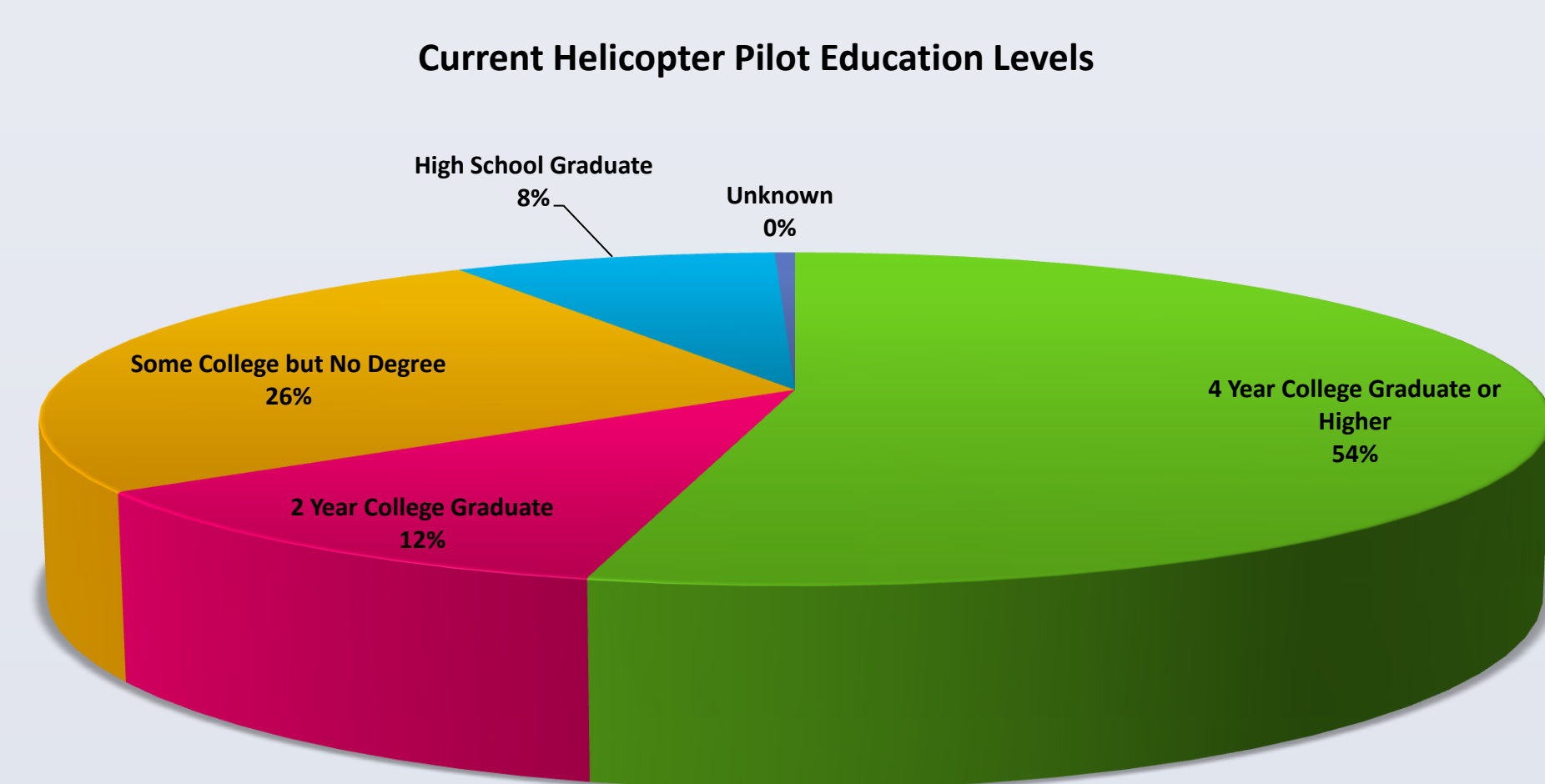


EXAMINING THE VALUE OF A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FOR HELICOPTER PILOTS

ABSTRACT

- Traditionally, a bachelor's degree has never been a qualification requirement for entry-level helicopter pilots obtaining employment or for even becoming entirely successful helicopter pilots in the industry.
- As helicopter companies grow into larger corporate entities, a bachelor's degree is beginning to appear as a desirable qualification on some helicopter pilot job advertisements.
- Currently, only corporate helicopter operators, aircraft manufacturers, and some branches of the military actually require their helicopter pilots to hold 4-year degrees.



