

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study based on the data collected from the sample group (100 completed questionnaires). It is divided into four parts as follows; Part 1: Personal data of the parents, Part 2: Parents' opinions on the importance of pre-kindergarten schooling, Part 3: Parents' considerations in choosing pre-kindergarten schools for children, Part 4: Parents' comments on advantages and disadvantages of pre-kindergarten schooling.

4.1 PERSONAL DATA OF PARENTS

In part one of the questionnaire, there were six questions asking about the parents' personal data. 100 respondents answered the questions in Part 1. The result for each question was shown in the table below in terms of frequency and percentage.

Gender

Table 1 shows two-thirds of the respondents or 66% were female while the rest or one-third was male.

Table 1. Gender

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Female	66	66
Male	34	34
Total	100	100

Age

From Table 2, about one-third or 27% of parents were 36-40 years old, followed by 26% of parents who were 31-35 and 26-30 years old equally. Sixteen parents were 41-45 years and only 5 were more than 46 years.

Table 2. Age

	Frequency	Percent (%)
26-30	26	26
31-35	26	26
36-40	27	27
41-45	16	16
46-50	2	2
More than 51	3	3
Total	100	100

Education

Table 3 shows that the majority of the respondents (70%) graduated with a Bachelor's Degree. The number of parents who had a Master Degree was around one-quarter or 22%, followed by 4% and 2 % of parents who graduated with Vocational certificate and Doctoral Degree, respectively. One graduated from high school and one from primary school.

Table 3. Education

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Primary School	1	1
High School	1	1
Vocational School	4	4
Bachelor Degree	70	70
Master Degree	22	22
Doctoral Degree	2	2
Total	100	100

Occupation

Table 4 reveals that 84% of parents were private employees while 11% of them worked in Government and State Enterprise offices. The remaining 5 parents were self-employed, business owners and in other careers.

Table 4. Occupation

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Private Employee	84	84
Government & State Enterprise	11	11
Self-employed & Business owner	3	3
Others	2	2
Total	100	100

Family Status

Table 5 shows that the majority of the respondents were married with children aged more than 3 years old (39%), followed by married with 0-3 year-old children (29%), and married without children (25%), respectively. The remaining 7 parents were widows, divorced or separated.

Table 5. Family Status

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Married without children	25	25
Married with 0-3 years old children	29	29
Married with > 3 years old children	39	39
Others	7	7
Total	100	100

Monthly Family Income

Table 6 shows that approximately one third of the respondents earned a monthly family income of 30,001-50,000 baht (33%), followed by the parents earning more than 90,001 baht at 26%. The number of parents who earned less than 30,000 baht/family was exactly the same as that who earned 50,001-70,000 Baht, accounting for 16% each.

Table 6. Monthly Family Income

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Less than 30,000 baht	16	16
30,001 – 50,000 baht	33	33
50,001 – 70,000 baht	16	16
70,001 – 90,000 baht	9	9
More than 90,001 baht	26	26
Total	100	100

4.2 PARENTS' OPINIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PRE-KINDERGARTEN SCHOOLING

The tables shown below were items of questionnaires presented with their statistics. The data were displayed and analyzed by applying descriptive statistics of mean score. To analyze and interpret the data, the researcher divided the level of agreement into 5 levels:

1. Strongly agree	Mean score	= 4.30 – 5.00
2. Agree	Mean score	= 3.50 – 4.29
3. Neither agree or disagree	Mean score	= 2.70 – 3.49
4. Disagree	Mean score	= 1.90 – 2.69
5. Strongly disagree	Mean score	= 1.00 – 1.89

Table 7 shows the results of the respondents' opinions on the importance of pre-kindergarten schooling for children aged below 3 years old. These results would be presented in eleven statements as follows:

Statement 7 : You think that the learning in the first three years of life profoundly impacts children's life.

Sixty five respondents strongly agreed that learning in first three years of life profoundly impacts their children's life and 27% of parents agreed with this statement. Seven parents neither agreed nor disagreed and one strongly disagreed on this point. As the mean score of this statement was 4.55, it could be interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 8 : You think that learning in the first three years of life results in brain development.

Seventy one respondents strongly agreed that learning in first three years of life resulted in brain development and 27% of parents agreed with this statement. The remaining 2% were neither agreed nor disagreed. The mean score of this statement was 4.69, so it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 9 : You think that the connection of neurons results in children development, especially during their first three years.

Sixty two respondents strongly agreed that the connection of neurons resulted in children development, especially during their first three years. Twenty two parents agreed, and thirteen parents neither agreed nor disagreed with this idea. The remaining 3% disagreed. The mean score of this statement was 4.43, so it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 10 : You think that proper stimulation will develop children's ability such as body movement, vision, hearing, speaking.

Sixty nine respondents strongly agreed that proper stimulation would develop children's ability such as body movement, vision, hearing, speaking and 28% agreed with this statement. Only 3% neither agreed nor disagreed. As the mean score of this statement was 4.66, it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 11 : You think that the surrounding environment is important to children's brain development.

