

Tattoos, Well-Being, and Gender at Six American Public Universities

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University Enrollments: The Sample

- Northeast State University n= 658
 - Southeast State University n= 328
 - Midwest State University n= 476
 - Midsouth State University n= 557
 - Northwest State University n= 190
 - Southwest State University n= 185
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- 82 % Ages 18-20
 - 67 % Anglo
 - 59 % Female
- Total N = 2394
Response Rate = 74%

Variables, Scales, and Results from Surveying Students

Categories of Tattoos:

No tattoos 1 Tattoo 2-3 Tattoos 4 + Tattoos

14 % of males have at least one tattoo

18 % of females have at least one tattoo

Self Esteem

A Scale of Ten Questions:

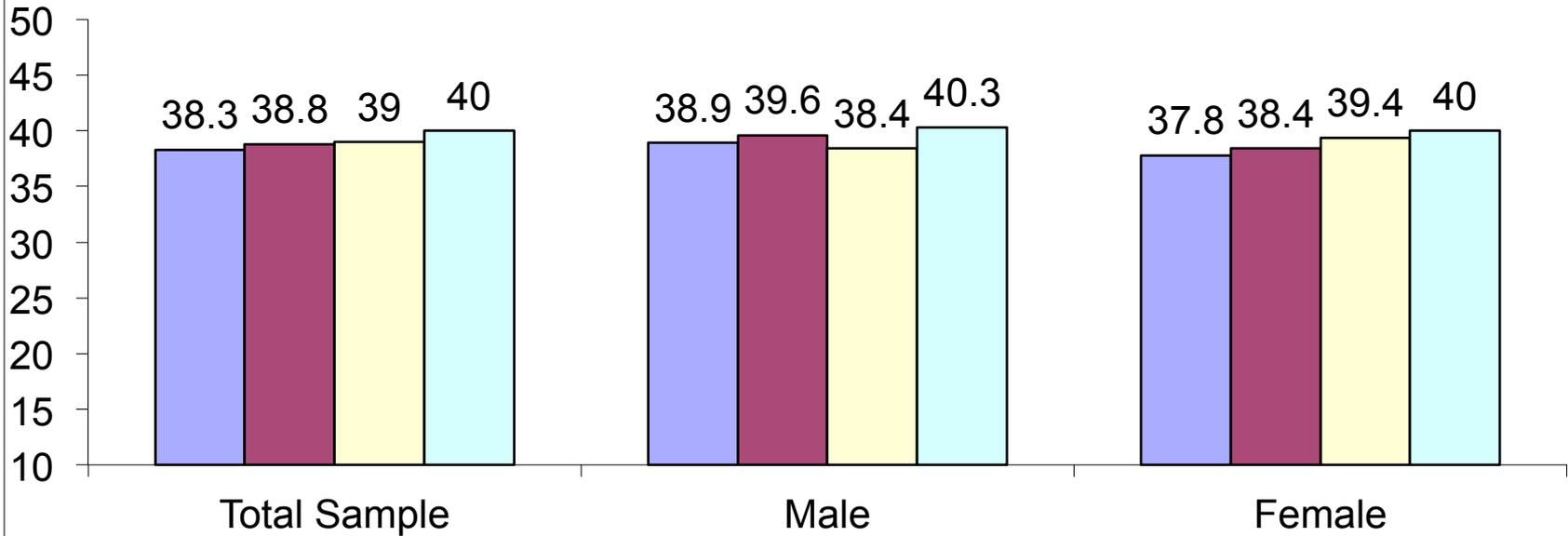
- On the whole, I am satisfied with myself
- At times I think I am no good at all
- I feel that I have a number of good qualities
- I am able to do things as well as most other people
- I feel I do not have much to be proud of
- I certainly feel useless at times
- I feel that I'm a person of worth
- I wish I could have more respect for myself
- All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure
- I take a positive attitude toward myself

Response Choices: “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”

Range = 10 to 50

Cronbach's Alpha Measure of Reliability = .86

Self Esteem and Tattoos by Gender



Mean Scale Scores - Range = 10-50
p < .05 for females only

0 Tattoos

1 Tattoo

2-3 Tattoos

4+ Tattoos

Depression

A Scale of 6 Questions:

To what extent do you currently feel you cannot eat; your appetite is poor?

To what extent do you currently feel you cannot shake off the blues even with the help of family or friends?

To what extent do you currently feel everything is an effort?

To what extent is your sleep currently restless?

To what extent do you currently feel sad?

To what extent do you currently feel you cannot “get going?”

