

# The expectations of sex education curriculums from the adult population

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## Conclusion

- The support of the topics of abstinence, LGBTQ issues, and morality are correlated with religious and political stance. This could support that the opinions of sex education are influenced by political and religious agendas.
- The majority of the adults sampled supported an outside source being the teacher of sex education programs. Seeing as the majority of current sex educators are not outside sources this is valuable information moving forward in the understanding and improvement of sex education programs.
- There was surprising support of abstinence topics, even in the non-religious and liberal-leaning participants. This highlights the adult view that teenagers should not be having sex and that sexual education programs should teach this lesson. However, previous research shows that over half of college students are sexually active, regardless of the type of sexual education program (Prater, 2019). We need to move way from this focus and start education students in ways to live a sexually healthy life.

## Limitations

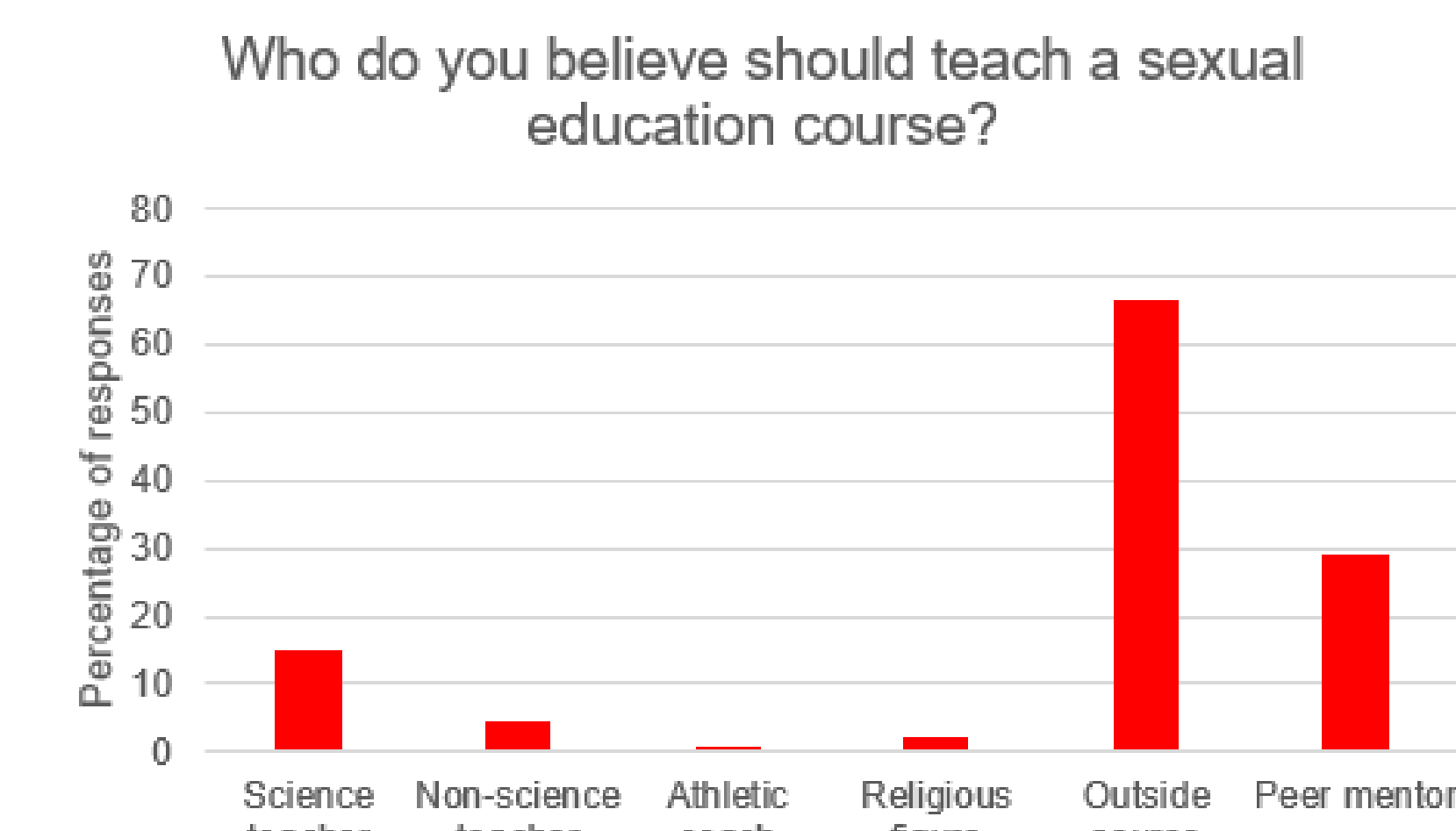
Limitation to this study is the lack of diversity in the sample. The overwhelming majority of the sample were white women from the south. We would have a better understanding of the population if our sample was more diverse. Future studies should collect data from the groups that are lacking which would show a better understanding of the current situation of the mind set about sex education.