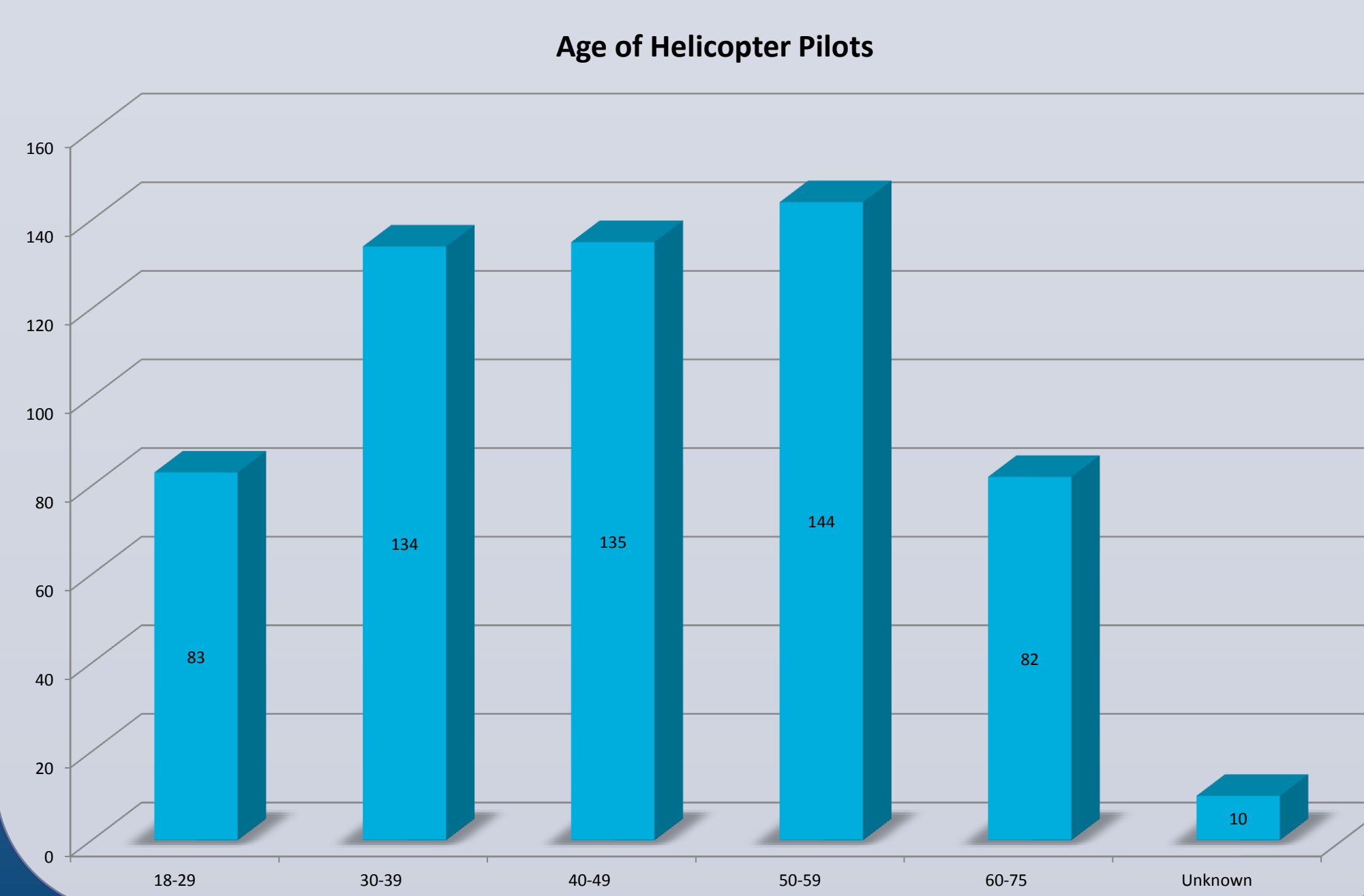