Response choices:

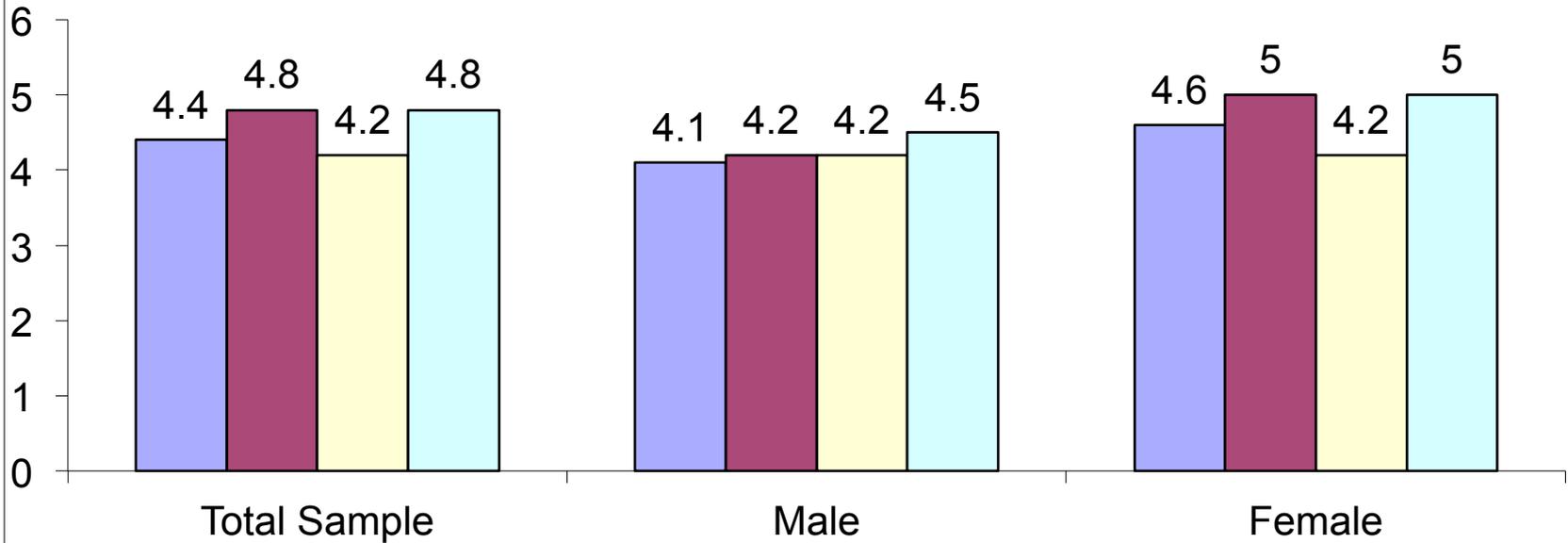
- Rarely or none of the time (< 1 day a week)
- Some or a little of the time (1-2 days a week)
- Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days a week)
- Most all the time (5-7 days a week)

Range = 0 to 18

Chronbach' s Alpha Measure of Reliability = .88

Radloff, L.S. (1977) 'The CES-D scale: A self report depression scale for research in the general population'. Applied Psychological Measurement 1: 385-401.

Depression and Tattoos by Gender



Mean Scale Scores - Range = 0-18
p = n.s. throughout

0 Tattoos

1 Tattoo

2-3 Tattoos

4+ Tattoos

Suicide Ideation

A Scale of 2 Questions:

To what extent do you currently think about hurting yourself?

To what extent do you currently think about taking your own life?

Response choices:

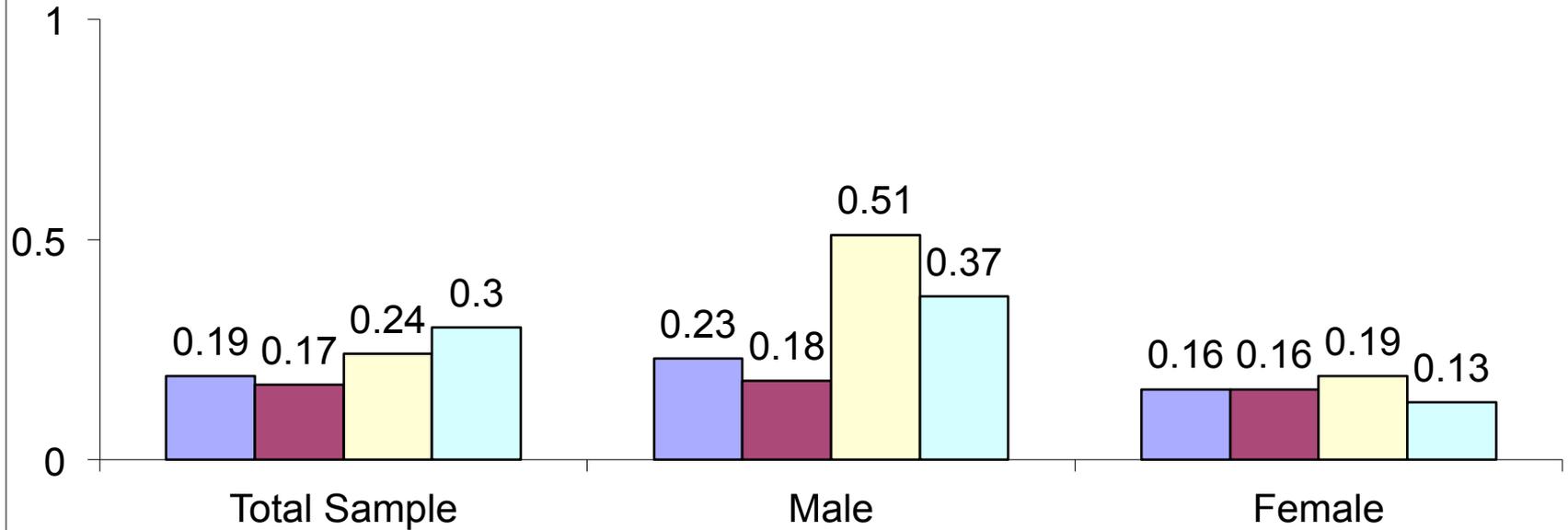
- Rarely or none of the time (< 1 day a week)
- Some or a little of the time (1-2 days a week)
- Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days a week)
- Most all the time (5-7 days a week)