Seventy one respondents strongly agreed that the surrounding environment was important to children's brain development and 26% agreed with this idea. The remaining 3% neither agreed nor disagreed. As the mean score of this statement was 4.68, it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 12 : You think that children can learn more from an enriched environment than an impoverished one.

Fifty five respondents strongly agreed that children could learn more from an enriched environment than an impoverished one, and 30% agreed with this idea. Twelve parents neither agreed nor disagreed and 3% disagreed. Since the mean score of this statement was 4.37, it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 13 : You think that less stimulation during the first three years of life will lower children's brain efficiency or slow response to stimuli.

Thirty four respondents agreed that less stimulation during the first three years of life would lower children's brain efficiency or slow response to stimuli and 32% neither agreed nor disagreed with this idea. Twenty nine parents strongly agreed and 5% disagreed. Because the mean score of this statement was 3.87, it was interpreted that the respondents agreed with this statement.

Statement 14 : You think that earlier learning is better, especially in children's first three years.

Thirty nine respondents agreed that earlier learning was better, especially in children's first three years and 30% neither agreed nor disagreed with this idea. Sixteen parents disagreed and 5% strongly agreed. The mean score of this statement was 3.53, so it was interpreted that the respondents agreed with this statement.

Statement 15 : You think that the children's intelligence is related to their learning experience during their first three years.

Forty respondents agreed that children's intelligence was related to their learning experience during their first three years and 28% neither agreed nor disagreed with this idea. Twenty six parents strongly agreed and 5% disagreed. The remaining 1% strongly disagreed. The mean score of this statement was 3.85; therefore, it was interpreted that the respondents agreed with this statement.

Statement 16 : You think that each intelligence is more from genetics than learning environment.

Thirty five respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that intelligence was more from genetics than learning environment and 28 % disagreed with this statement. Twenty three parents agreed and 11% strongly agreed. The remaining 3% strongly disagreed. The mean score of this statement was 3.11, so it was interpreted that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Statement 17 : You think that pre-kindergarten learning is suitable for the first three years of life.

Forty eight respondents agreed that pre-kindergarten learning is suitable for the first three years of life and 25% neither agreed nor disagreed with this idea. Eighteen parents strongly agreed and 8% disagreed. The remaining 1% strongly disagreed. Since the mean score of this statement was 3.74, it was interpreted that the respondents agreed with this statement.

As the total mean score of parents' opinion on the importance of pre-kindergarten schooling was 4.13, this result would be interpreted that respondents agreed that pre-kindergarten schooling was important for children aged below 3 years.

Table 7. Parents' Opinion on the Importance of Pre-Kindergarten Schooling

	Statements	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Mean (X)	Degree of parents' opinion
7	You think that the learning in the first three years of life profoundly impacts children's life.	65 %	27 %	7 %	-	1 %	4.55	(5)
8	You think that learning in the first three years of life results in brain development.	71 %	27 %	2 %	-	-	4.69	(5)
9	You think that the connection of neurons results in children's development, especially during their first three years.	62 %	22 %	13 %	3 %	-	4.43	(4)
10	You think that proper stimulation will develop children's ability such as body movement, vision, hearing, speaking.	69 %	28 %	3 %	-	-	4.66	(5)
11	You think that the surrounding environment is important to children's brain development.	71 %	26 %	3 %	-	-	4.68	(5)
12	You think that children can learn more from an enriched environment than an impoverished one.	55 %	30 %	12 %	3 %	-	4.37	(4)

(table continues)

Table 7. (continued)

13	You think that less stimulation during the first three years of life will lower children's brain efficiency or slow response to stimuli.	29 %	34 %	32 %	5 %	-	3.87	(4)
14	You think that earlier learning is better, especially in children's first three years.	15 %	39 %	30 %	16 %	-	3.53	(4)
15	You think that the children's intelligence is related to their learning experience during their first three years.	26 %	40 %	28 %	5 %	1 %	3.85	(4)
16	You think that each intelligence is more from genetics than learning environment.	11 %	23 %	35 %	28 %	3 %	3.11	(3)
17	You think that pre-kindergarten learning is suitable for the first three years of life.	18 %	48 %	25 %	8 %	1 %	3.74	(4)
Importance of pre-kindergarten schooling							4.13	(4)

4.3 PARENTS' CONSIDERATIONS IN CHOOSING PRE-KINDERGARTEN SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN

Table 8 shows the results of the respondents' opinions on the major considerations in choosing pre-kindergarten schools for children aged below 3 years old. These results will be presented in six statements as follows:

Statement 18 : You think that pre-kindergarten schools should have attentive teachers and staff.

Sixty five respondents strongly agreed that pre-kindergarten schools should have attentive teachers and staff. Twenty nine agreed with this idea and 3% of parents neither agreed nor disagreed. The remaining 3% disagreed. As the mean score of this statement was 4.56, it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 19 : You think that pre-kindergarten schools should set affordable tuition fees.