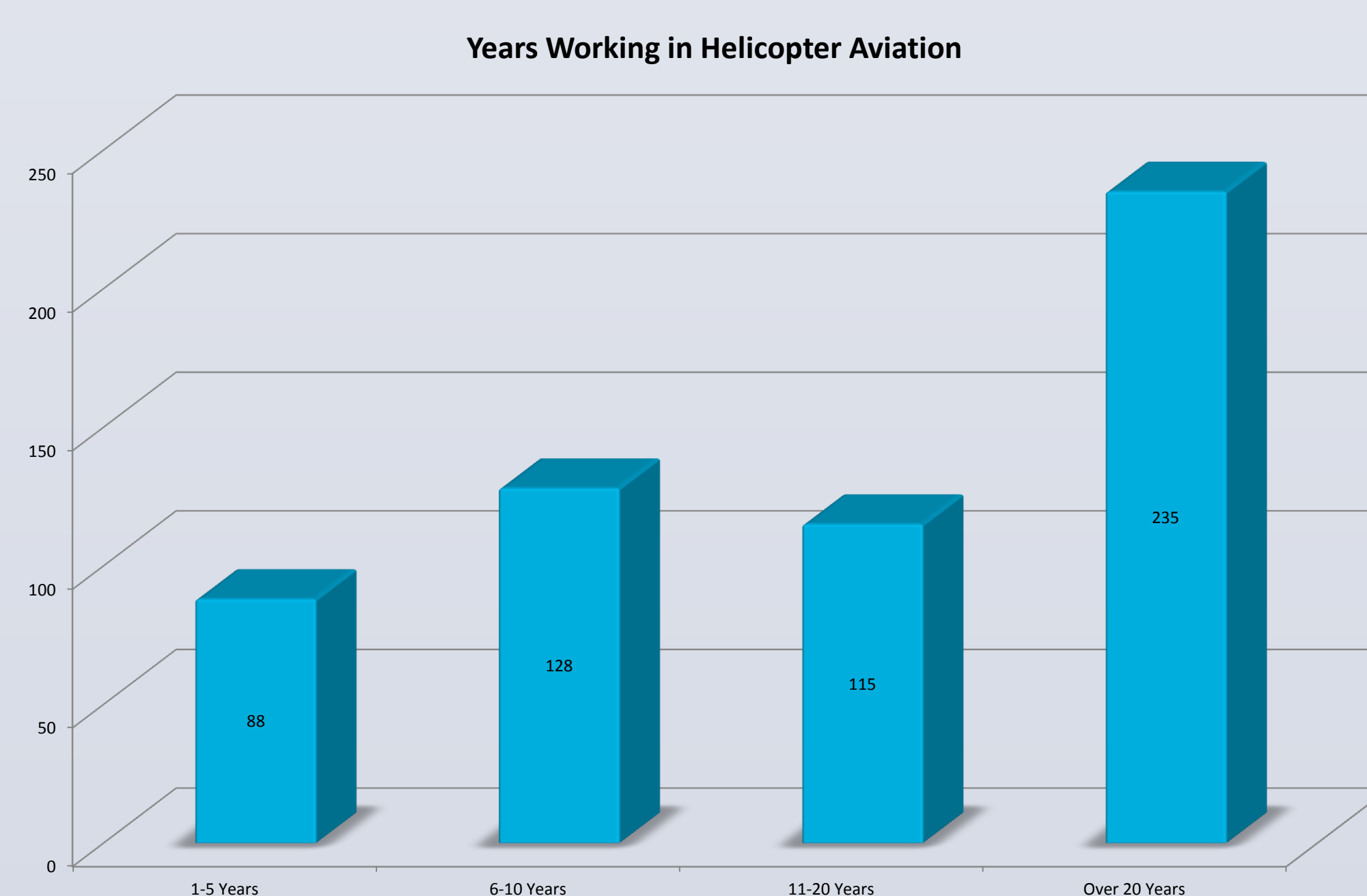
