



Postpartum Depression: A Study of Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Background:

- Postpartum Depression (PPD), while containing similarities to that of depression, is more extreme and last longer, and is much different than that of baby blues, which are general worries and tiredness after having a baby (CDC, 2022).
- According to America's Health Rankings (2022), in the US, the current healthiest state regarding PPD is Iowa at 7.9% while Arkansas is the least healthy state at 23.2%.
- In the study *Public Attitudes and Feelings of Warmth Toward Women and Men Experiencing Depression During the Perinatal Period*, results concluded that "participants reported significantly more negative attitudes about depressed men than women, and male participants reported significantly more negative attitudes than female participants toward depressed individuals. Male participants felt equally warm toward men and women who experienced depression during non-perinatal periods, whereas female participants felt significantly warmer toward women who experienced depression during non-perinatal periods compared with men" (Felder et al., 2017).

Purpose of this study:

- The study aims to assess people's knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs regarding postpartum depression.

Hypotheses:

- Individuals with low postpartum depression knowledge will be more likely to have negative attitudes and beliefs regarding postpartum depression.
- Females will have higher rates of knowledge about postpartum depression than males.
- Younger generations will have more positive outlooks on mothers with postpartum depression than older generations.

METHODS

Participants:

- A convenience sample of adults ages 18 and older including students at a regional Kentucky university. The participants were from a variety of demographic categories including ages, genders, varied educational backgrounds, races/ethnicities, marital statuses, and different states across the United States.
- University student sampling- The primary author asked six professors to send the survey out to their students, which reached 60 student participants.
- Snowball Sampling- used to reach 68 individuals across multiple social media platforms. A link to the survey was sent out on websites including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to 9 of the primary author's connections; from there, they were asked to share the survey with their connections.

Survey:

- The Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs About Postpartum Depression Questionnaire (KABAPPD) were created by the authors using a previously validated and tested survey, the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs About Postpartum Depression Questionnaire.
- Permission to use the original instrument, *Attitudes, and Beliefs About Perinatal Depression Questionnaire*, was obtained via the original author, Dr. Jennifer N. Felder.
- Items 1-10 consisted of demographic questions, related to gender, age, ethnicity, if they were a student, education, marital status, current residing state, if they have ever given birth, if they have ever experienced postpartum depression, and if they know what postpartum depression is.
- Items 11-27 consisted of Likert scale questions that assessed the participant's knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs on and about postpartum depression.

Data & Analysis:

- Percentages, means, and frequencies were analyzed in conjunction with this research study. ANOVA with a least significant difference post hoc test was run to assess differences in participant groups.

RESULTS

Demographics:

- The target population of this research study was all eligible adults ages 18 and older. Some of the respondents included students enrolled in a regional Kentucky university.
- 128 respondents completed the KABAPPD survey.