## Results

**145 adults participated in this study.** 4 participants were removed from the study due to nonsensical answers. Therefore our sample was 141 (114 females, 26 males, 1 nonbinary). The participants ages ranged from 18-79 years. The participants were white (123), African American or black (7), Asian (2), Indian (1), multiracial (4), and 4 failed to respond.

### Who do you believe should teach a sexual education course?

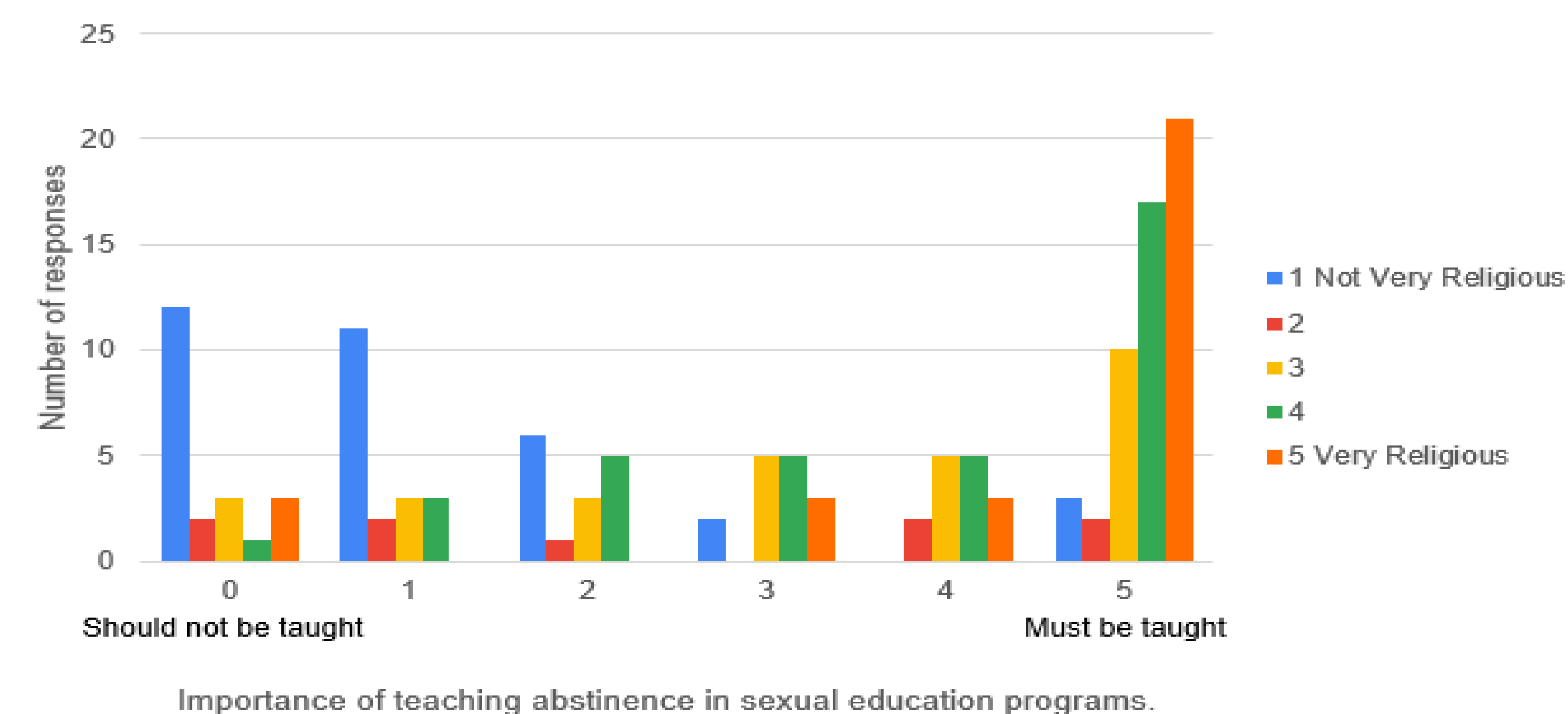
The majority of all participants (66.79%) thought that an outside source should be brought in to teach sexual education programs.