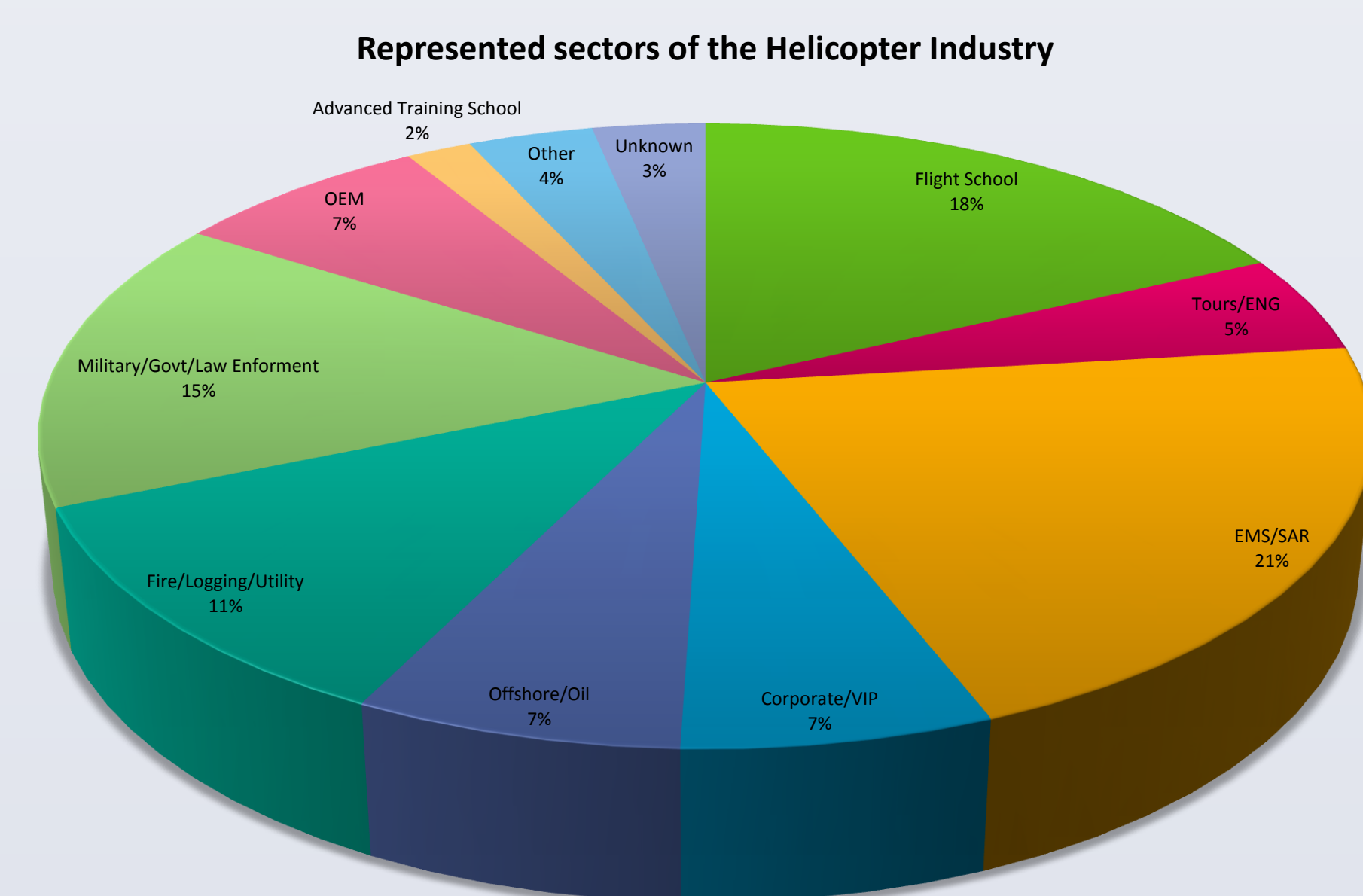
OBJECTIVES