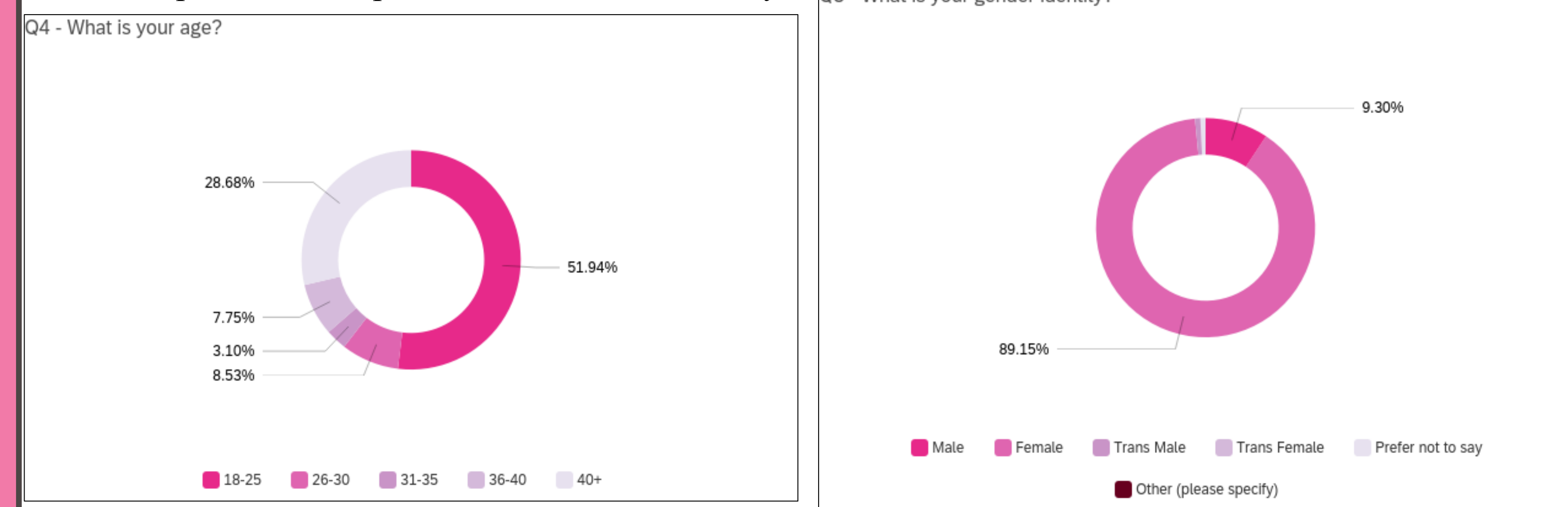


Table 1. Have given birth to never given birth Differences in PPD Attitudes and Beliefs

Survey Question	Given Birth	Have not	P-values*
Depressed pregnant women should temporarily give up care of their babies to someone else.	2.22±1.02	1.88±.84	0.046
Depressed pregnant women are a danger to themselves.	3.36±1.34	2.80±1.31	0.024
There is little that can be done to control the symptoms of depression in pregnant women.	1.97±.93	1.65±.77	0.035
A person can tell that pregnant women are depressed by the way they act.	2.38±1.28	1.96±.75	0.022
Depression in pregnant women is a common problem in our society.	5.12±.97	4.63±1.30	0.022

*p<.05; Only significant comparisons are reported here.