### Differences related to politics and religion:

- Participants who identified as very religious found the topic of **abstinence** more important in sexual education programs compared to non-religious participants ( $\chi^2=59.43$ ,  $p<0.00$ ).
- Participants who identified as non-religious found the topic of **LGBTQ issues** more important in sexual education programs compared to very religious participants ( $\chi^2=59.43$ ,  $p<0.00$ ).
- Participants who identified as politically conservative found the topic of **abstinence** ( $\chi^2=70.34$ ,  $p<0.00$ ) and **morality** ( $\chi^2=46.82$ ,  $p<0.00$ ) more important in sexual education programs compared to liberal-leaning participants.
- Participants who identified as politically liberal found the topic of **LGBTQ issues** more important in sexual education programs compared to conservative-leaning participants ( $\chi^2=59.33$ ,  $p<0.00$ ).
- Participants who ranked the topic of **LGBTQ issues** as more important also ranked topics of **abstinence** as less important ( $\chi^2=45.36$ ,  $p<0.00$ ).
- However, even in groups of participants that encouraged the inclusion of **LGBTQ topics**, there is still a large number of adults who rank **abstinence** as important. The participants who ranked LGBTQ issues as very important ( $n=56$ ), 17 also ranked abstinence as very important.
- Levels of education did not predict the participants rank of importance in **LGBTQ issues** ( $\chi^2=11.35$ ,  $p=0.33$ ); however, a quantitative trend shows that participants of higher education showed a large amount of support to the inclusion of LGBTQ topics.
- Participants who identified as very religious also thought that sexual education programs should not be **coed** while participants who identified as non-religious thought that they should be coed. ( $\chi^2=13.31$ ,  $p=0.01$ )