- The purpose of this research is to examine the value of a bachelor's education for entry-level helicopter pilot interviewing and job placement in the current and future job market.
- This research may help identify areas of improvement in the education and training curricula for new professional helicopter pilots entering the industry.



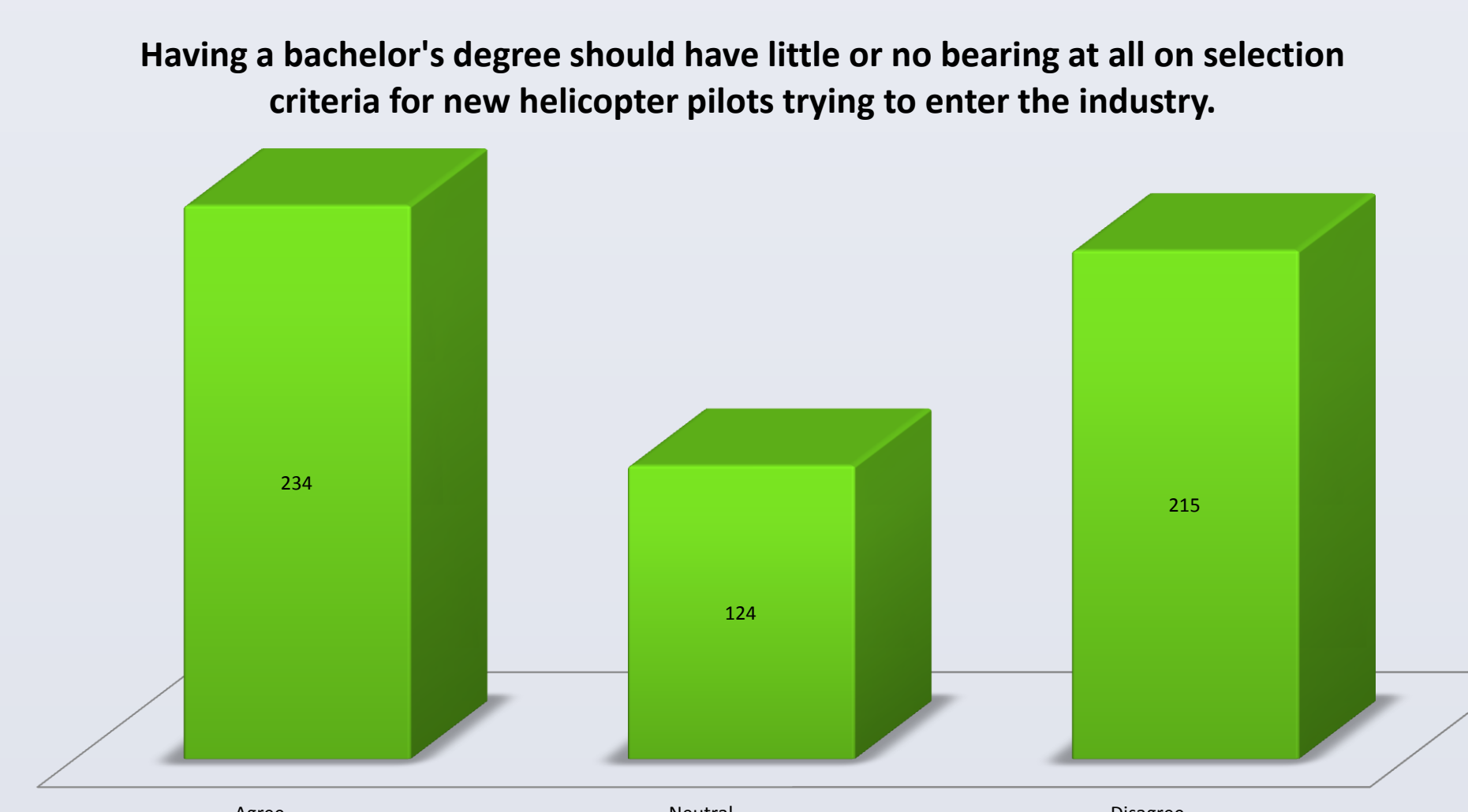
METHODS

- A descriptive quantitative research method was employed utilizing a 15-question paper survey distributed at an annual helicopter pilot career seminar to collect data.
- A web link was distributed to professional helicopter pilots from multiple sectors of the industry online through the assistance of Rotorcraft Pro Magazine, Vertical Magazine, and several Facebook Helicopter Group pages.
- This data was collected from a sample of 588 helicopter pilots, with nearly 40% of the pilots with over 20 years industry experience.