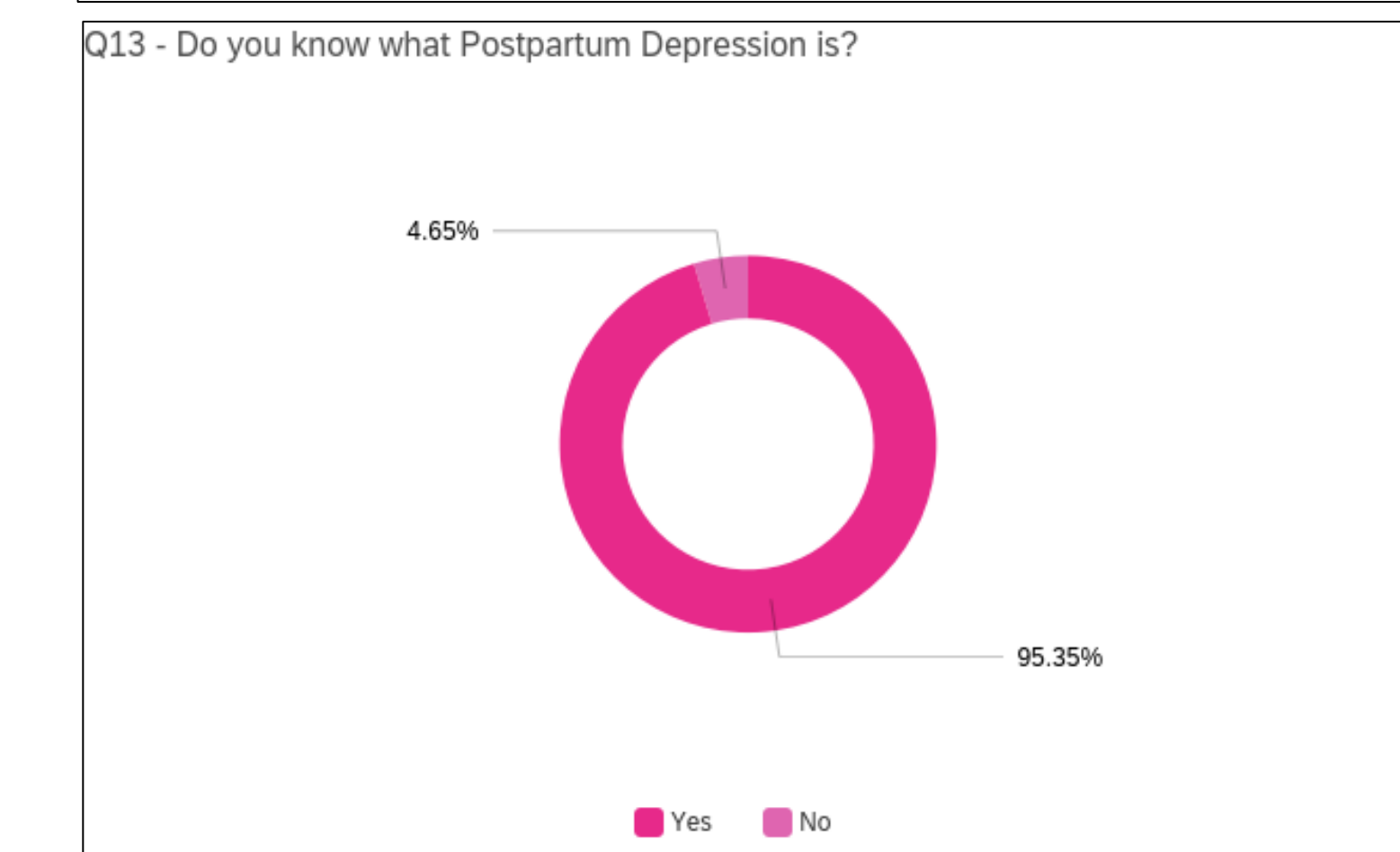
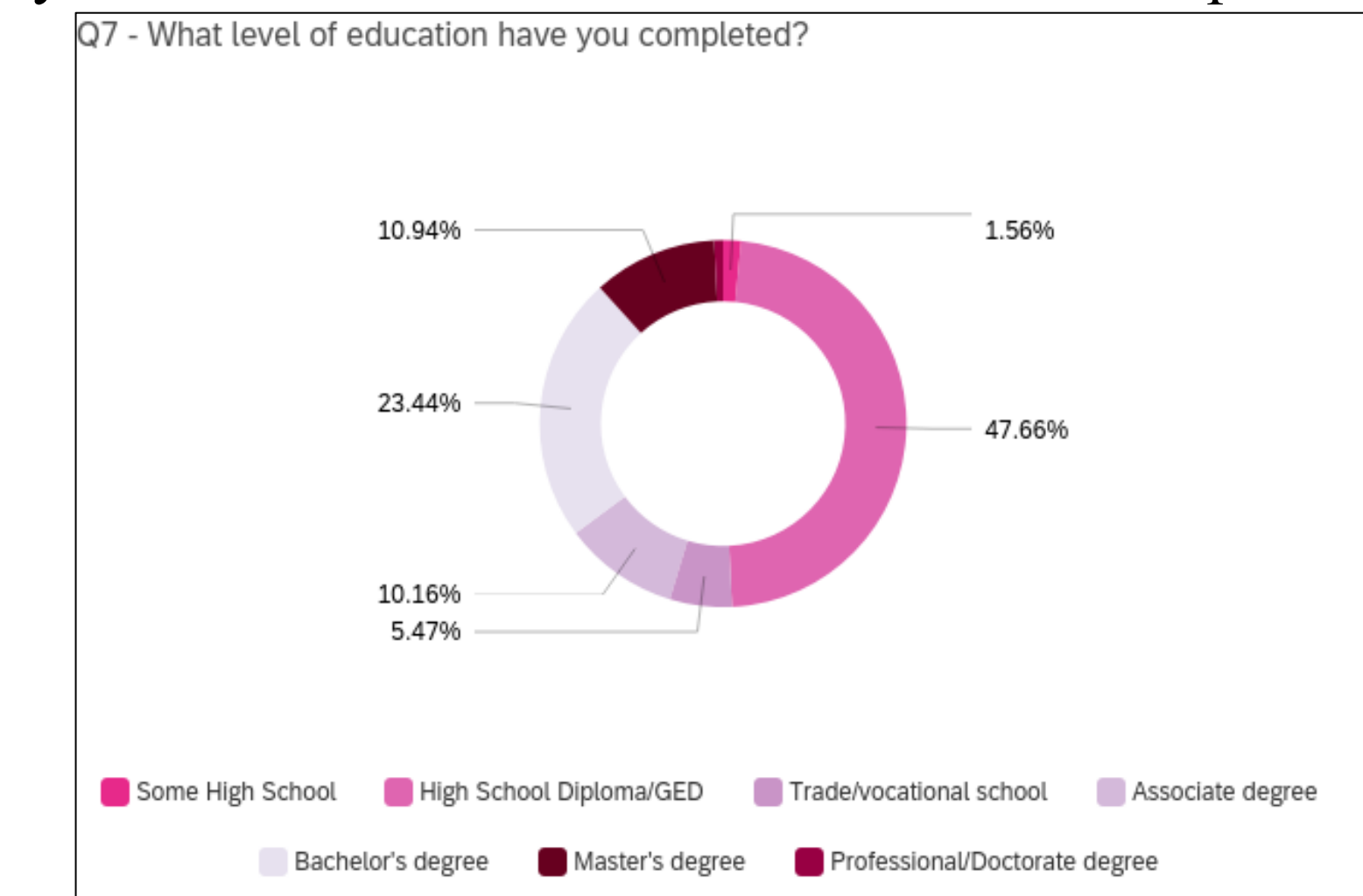
Table 2. Education Level and PPD Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs

Survey Question	Mean ± SD
Do you know what Postpartum Depression is?	
Master Degree	1±0*
Associate Degree	1±0*
Some High School Education v. High School Education	1±0*
High School Education	.93±.249
Depressed pregnant women should temporarily give up care of their babies to someone else.	
Bachelor Degree	1.76±.852*
Professional Degree	1.57±.861*
High School Education	2.30±1.03
Depressed pregnant women are a danger to themselves.	
Associate Degree	2.46±.88*
High School Degree	3.32±1.38
Depressed pregnant women are a danger to their babies.	
High School Education	1.39±.91†
Master Degree	1.23±.44†
Associate Degree	1.14±.38
Depressed pregnant women should probably keep their depression to themselves.	
High School Education	1.36±.89
Bachelors Degree	1.17±.38†
Associate Degree	1±0*
Professional Degree	1±0*
Knowing that a pregnant woman is depressed tells me a lot about what kind of parent she would be.	
High School Education	1.41±.81
Associate Degree	1.08±.28*
Bachelors Degree	1.10±.31*
Professional Degree	1.71±.49†‡

*p<.05; †significant to High School Education, ‡ p<.05; significant to associates degree, § p<.05 significant to bachelor's degree, ¶ p<.05 significant to master's degree

RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS

- The participants were mostly female, at 89.15% (n=115), and self-identified as White at 89.15% (n=115).
- Most respondents ranged from 18-25 at 51.94% (n=67) and 40 and older at 28.68% (n=37).
- 47.66% (n=61) of the respondents reported having only a high school diploma, 23.44% (n=30) reported having a Bachelor's degree, and 10.94% (n=14) reported having a Master's degree.
- Most of the respondents had never given birth before (58.91%, n=76), and only 13.18% (n=17) had reported ever being diagnosed with or experiencing symptoms of postpartum depression.
- Of the 128 respondents, 95.35% (n=123) reported that they did know what postpartum depression is.
- Women felt significantly more positive about other women with PPD than males.
- Because this was a convenience sample, there is not an even distribution of male-to-female participants in this survey. In other studies, the authors would try for a more even ratio of male-to-female respondents.



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