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# Theory of Planned Behavior: Examining Breastfeeding Intentions and Behaviors

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## Background

- Breastfeeding is the ideal infant nutrition, providing benefits to both infants and mothers.
- Global health organizations recommend that infants are exclusively breastfed for 6 months.
- According to the CDC (2017), 23.9% of mothers are exclusively breastfeeding for the first 6 months in Michigan.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between antecedents in the Theory of Planned Behavior and breastfeeding intentions with breastfeeding at 60 days postpartum.

## Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between antecedents (maternal attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) and maternal intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months?
- Is there a relationship between maternal intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months and actual breastfeeding behavior at 60 days postpartum?

## Theoretical Framework

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, a mother's breastfeeding intention is directly related to the following antecedents: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

## Methods

### Design:

Secondary analysis of a larger prospective descriptive study

**Recruitment:** Convenience and snowball sampling through social media, hospitals, and local businesses.

**Procedure:** 3 Questionnaires: baseline, 10 and 60 days postpartum

- Baseline: Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control toward breastfeeding (Likert-scales)
- 10 and 60 days: Breastfeeding behaviors

**Analysis:** Data were analyzed using SPSS version 21 software.

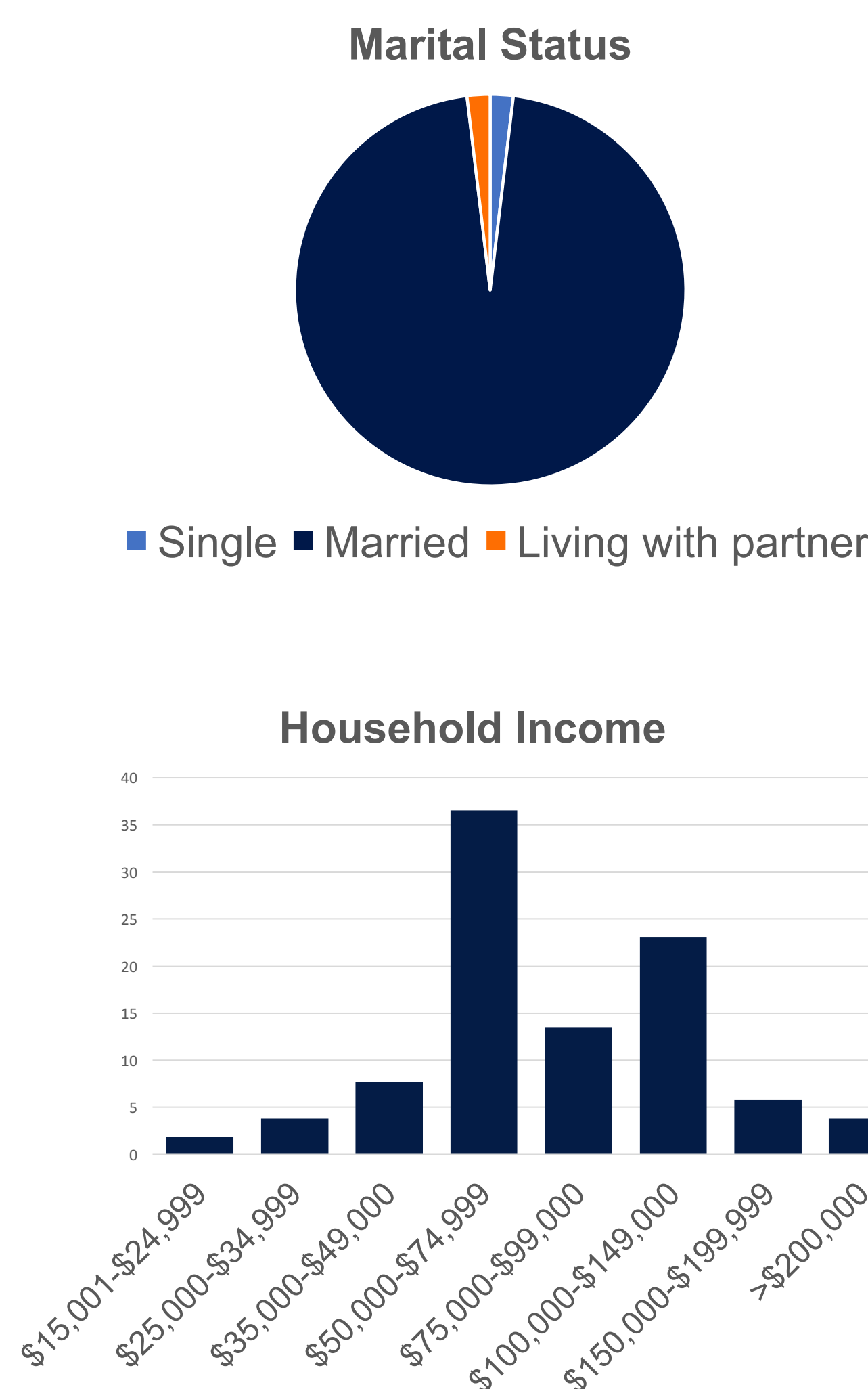
- Descriptive statistics
- Spearman's Rho: Antecedents vs Intention
- Fisher's Exact Test: Intention vs Breastfeeding Behavior

## Limitations

- Limited diversity of participants
- Convenience sampling
- Maternal self reported data