Range = 0 to 6

Chronbach' s Alpha Measure of Reliability = .80

Radloff, L.S. (1977) 'The CES-D scale: A self report depression scale for research in the general population'.
Applied Psychological Measurement 1: 385-401.

Suicide Ideation and Tattoos by Gender



Mean Scale Scores - Range = 0-6
p = n.s. throughout

0 Tattoos

1 Tattoo

2-3 Tattoos

4+ Tattoos

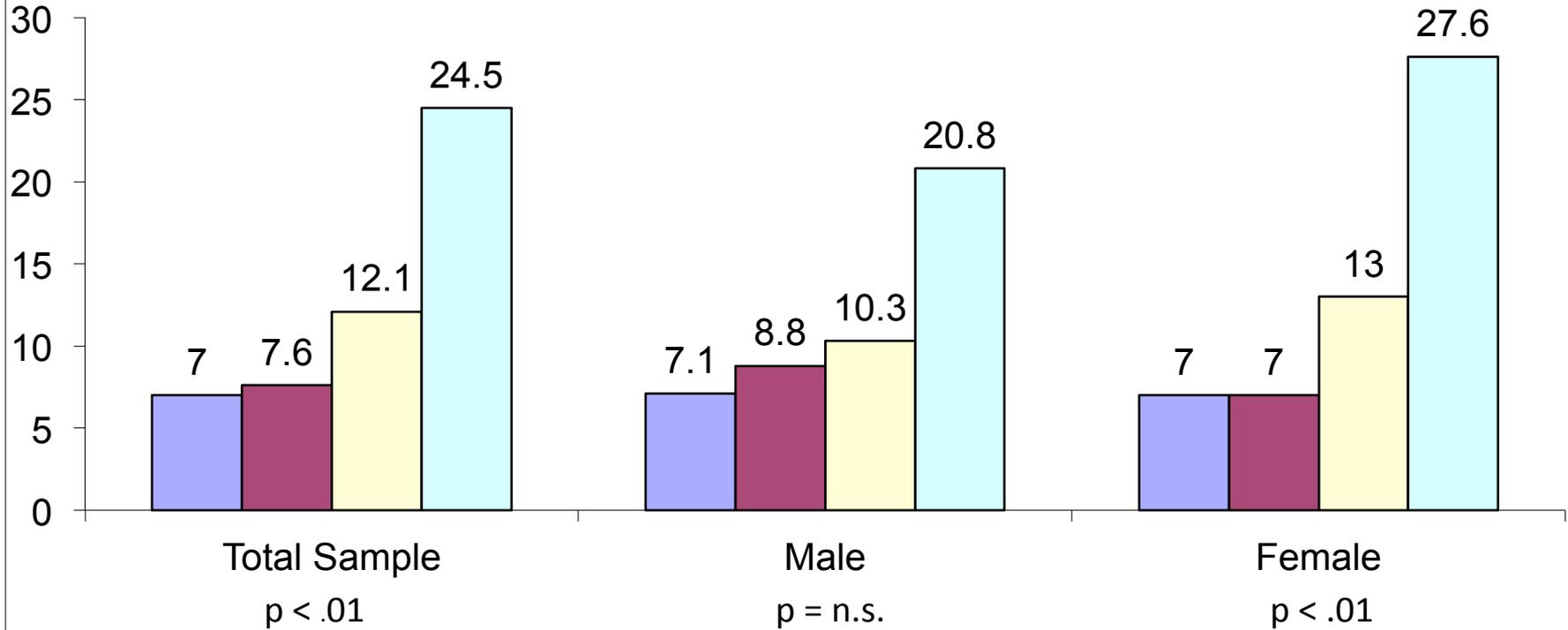
Suicide Attempts

How often have you attempted suicide?

- Never
- Once
- Twice
- A few times
- Several times

Radloff, L.S. (1977) 'The CES-D scale: A self report depression scale for research in the general population'.
Applied Psychological Measurement 1: 385-401.

Number of Tattoos and 1+ Suicide Attempts by Gender



Comparative Percentages, 1+ Suicide Attempt



Summary

- There are no significant or substantive differences among increasingly tattooed respondents regarding increased depression or suicide ideation.
- There is a modestly significant, though substantively minimal, elevation of self esteem for increasingly tattooed females.
- There are significant increases in reported suicide attempts among increasingly tattooed respondents, especially among those with 4+ tattoos.
- This last behavioral difference is more pronounced among females.