



#Abortion: A Content Analysis of Post Interaction and Mental Health References



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Introduction

Research from the American Psychological Association suggests that **abortion has not been linked to mental health issues, while restricting safe abortion has been.** It remains unclear how adolescents' reference mental health based on what side of abortion they align themselves with, and how interactions with posts about abortion differ based on stance.

The purpose of this study was to analyze interactions (such as likes and comments) with, and understand mental health related references in, #abortion posts on Instagram and how these change based on pro-life or pro-choice stance.

Methods

Study Type

- Content analysis of Instagram posts

Unit of Analysis

- 100 Instagram posts that used #abortion
- 50 each, pro-life and pro-choice

Methods Steps

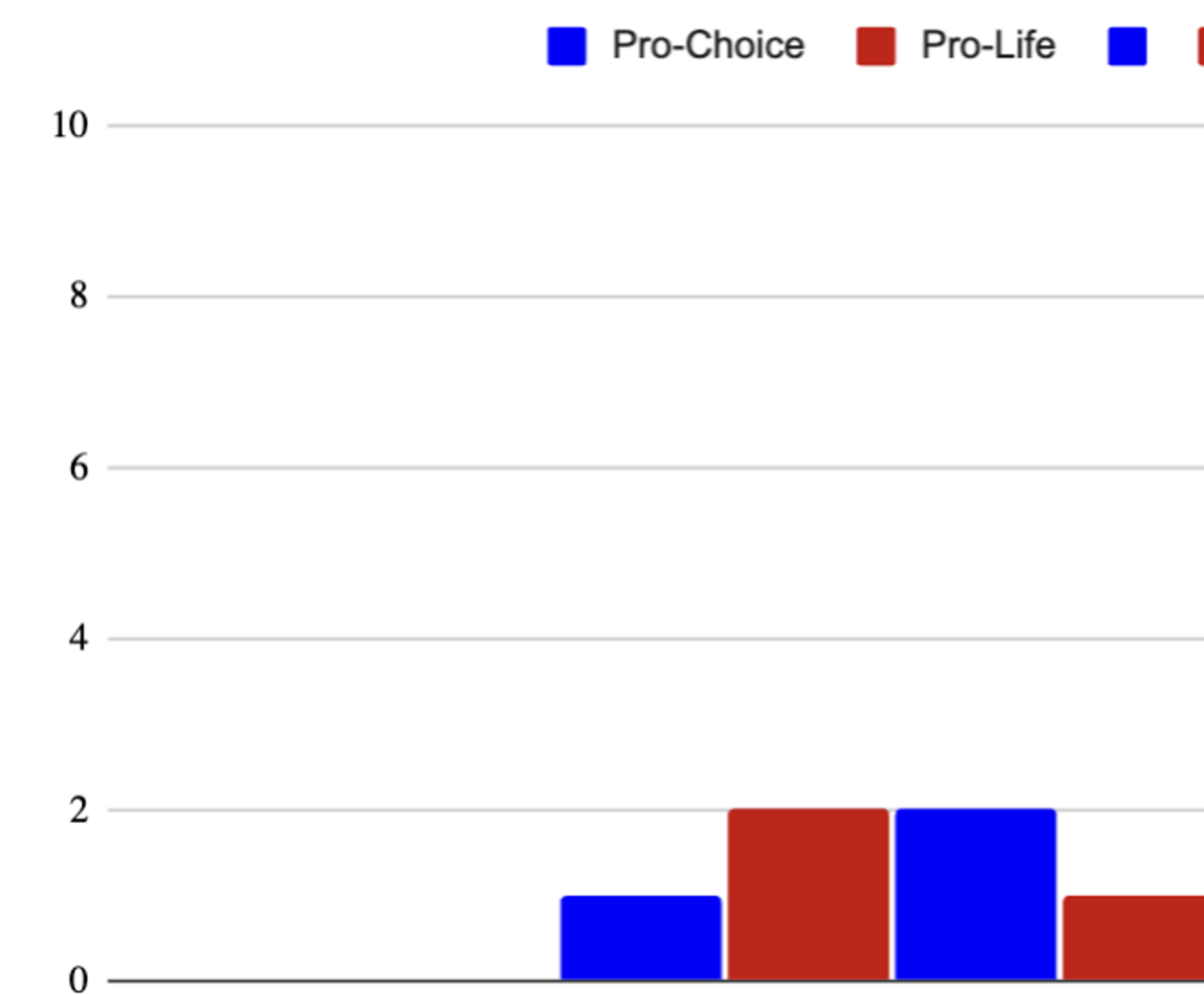
- Determined post's abortion stance
- Each post was coded for the chosen variables

variable	definition
pro-life	against abortion in all cases
pro-choice	against complete abortion bans
stress	defined as a short-term, specific sense of fear or nerves.
anxiety	defined as a long-term, general sense of apprehension or nervousness.
likes	the number of likes listed at the time of post viewing
comments	the number of comments listed at the time of post viewing