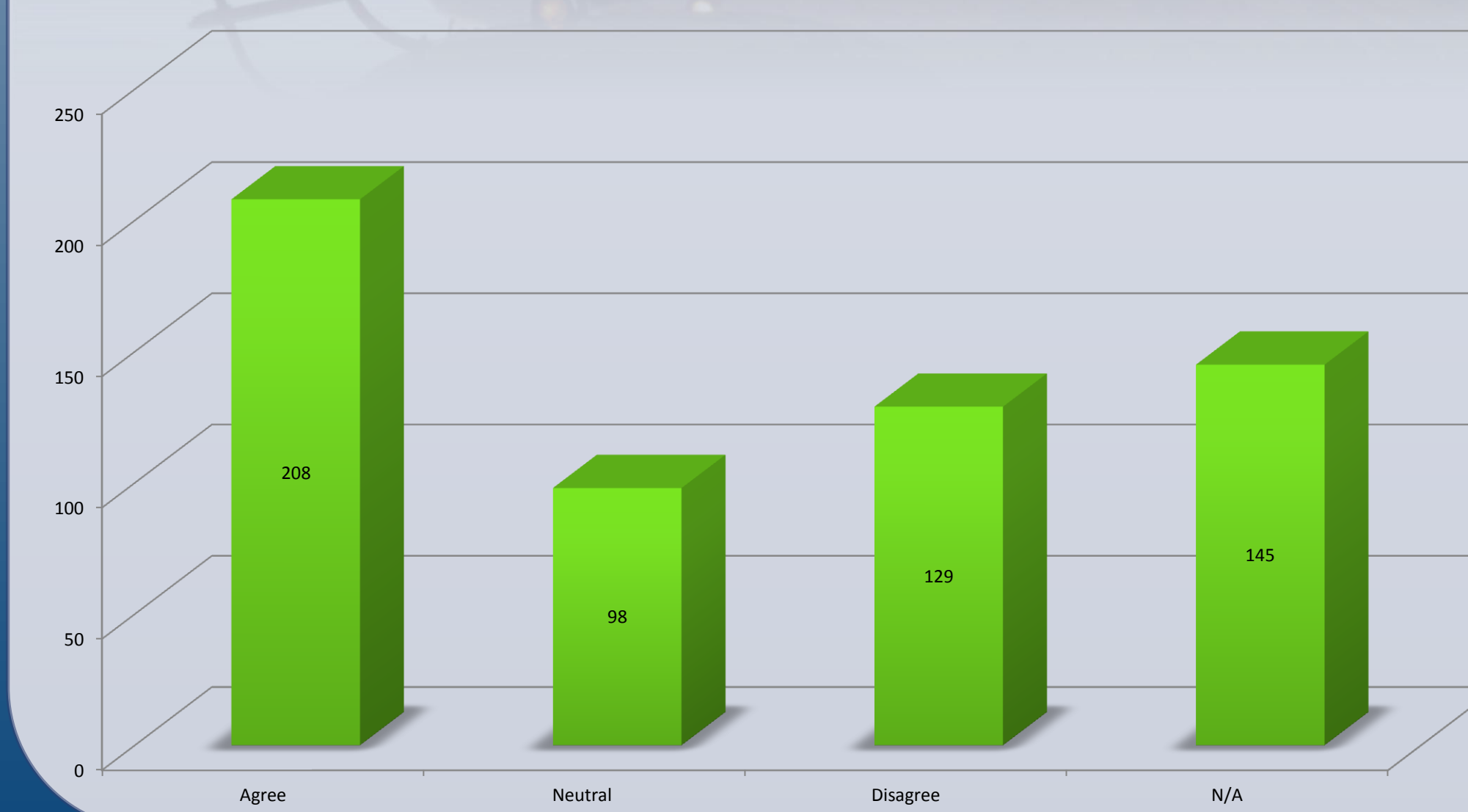


PRELIMINARY DATA

- Preliminary data exhibited conflicting views towards the value of a bachelor's education in the helicopter industry.
- A degree is not a replacement for flight hours, and may not initially help a helicopter pilot obtain an entry-level job.
- A degree may be a consideration after a pilot meets minimum flight hours and the degree may be utilized as a *tiebreaker* between other candidates that have comparable flight hours and experience.
- One respondent wrote, "As a Chief Pilot, a college degree is a strong advantage when hiring."



