

[\(00:01\):](#)

Jace Robertson of duck dynasty, Selena Gomez, and Kevin Jonas of the Jonas brothers have all spoken publicly about their commitment to saving their virginity for marriage because of their religious beliefs. This is an example of purity culture. A religious movement, which at its peak in the 1990s and early two thousands reached millions of young people with a form of abstinence education that emphasizes the value of virginity, modesty, purity of thought, and avoidance of intense romantic relationships without intention of marriage. This study explores the impact of purity culture on the sexuality identity and religious practices of those who were raised in this culture.

[\(00:41\):](#)

I began with a short survey distributed via social media, along with an attempt to recruit persons, willing to be interviewed about their experiences in purity culture. When I received over 250 offers for interviews in the first week, I created a second longer survey, which combines open-ended text entry questions such as describe your experiences with purity culture with validated Likert scale, such as the Mosher sex guilt scale and Ashdown sex satisfaction scale. The longer survey was emailed to all interview response--volunteers and shared via social media in place of the short survey, which had reached 714 responses in only three weeks.

[\(01:23\):](#)

The response to this research has been overwhelming within one month of the initial survey release. I received 1071 fully or partially completed surveys. Respondents are predominantly white, predominantly between the age of 21 and 40 and predominantly female. All of which support the popular belief that white Christian girls were the primary target of purity culture.

[\(01:47\):](#)

51% of respondents described themselves as heterosexual with 36% of respondents answering yes, to the question I consider myself to be part of the LGBTQ community In 2017, Gallup found that 5.1% of US women identify as LGBT. So this high rate of response from the LGBTQ+ community raises interesting questions for ongoing research.

[\(02:14\):](#)

The level of response to this research suggests that this topic is important to many people. 54% of whom indicate that their experience with purity culture was extremely negative.

[\(02:26\):](#)

77% of respondents answered yes to the question. Have you ever experienced guilt shame, sexual aversion or some other negative emotion, which you feel is related to your experiences in purity culture? And 38% has sought counseling therapy or other help with issues they feel were related to their experiences in purity, culture. Guilt, shame, and or sexual aversion are identifiable in all the interviews conducted so far, even participants who described their experiences with purity culture as being extremely or somewhat positive.

[\(03:00\):](#)

Initial interview analysis finds that the primary benefits of purity culture are either religious "doing what's right and following God's word" or protective such as "if I would have had sex with others before

marriage, I would have been thinking of them", whereas shame and a negative view of self are pervasive themes in the negative impacts of purity culture showing up in comments. "Like I hated myself" and "left me with a lot of very complicated baggage because my understanding of my value was very entrenched with what I did or did not do physically and emotionally."

[\(03:36\)](#):

This summer's interview is focused on participants', spiritual history and current practices and how they were impacted by the experiences of purity culture. All of my participants were raised Christian 42% of them identified as being Christian, please specify with a text specification of the church that they attended or nondenominational Christian 26% grew up Baptist, however, and the others are spread between these denominations. However, only 19% of respondents currently identify as nondenominational Christian with agnostic 18%, nothing in particular, 13% and atheist 12% representing the other top categories. Only 5% of adult respondents still identify as Baptist, which is fewer than identify as pagan.

[\(04:30\)](#):

Initial analysis suggests a correlation between perceived positivity of purity culture experience and retention of faith of origin, but more analysis is needed.

[\(04:43\)](#):

Future direction on this project may include an in depth look at the impacts of purity culture on persons who identify as part of the LGBTQ community an analysis of the differences and experiences of siblings within the same family group and an exploration of the differences or similarities in experience of heterosexual couples who were both raised in purity culture. An additional area of inquiry would be the experience of participants who sought therapy or other help with issues of guilt, shame, or sexual aversion, which they attribute to their experiences in purity culture. Thank you.