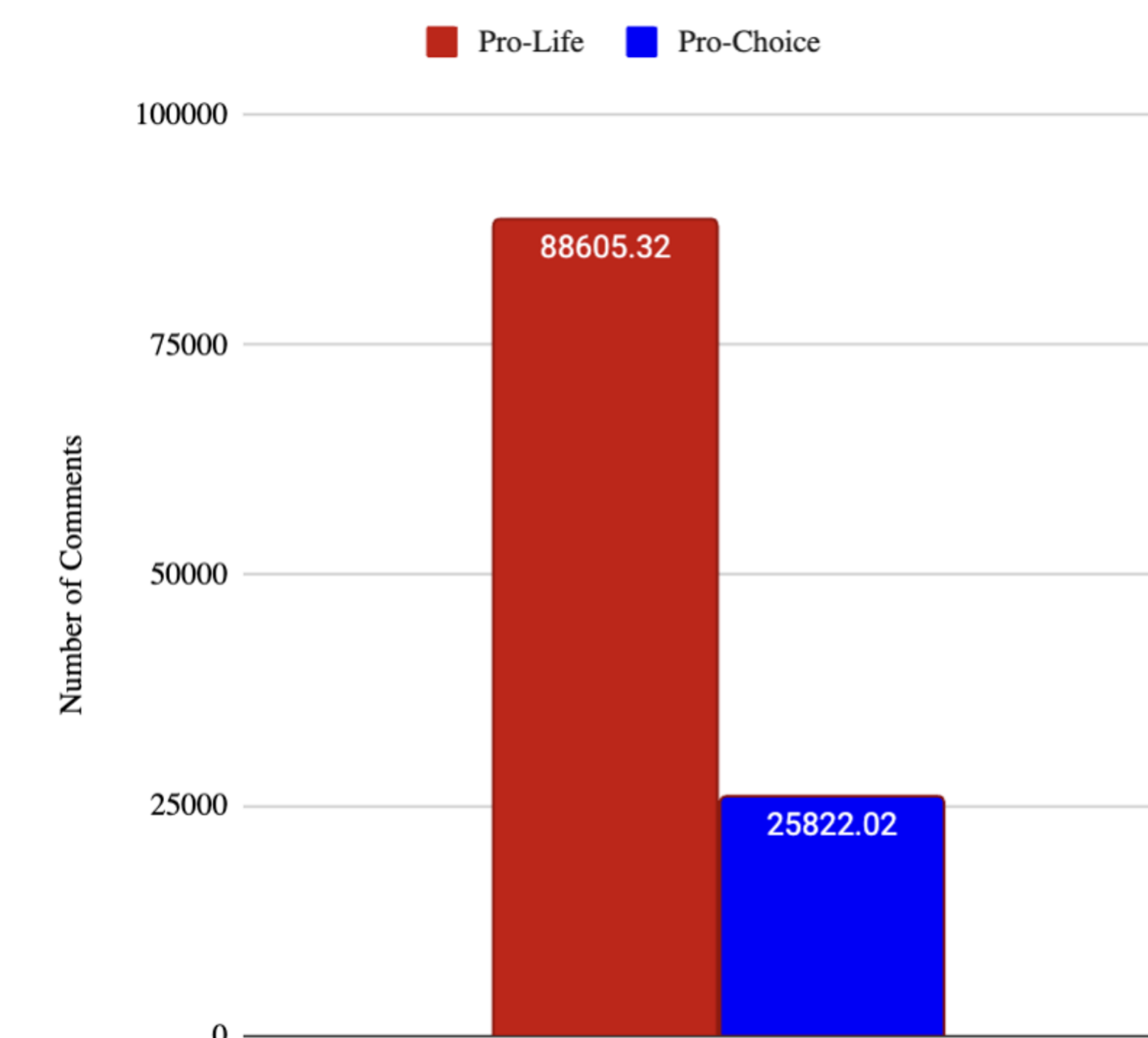
Results

Across all 100 posts included:

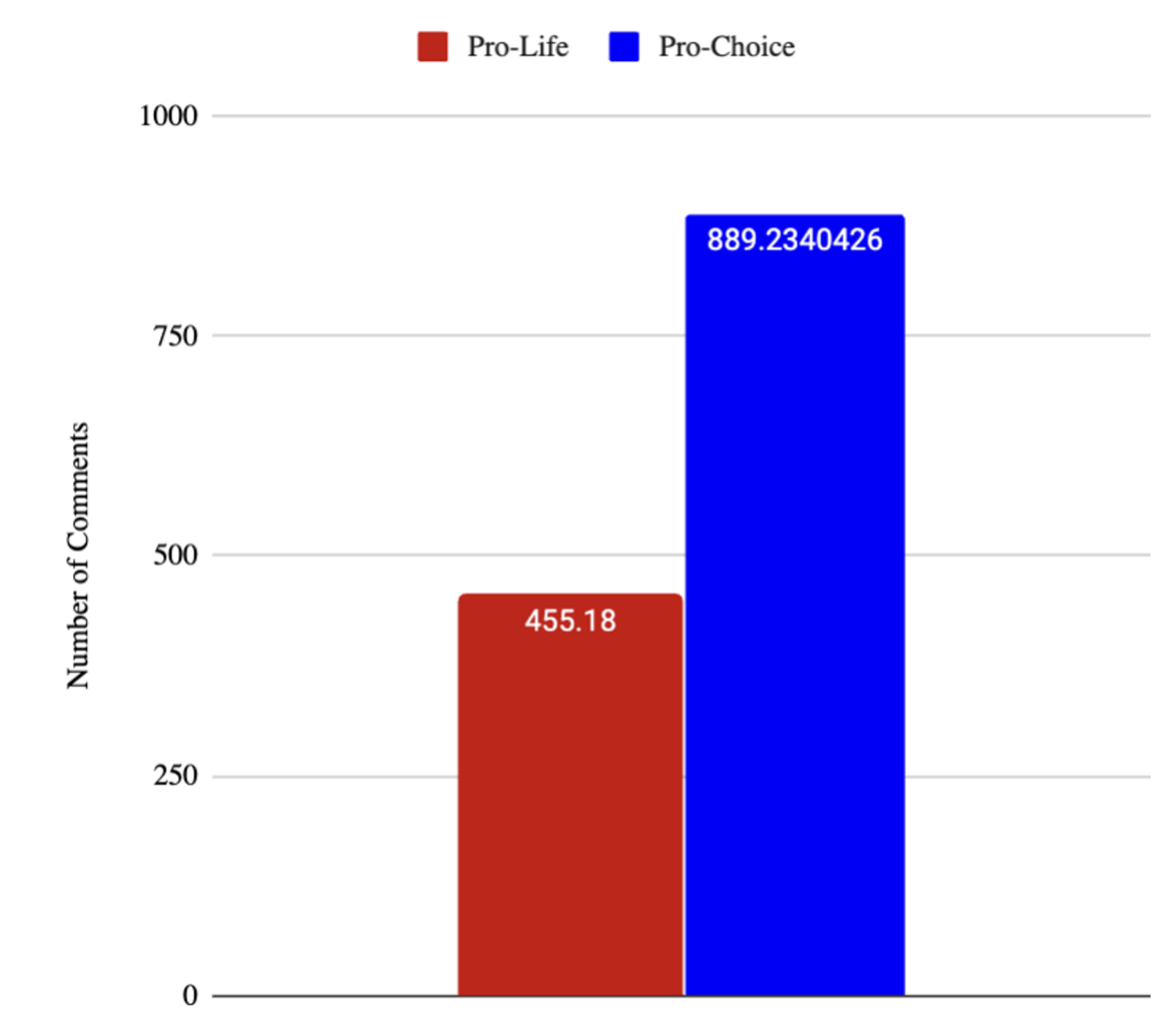
References to Stress and Anxiety



Mean Number of Likes by Abortion Stance



Mean Number of Comments by Abortion Stance



Main Points:

- **Few posts** referenced mental health. 4 references to mental health in Pro-Choice posts vs. 2 in Pro-Life
- **Mean of 899 comments on Pro-Choice posts vs. 455 on Pro-Life**
- **Mean of 88605 likes on Pro-Life posts vs. 25822 on Pro-Choice**

Quote from an example post that references anxiety:

"[Individual's Name], who was denied an abortion in her home state of Florida, described the agony of watching her son gasp for air and die after he was born. [Name] was diagnosed with PTSD and started seeing a therapist once a week."

Conclusions

Findings

- **Mental health** is not referenced very much in top #abortion posts, but it is **referenced much more in pro-choice posts than pro-life posts.**
- This study suggests that **pro-life posts are interacted with more passively** with a like, and **pro-choice posts are interacted with more actively**, with positive and negative comments.

Limitations

- **Many of the top posts in #abortion are from large organizations**, so personal stories are often not included. These personal stories are what would be more likely to reference mental health issues, which is a possible reason why **we did not see many mental health references.**

Implications

- **People trying to share information about abortion could look at this data** to see how it may be interacted with.
- **Another research project could look at mental health references** in posts that come **from personal accounts** or have fewer comments and likes. These types of posts may be more likely to reference mental health.

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