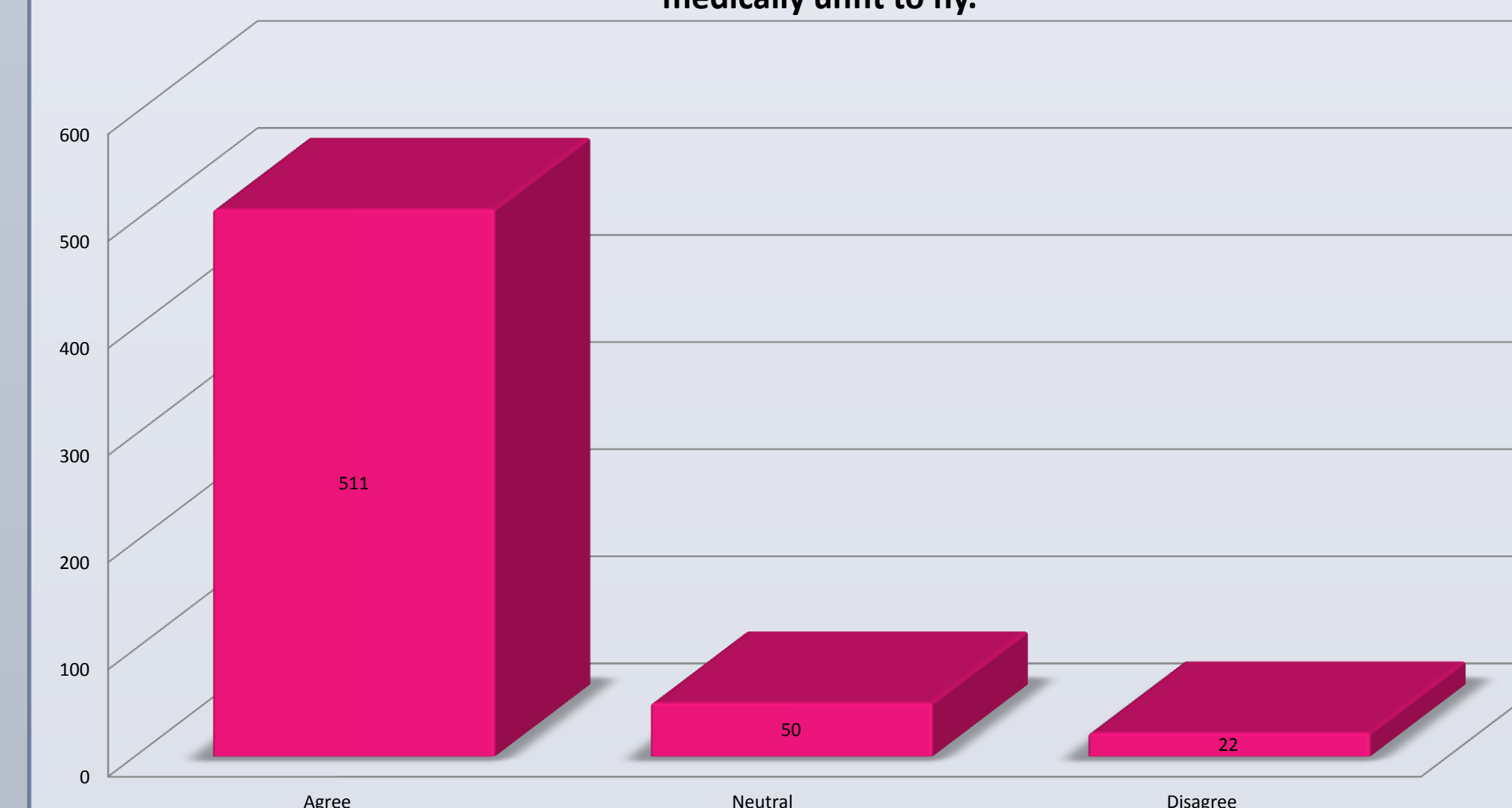
In my experience as a Pilot Supervisor/Chief Pilot/Management, new hires with a bachelor's degree have typically been promoted into positions with increased responsibility sooner than those with only an associates or no degree at all.



