.

Since children interact with other children, they seem to develop better social skills. When they enter Primary School, they already know about sharing, caring and taking turns. They learn to value friendship and develop techniques to win new friends.

The majority of respondents agreed that preschoolers perform academically better than non-preschoolers. At the pre-school level, children are indirectly taught a bit about certain subjects that children will get when they go to Infant One.

Some children tend to cry when they are new in an institution. Most of them cry on their first days of pre-school, but then they get used to it and it is easier for them when they enter Primary School. So, preschoolers tend to adjust to the classroom environment faster.

Pre-school promotes a lot of play at their level. Most of the Infant One teachers agreed that preschoolers tend to deviate from their work during class time. Children have a very short attention span, and when they get bored, they only think about playing. That's why all respondents positively supported that preschoolers are more play-oriented.

All respondents agreed that pre-school helps children to develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally. Children develop physically through exercise and play. At pre-school, there are a lot of outdoor games for children to play. Children begin to learn about shapes, colours, sizes, textures and even begin counting at that level. Through all this, children begin to develop mentally. Interacting with the teacher and classmates, help children to develop socially. Through drawings and role playing, children can express themselves emotionally.

Pre-school experiences definitely give children the opportunity to explore and understand their world. Children use different materials to construct different things - based on reality or fantasy. This helps to foster their imagination. Children also learn to relate different shapes with things they see in the environment.

When children enter Primary School, they have already gotten some of the fundamental basic things at pre-school. At the Infant

One level they just keep on building on what they already know. At this stage they are very inquisitive and always want to know more.

All respondents agreed that all children should attend pre-school before entering into Primary School. Some teachers are realizing that more attention has to be given to the first years of Primary Education. At this level, the foundation is laid. If a very good foundation is laid, the child is apt to receive a good education succeed in his/her studies. All teachers should give their best no matter which level they are teaching. It is for the betterment of our educational system and for the future of Belize.

APPENDIX

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Formal Education :- it is instruction given in schools. It is often called schooling.
2. Early Childhood :- includes a wide variety of planned educational experiences for young children. This education for the very young begins with children five years or younger. Pre-schools and nursery schools provide formal training for young children.
3. Academic Performance :- The ability to perform/achieve in subjects offered in the educational system.
4. N.G.O.'s :- abbreviation for non-governmental organizations. These are groups of people united for different purposes, and which do not belong to the system which governs a country.

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7. Spodek B. (1986). Today's Kindergarten Exploring the Knowledge Base, Expanding the Curriculum. New York : Teachers College Press.

Copy of Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a requirement for a Level Two Certificate at Belize Teachers' Training College (B.T.T.C.), I am conducting an investigation to determine if there is a marked difference in the academic performance of Infant I students who attended kindergarten as opposed to those who did not.

I would greatly appreciate your cooperation in responding to the following questionnaire. The time span for returning the questionnaire to the contact person in your school is one week. I assure you that your responses to the questionnaire will be used for the sole purpose of my research and will be kept confidential.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation :

L. Castillo

Lorena T. Castillo,
B.T.T.C. Level Two
student-teacher

SECTION A

Please put a check mark (✓) beside the most appropriate response for each of the following statements :-

1. Gender :- Male (M) _____ Female (F) _____
2. Age :- 16-20 _____ 21-30 _____ 31-40 _____ 41-over _____
3. Educational Status :-
First Teachers' Certificate _____
Second Class Teachers' Certificate _____
High School Diploma _____
First Class Teachers' Certificate _____
Sixth Form Diploma _____
Level I Trained Teachers' Certificate _____
Level II Trained Teachers' Certificate _____
Trained Teachers' Certificate (2+1 year course) _____
Bachelor's Degree _____
4. Teaching Experience :- 1-5 years _____ 6-10 years _____
11-15 years _____ 16-20 years _____ 21-over years _____
5. Number of years teaching at the Infant level:-
1-2 years _____ 3-4 years _____ 5-6 years _____ 7-over years _____
6. Number of children in your class :- _____ children
7. Number of children in your class who attended Kindergarten
before entering primary school : _____ children

SECTION B

Please circle the letter(s) which indicate(s) your response to each of the following statements :-

SA- Strongly Agree

D- Disagree

A- Agree

SD- Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1. Children who attend pre-school can orally express themselves better. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2. Children who attend pre-school possess better phonetical skills. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. Children who attend pre-school develop better social skills. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. Children who attend pre-school perform academically better than children who do not attend pre-school. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5. Children who attend pre-school tend to adjust to the classroom environment faster. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6. Children who attend pre-school tend to deviate from their work during class time. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 7. Children who attend pre-school are more play-oriented | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8. Pre-school helps children to develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 9. Pre-school experiences give children the opportunity to explore and understand their world. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 10. Children who attend pre-school tend to display a positive attitude toward school work. | SA | A | D | SD |

11. Children who attend pre-school tend to grasp concepts faster.

SA A D SD

12. All children should attend pre-school before entering Primary School.

SA A D SD