## Results & Conclusions

### Participant Demographics (N=52)



- Mean age: 31 years
- Bachelor's educated: 51.9% (n=27)
- Employed full time: 44.2% (n=23)
- Multipara: 78% (n=41)
- Married: 96% (n=50)

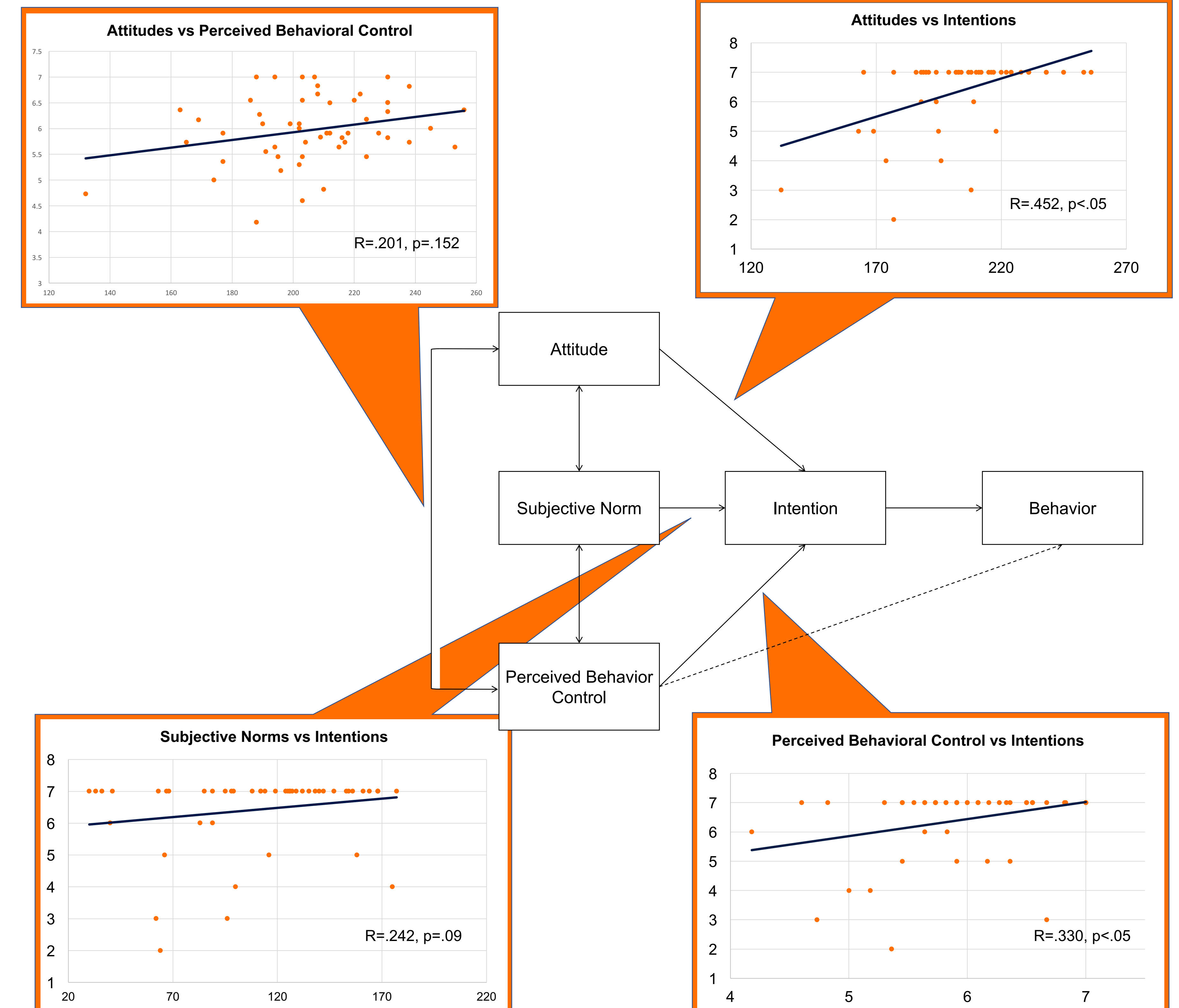
### Breastfeeding Intentions

- Extremely likely to give breastfeeding a try= 96.2% (n= 50)
- Extremely likely to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months= 76.9% (n= 40)
- Extremely likely to exclusively breastfeed at 6 months= 65.4% (n= 34)

### Breastfeeding Behaviors at Day 60 postpartum

- Any breastfeeding= 98% (n= 51)
- Exclusive breastfeeding= 90.4% (n= 47)

### Theoretical Results



### Correlations

- There was a significant positive correlation between attitudes and intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months,  $r(52)=.452, p<.05$ .
- There was a significant positive correlation between perceived behavioral control and maternal intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months,  $r(52)=.330, p<.05$ .
- There was no significant correlation between subjective norms and maternal intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months,  $r(52)=.242, p=.09$ .
- There was no significant relationship between maternal intention to exclusively breastfeed at 3 months and exclusive breastfeeding at 60 days postpartum,  $\chi^2=2.70, p=.23$ .

## Nursing Implications

- Implement nursing interventions to foster positive breastfeeding attitudes among breastfeeding mothers
- Establish supportive measures to promote perceived behavioral control among breastfeeding mothers