



# Attitudes of shelter visitors regarding companion animal welfare



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## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between animal and its owner is one of the strongest emotional experiences known to humans, sometimes even deeper than the one between two persons. Many owners report that with dogs they simply feel better and that they have a company when they are lonely. Nonetheless, this relationship can be easily broken and consequently dogs are often admitted to the animal shelters, where they await for their new home.

Public concern regarding animal welfare in general is rising, and even more so on issues related to companion and farm animals. Many studies have been conducted regarding general public or opinion of different stakeholders (i.e. students, consumers) towards animal welfare. Purpose of our research was to examine the attitudes of shelter visitors towards animal welfare of companion animals (CA), and to get a better insight on how do potential future owners contemplate regarding these issues.

## METHODS

A total of 50 voluntary and anonymous surveys were carried out in the Shelter for Abandoned Animals – Zagreb. Questionnaire was developed and pre-tested on a sample of 10 random people and afterward corrected according to suggestions. Survey consisted of 21 general questions, divided into two parts. The first group of questions requested information on demographic of the visitors, and the second part contained 20 statements used to examine their attitudes towards shelter CA, and their welfare. The statements were formed as series of five-point Likert scale questions (1: full disagreement to 5: full agreement), and Yes-No-I don't know questions.

Table 1. Participants attitudes towards general statements regarding CA

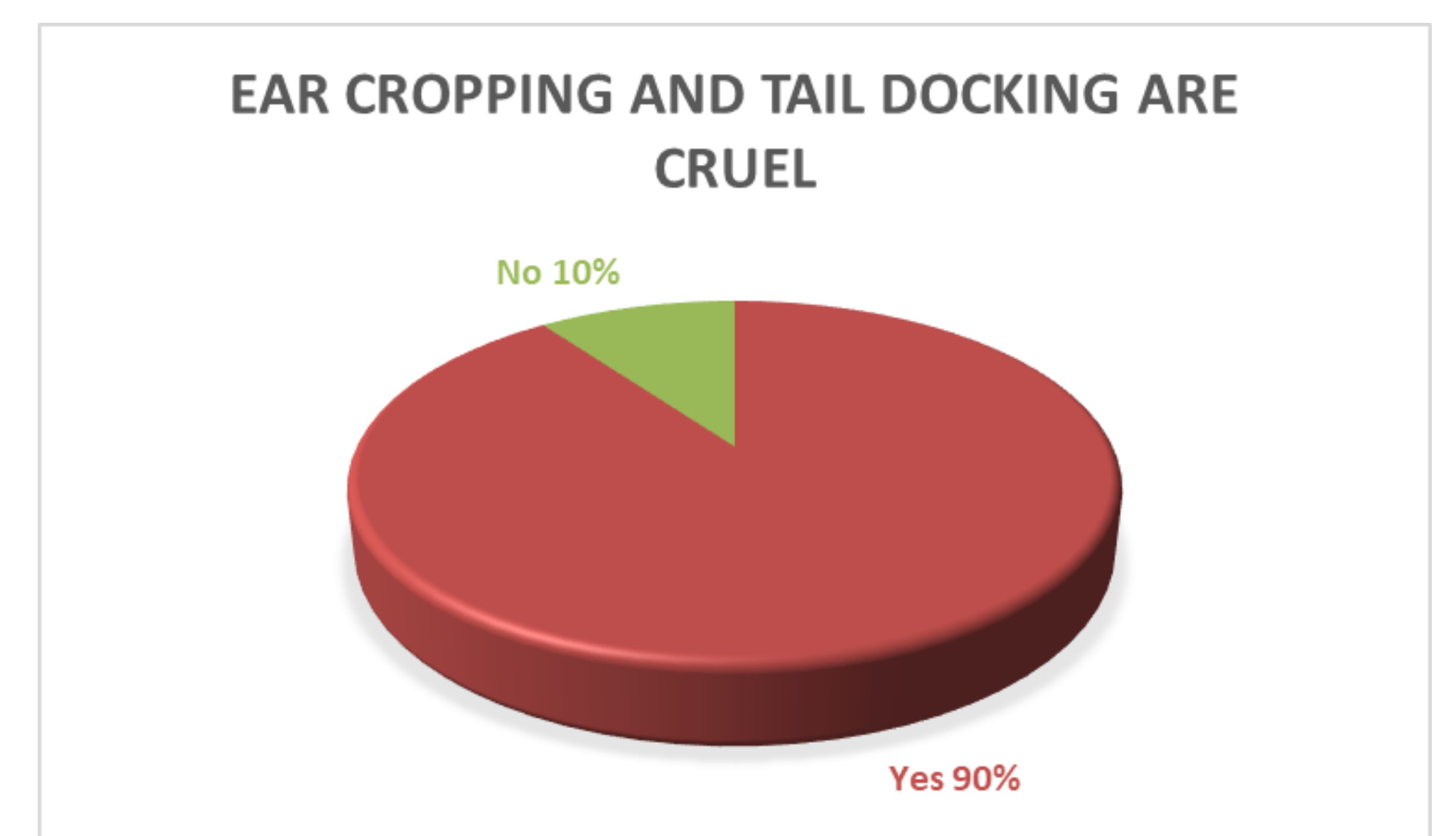
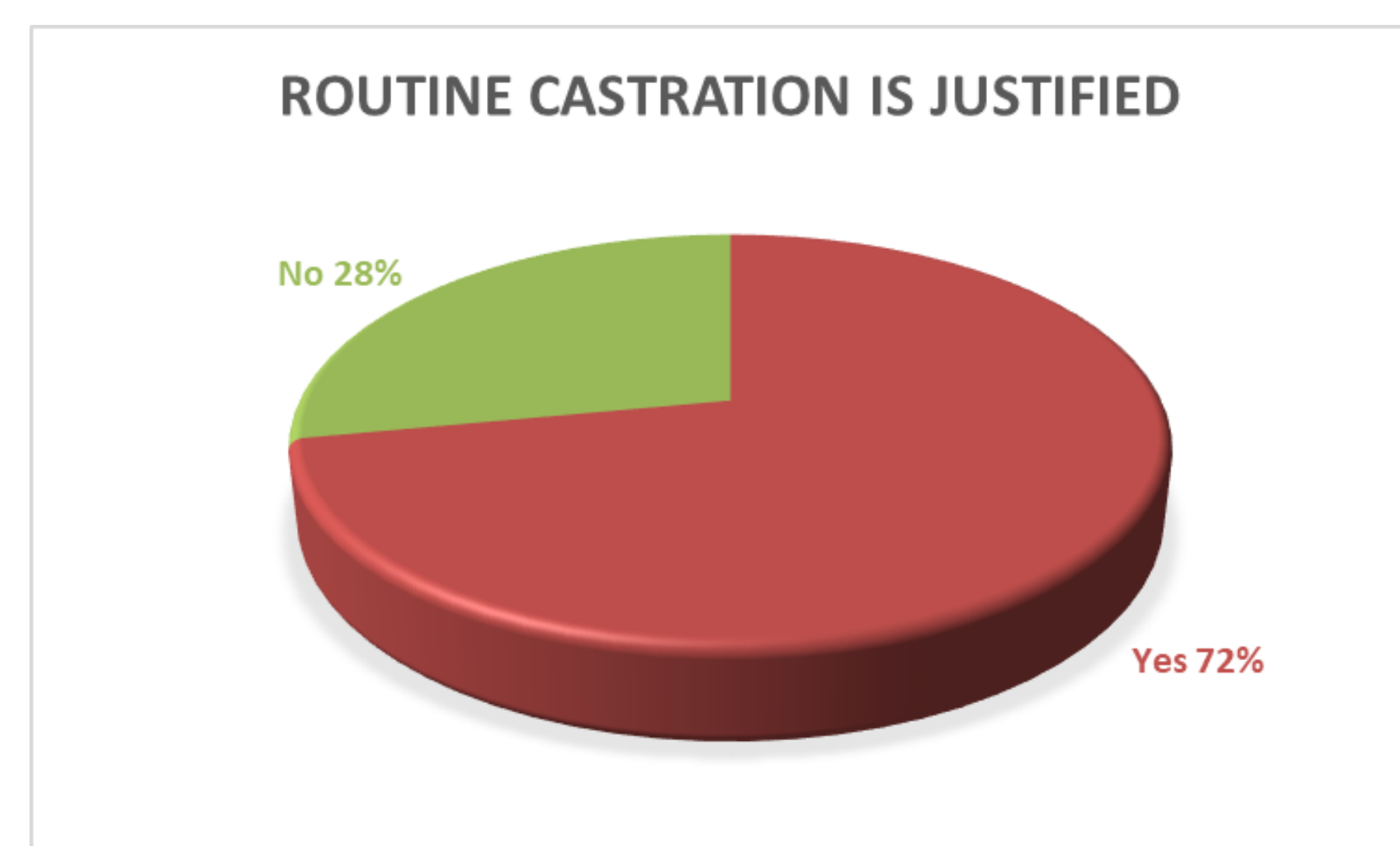
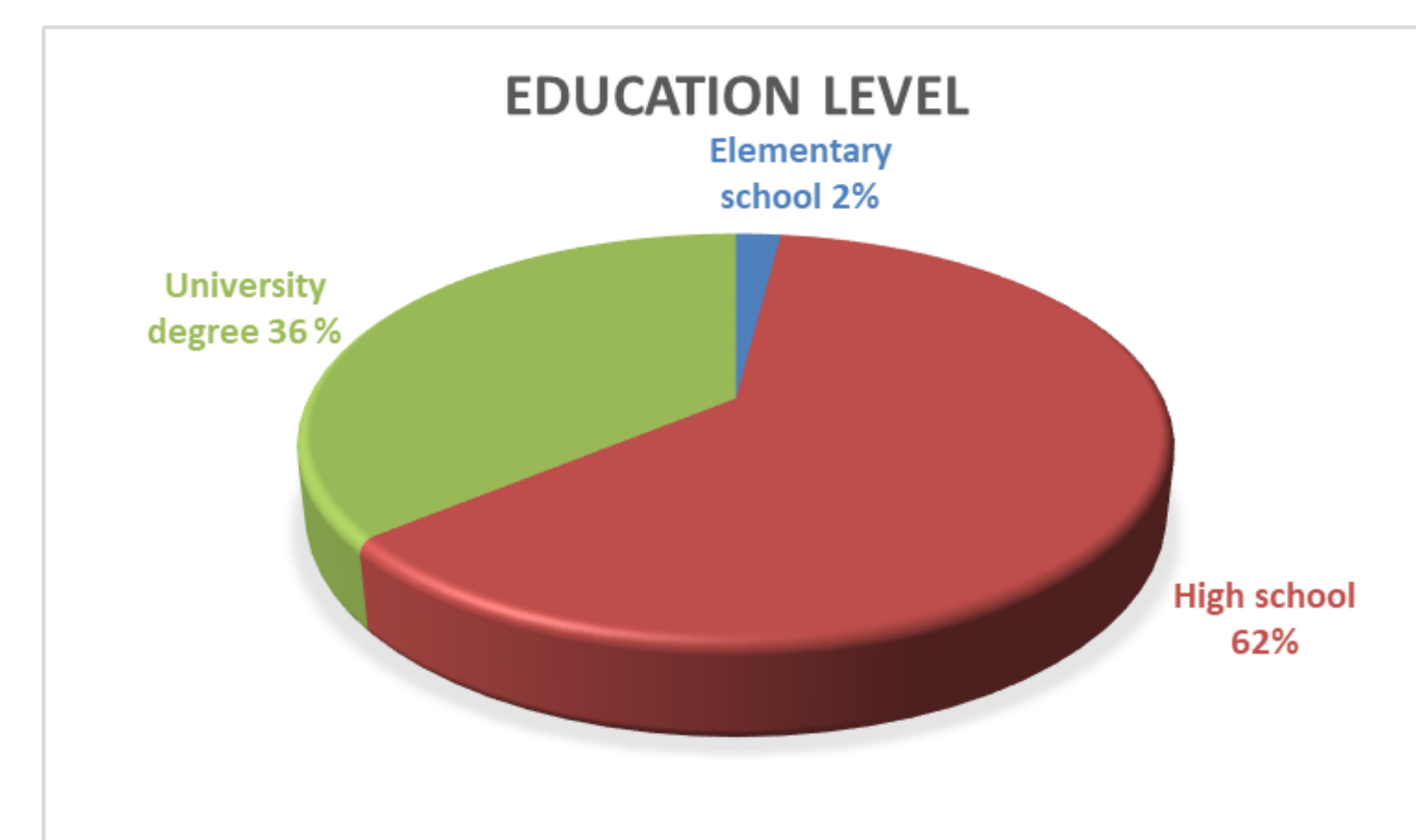
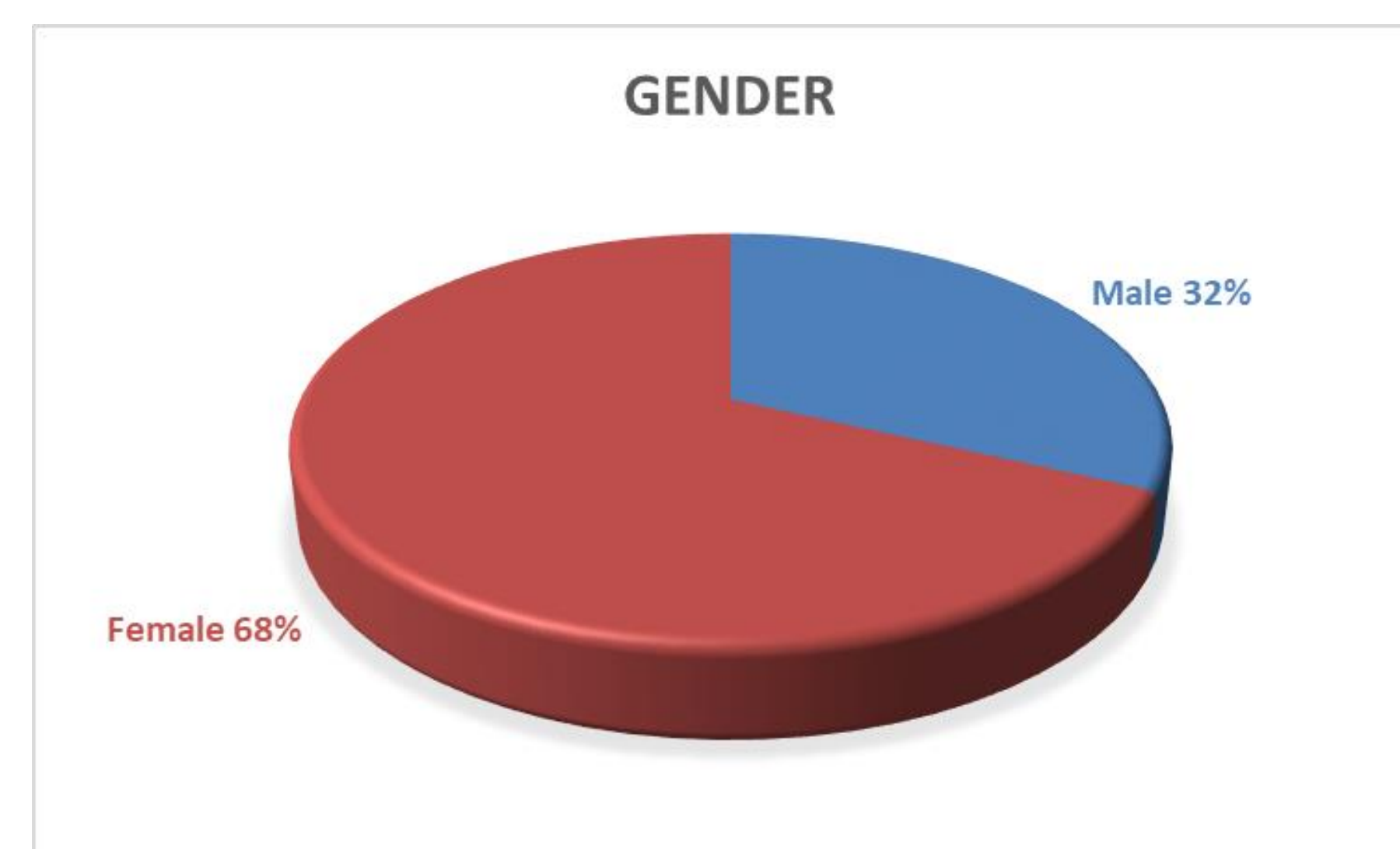
Statement	Mean* ( $\pm$ SEM) (n = 50)
CA have a benefit for human health	$\bar{x}$ =4.59 ( $\pm$ 0.78)
Children should be educated about CA in Kindergarten	$\bar{x}$ =4.90 ( $\pm$ 0.37)
Owners can bond and care with more than three CA	$\bar{x}$ =3.02 ( $\pm$ 1.55)
Owners sometimes not to their knowledge can do harm to their pet	$\bar{x}$ =4.12 ( $\pm$ 0.97)
Owners sometimes are doing harm on purpose	$\bar{x}$ =3.86 ( $\pm$ 1.20)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## RESULTS



## CONCLUSION

The results of this survey suggest that participants of the survey are well familiar with term of animal welfare and they completely understand major welfare problems regarding CA. Based on their attitudes we can conclude that as future owners they would take good care of their pets.