Fifty eight respondents strongly agreed that pre-kindergarten schools should set affordable tuition fees and 36% agreed with this idea. Only 6% neither agreed nor disagreed. Because the mean score of this statement was 4.52, it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 20 : You think that pre-kindergarten schools should have small class size.

Seventy one respondents strongly agreed that pre-kindergarten schools should have small class size and 28% agreed with this idea. Only 1% disagreed. The mean score of this statement was 4.69, so it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 21 : You think that pre-kindergarten schools should provide adequate facilities for children and parents such as school bus service, playground.

Fifty seven respondents strongly agreed that pre-kindergarten schools should provide adequate facilities for children and parents such as school bus service, playground and 33% agreed with this idea. Nine parents neither agreed nor disagreed. The remaining 1% disagreed with this statement. As the mean score of this statement was 4.46, it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 22 : You think that pre-kindergarten school's syllabus should not aim at academic achievement only.

Seventy one respondents strongly agreed that pre-kindergarten schools should not aim at academic achievement only and 26% agreed with this idea. Parents who strongly disagreed, disagreed, neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement represented 1% each. The mean score of this statement was 4.65; thus, it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Statement 23: You think that learning in pre-kindergarten schools should not be limited to the classroom.

Seventy respondents strongly agreed that learning in pre-kindergarten schools should not be limited to the classroom and 24% agreed with this idea. Four parents neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 2% disagreed with this statement. As the mean score of this statement was 4.62, it was interpreted that the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

The total mean score of parents' consideration in choosing pre-kindergarten schools for children was 4.58, so this result would be interpreted that respondents strongly agreed that attentive teachers and staffs, affordable tuition fees, small class size, adequate facilities, syllabus, and outdoor learning activities were the major considerations for them to choose pre-kindergarten schools for their children.

Table 8. Parents' Considerations in Choosing Pre-Kindergarten Schools for Children.

	Statements	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Mean (X)	Degree of parents' consideration
18	You think that pre-kindergarten school should have attentive teachers and staff.	65 %	29 %	3 %	3 %	-	4.56	(5)
19	You think that pre-kindergarten schools should set affordable tuition fees.	58 %	36 %	6 %	-	-	4.52	(5)
20	You think that pre-kindergarten schools should have small class size.	71 %	28 %	-	1 %	-	4.69	(5)
21	You think that pre-kindergarten school should provide adequate facilities for children and parents such as school bus service, playground.	57 %	33 %	9 %	1 %	-	4.46	(4)
22	You think that pre-kindergarten school's syllabus should not aim at academic achievement only.	71 %	26 %	1 %	1 %	1 %	4.65	(5)

(table continues)

Table 8. (continued)

23	You think that learning in pre-kindergarten school should not be limited to the classroom.	70 %	24 %	4 %	2 %	-	4.62	(5)
Parents' considerations in choosing pre-kindergarten schools for children							4.58	(5)

4.4 SUGGESTIONS

In this part, all of the parents were asked to express their opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of pre-kindergarten schooling. Approximately 61% of respondents (61 questionnaires) provided useful suggestions.

4.4.1 Advantages of Pre-kindergarten Schooling

Most Thai parents believed that pre-kindergarten schooling was advantageous because of the following reasons:

(1) Experienced teachers knew how to stimulate children's learning through many playing activities more than parents.

(2) Facilities and equipment at pre-kindergarten schools were designed for proper and safe learning process at different age levels, so children would get more new experiences from school than from home.

(3) The environment of pre-kindergarten schools could stimulate children learning better than the home environment since participation with friends and teachers would help them to develop their motor skills, social skills, language skills and discipline. Besides, the respondents believed that pre-kindergarten schooling would stimulate their children to be active, fast learners, which would result in their children's brain development.

(4) Pre-kindergarten schools would take good care of their children while they were at work and would make their children familiar with a school environment, friends, and teachers before attending kindergarten level.

4.4.2 Disadvantages of Pre-kindergarten Schooling

Some disadvantages of pre-kindergarten schooling were expressed as follows:

(1) Thai pre-kindergarten school standard which included professional teachers, proper curriculum, appropriate teaching style, and school safety was in doubt. Some kindergarten schools tried to promote pre-kindergarten schooling concept, but few schools had experts who understand teaching at the pre-kindergarten level. Some pre-kindergarten schools put too much emphasis on academic matters so children may be stressed and refused learning at further levels. Some schools provided few teachers or staff in one class which were not enough to take good care of the children. Besides, below 3 years old children might get sick easily due to the lack of a hygienic environment in schools.

(2) Parents considered tuition fees of pre-kindergarten level as an unnecessary expense since below 3-years-old children should get warmth from family members instead of being forced to attend pre-kindergarten school. Some parents believed that children's learning is not limited to the classroom only. They could learn and get experiences from their family members who could look after them.