### Comparison of Religousness and Importance of Abstinence in Sexual Education Programs



## Methods

### Participants and Recruitment

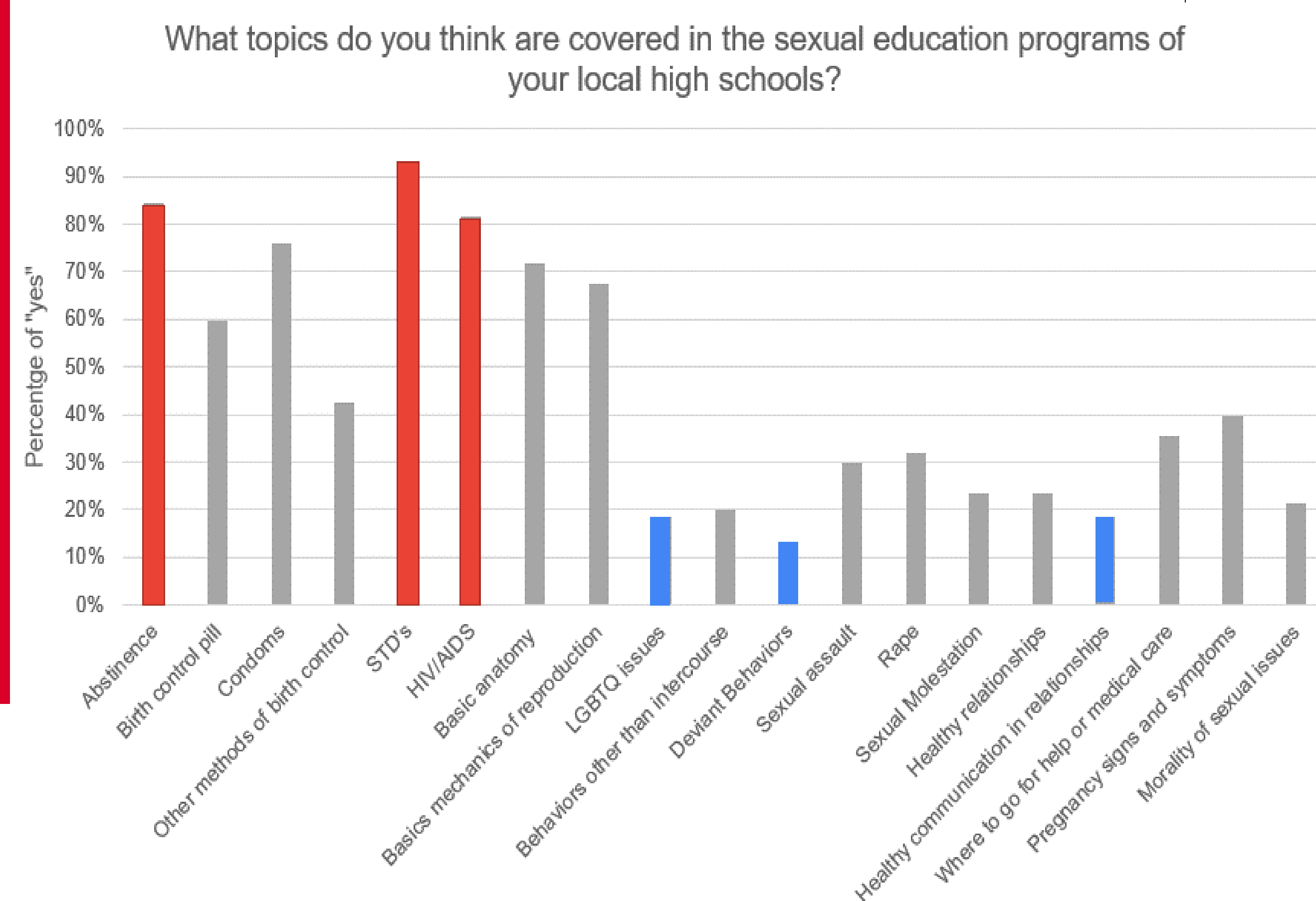
- The only inclusion criteria for this study were 1) participants had to be over 18 years old and 2) not currently enrolled in college classes.
- Participants were recruited through social media by the sharing of the survey and a request for joining the study
- At the end of the survey we also asked if they would share the survey on their social media page, using snowball sampling.

### Materials

- Participants completed an online survey with 35 questions in total.
  - **Sexual Education Program Questions:** The survey included the choice of 5 different sexual education programs. They were also instructed to select the one option that best describes the program they experience in high school.
  - **Topics covered in sexual education program:** The participants were asked to indicate which topics they believed were offered in a sex education programs based off a list of topics provided to them. They were then asked to rank the importance of each topic individually. The participants were also asked if they believed a sex education program should be co-ed and who they believed should teach a sex education course.
  - **Demographic questions:** included age, race, and level of education. The participants were asked which state they lived in. They were also asked to rate their religious and political views.

### Data Collection

Data was collected using social media. The survey was shared on a social media platform, and at the end of the survey the participants were asked to share the survey on their accounts to spread access to the survey. The project was approved by LaGrange College's IRB.



## Introduction

- Previous research has found that the majority of sexual education programs taught in the school system are abstinence based.
  - While only 1/3 of the schools in the US reported in Gardner (2015) an abstinence-only based sex ed programs, every student involved in the study reported that their sexual education program was abstinence-only and highly valued virginity even when the school reported otherwise.
  - In other research (Constantine, Jerman, Petra, Huang, & Alice, 2007) only 5-10% of students reported that they were enrolled in a comprehensive sexual education program.
- Students have also reported that their sexual education program did not cover, or covered only briefly, important topics.
  - Students reported that their ideal sexual education program would include a neutral orientation to sexuality that assumes young people will be sexually active, full and specific information on contraception and safe sex options, and information on accessing sexual health services (Gardner, 2015).
- Parents also believe certain topics are lacking in sexual education programs.
  - Parents reported that they wanted the topics of puberty, healthy relationships, abstinence, sexually transmitted diseases, and birth control taught in their child's sexual education program (Kantor & Levitz, 2017).
  - 89% of parents were in support of comprehensive based programs while 11% of parents were in support of abstinence-only based programs (Constantine, Jerman, Petra, Huang, & Alice, 2007).
- No conclusions have been drawn pertaining to what influences parents' perception of sexual education programs.
  - A study conducted on the different views of sexual education between Democrats and Republicans showed no significant difference between the expectations of Democratic and Republican parents (Kantor & Levitz, 2017).