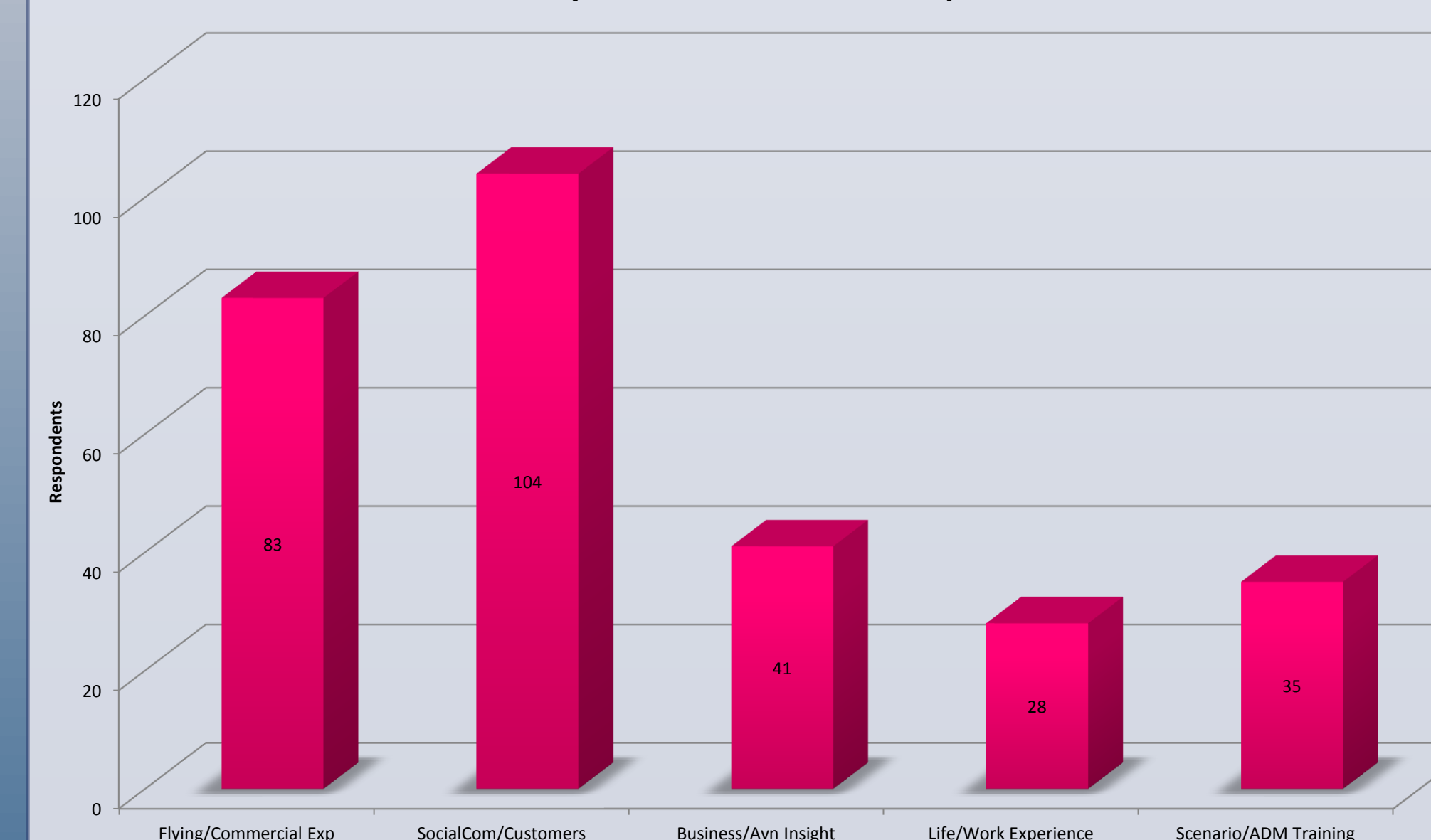
PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Helicopter pilot respondents overwhelmingly agree that a degree holds value outside the cockpit, especially if the pilot should lose his or her medical and are no longer able to fly.
- Most respondents believe that an education is useful; however, many clarified that a degree is not necessary to fly a helicopter, nor to obtain a successful job in the industry.
- Flight hours and experience are paramount in the hiring process; although a degree would be considered when looking at a pilot for additional responsibilities or future management positions.
- Several respondents remarked on several of the same shortcomings of entry-level pilots, which if addressed, could have better prepared them for the commercial helicopter industry.

Helicopter pilots seeking a bachelor's degree should ensure that other industry skills are included in the curriculum as part of a backup plan should he/she become medically unfit to fly.



Skills that Entry-Level Professional Helicopter Pilots Lack



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Bryan Cox – Assistant Professor, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
- Lyn Burks – Owner, HeliSuccess & Rotorcraft Pro Magazine
- Élan Head – Editor, Vertical Magazine